



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

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Volume 2

Number 9

Incidents

Death Valley National Park Truck Accident Leads To Hazmat Spill

On the afternoon of Monday, March 12th, a truck driver heading east on California Highway 190 lost control of his vehicle near Emigrant Campground. The truck careened into the desert, landed on its side, and caught on fire.

Rangers responded with an ambulance and kept visitors away from the burning truck filled with chemicals. Around two hours later, mutual aid from Nye County, Nevada, came in the form of hazmat and medical personnel, as well as a fire engine. Units from the California Highway Patrol, Inyo County, and Cal Trans also responded.

Highway 190 was closed for over seven hours while the accident scene was being investigated. A National Park Service ambulance transferred the injured driver to the hospital.

The truck contained a slurry mix of cyanide and diluted and neutralized chromatic acid. The company for whom the driver is employed is working with park resource staff to clean up the spill.

Source: [Death Valley NP news release](#).

Joshua Tree National Park Missing Hiker Found By Searchers

Hiker Paul Hanks, 54, missing for five days, was found by park SAR personnel on Thursday, March 15th.

Hanks left San Diego on Sunday, March 11th, to hike in the park, but never checked into the hotel room he'd reserved for that evening. His white pickup truck was found in the parking lot at the Maze Loop trailhead on Wednesday and a search was begun.

Hanks was located in the search area, He was conscious and able to talk to rescuers, but the full extent of his injuries and physical condition had yet to be determined. He was evacuated by helicopter due to the rugged terrain and remote location and was taken to a local area hospital for evaluation and treatment.

Source: [Joshua Tree NP news release](#).

Mount Rainier National Park

Body Of Missing Snowshoer Found

The search for a missing snowshoer was suspended late on the morning of March 13th when his body was found in the Nisqually drainage below Paradise. He had been missing since becoming separated from his partner while descending from the Muir Snowfield the previous day.

Efforts to find him began at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 12th, with a hasty search of the main routes between Paradise (5,400') and Panorama Point (7,000'). No definitive clues were found prior to the teams' return from the field at 9:30 p.m.

Mountain Rescue Association teams from Everett, Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympic joined Mount Rainier National Park teams in search efforts. The Washington State SAR Planning Unit worked with park command staff on incident planning. Northwest Helicopters and the military provided aviation resources. Thirty-two people were assigned to the incident.

Source: [Mount Rainier NP news release](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Fire Activity Picking Up In Southern, Central States

Synopsis

NIFC is at Preparedness Level 1 (PL 1), the lowest of five levels.

Forty-eight large fires were reported last week, mostly in the Southern Area. At the time of the report (Friday), there were 27 large fires are burning in five states. Firefighters have contained another 32 large fires since March 9th.

National Park Service Fires

Anhinga Fire, Big Cypress National Preserve – As of last Friday, the fire had burned 3,119 acres and was 50% contained. Forty-seven firefighters and overhead were committed to the blaze, which was burning primarily in southern rough and short grass. Minimal fire behavior and smoldering were reported. Some structures were threatened; area and trail closures were in effect.

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	March 21st	March 28th	April 4th
Area Command Teams	0	--	--
NIMO Teams	0	--	--
Type 1 Teams	0	--	--
Type 2 Teams	0	--	--
Crews	14	--	--
Engines	250	--	--
Helicopters	9	--	--
Total FF/Overhead	1,017	--	--

Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2007-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	8,713	8,610	+ 103
Year-to-Date Acres	287,630	405,381	- 117,751

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Sources: [National Interagency Fire Center webpage](#); [NICC Incident Management Situation Report](#).

News From Around Washington

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

Department of the Interior Secretary, Congress Join In Support Of Bipartisan Bill To Fund NP

On March 7th, Secretary Zinke joined Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Angus King (I-ME) and Representatives Mike Simpson (R-ID) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR) in introducing a bipartisan bill to rebuild America's national parks.

The proposed bill would use up to \$18 billion in revenue derived from energy produced on federal lands and waters to establish a special fund within the Treasury specifically for "National Park Restoration".

The National Park Service estimates that its maintenance and repair backlog exceeds \$11.6 billion. In 2017, 330 million people visited the 417 NPS sites across the country. The NPS completed over \$650 million in maintenance and repair work in FY 2017, but aging facilities, high visitation, and resource constraints have kept the maintenance backlog between \$11 billion and \$12 billion since 2010.

Source: [Department of the Interior news release](#).

Capitol Hill Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate

On March 12th, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2019 for the Department of the Interior. Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior, was the witness for the department.

On March 14th, the Senate passed the amended House version of S. 188, to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

House

On March 13th, the House passed the following:

- H.R. 3469, to designate the bridge located in Blount County, Tennessee, on the Foothills Parkway (commonly known as Bridge 2) as the "Dean Stone Bridge."
- H.R. 1350, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota, by transferring administrative jurisdiction over several small tracts of land managed by BLM to the National Park Service, and to authorize a land exchange between the state and NPS for other small parcels on the edges of the park.
- H.R. 4266, to clarify the boundary of Acadia National Park.

On March 14th, the House Natural Resources Committee approved, among other bills:

- H.R. 401, to designate the mountain at the Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming, as Devils Tower.
- 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.
- H.R. 4851, to establish the Kennedy–King National Historic Site in the State of Indiana, at the site in Indianapolis where Senator Robert F. Kennedy informed the crowd of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

On March 15th, the Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled "Policy Priorities at the Department of the Interior and the Administration's Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Proposal". Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior was the witness for the department.

On March 15th, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved, among other bills, H.R. 4809, to require federal agencies to publish on their Internet websites, any guidance documents, within 60 days of enactment of the act, issued within the previous 10-year period.

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

Park People, Friends and Allies

NPS Alumni Memorial Service Set For Dick Sellars

A memorial service has been scheduled for career National Park Service historian Richard (Dick) W. Sellars, who passed away on November 1, 2017 (his obituary can be found at [this link](#)).

The service will be held on Saturday, April 7th, at the Randall Davey Audubon Center, 1800 Upper Canyon Road, in Santa Fe. The memorial will begin at 1:30 and last about 45 minutes, to be followed by a reception.

Because this service will be held outdoors, with seating covered by a tent if the weather is uncooperative, attendees should wear clothing, shoes and perhaps a hat in which they will be comfortable outside.

Parking at the Randall Davey Audubon Center is limited to only thirty spaces; those will be reserved for people with handicapped placards or walking limitations. The need for access by fire vehicles means parking along Upper Canyon Road is prohibited, so all other attendees should park at the Atalaya Elementary School parking lot at 721 Camino Cabra, about a quarter of a mile south of the intersection of Alameda, Canyon Road, and Upper Canyon Road. Roadrunner Shuttle will have two vans there running back and forth up to the Center, beginning at 12:30. The trip will take maybe ten minutes. It would be wise to be at the parking lot by 12:50 at least. Return shuttles will run until 3:30.

If you're going to attend, please send an email to Judith Sellars at jsellars327@earthlink.net or leave her a phone message at 505-982-3416.

Source: Judith Sellars via email from Rebecca Post.

NPS Alumni Former Director Bob Stanton Receives Trailblazer Award

Former Director Bob Stanton and a civil rights lawyer were the first two people to receive the Trailblazer Award from Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers Monument. Stanton and Benjamin L. Crump were presented the awards last Thursday on Young's 154th birthday.

Stanton was the first African American director of the National Park Service. He was also a senior adviser on historic preservation at the Department of the Interior. He was selected because of his work in historic preservation and expanding the national parks narrative to include diverse people. He was also the first African-American to serve as the superintendent of a national park after Young.

Young was the first African American to reach the rank of colonel in the Army and was a pioneer for equality for African American soldiers. The West Point graduate fought in the Philippine-American war and was the first African American superintendent of a national park – Sequoia National Park – among his other career milestones.

Source: [Dayton Daily News news story](#).

Coalition News and Activities

News and actions taken by CPANP and its members on behalf of the National Park Service and National Park System.

CPANP Joins NPCA In Celebrating Its Centennial – NPCA will be celebrating its centennial in 2019. As part of this celebration, the association will be highlighting its partnership with and support of the National Park Service through a series of stories. If you have a story (or know someone who does) with a tie to NPCA, please contact Mary Martin at OSMAMO@frontinernet.net . Mary is serving as our liaison to NPCA for its centennial plans. These will be shared by NPCA both in print and online. This is a critical time in history to give voice and support to current NPS employees by highlighting examples of challenging situations which turned into successes. Please share your story today. Source: Amy Gilbert.

Other Reports and Releases

A brief summary of other recent news stories, web postings and agency press releases pertaining to the department, the National Park Service in general, public lands and the environment – particularly the impacts of climate change on park ecosystems, flora and fauna.

Administration

Two Zinke Staffers In Hot Water – Two members of Secretary Zinke’s personal staff have gotten themselves in serious trouble. One is gone; the other may be headed in the same direction. Christine Bauserman, a special assistant to the secretary, has resigned due to inflammatory comments made on social media. Evidently someone didn’t do a very good job of vetting her before bringing her into DOI – or maybe they did. Bauserman’s remarks included espousal of conspiracy theories and anti-Muslim and anti-LGBT comments. Meanwhile, Lori Mashburn, whose title is White House liaison, is under fire “for attending two private events hosted by her longtime former employer, the right wing Heritage Foundation, which appears to be a violation of federal ethics rules.” Not to mention the president’s own ethics rules. “As a political appointee,” says the *Huffington Post*, “Mashburn signed Trump’s ethics pledge, which bars appointees in the executive branch from participating ‘in any particular matter involving specific parties that is directly and substantially related to my former employer or former clients.’ Prohibited interactions include ‘any meeting or other communication relating to the performance of one’s official duties with a former employer or former client, unless the communication applies to a particular matter of general applicability and participation in the meeting or other event is open to all interested parties...’” Oh, yes; she also broke some standard ethics rules that apply to all executive branch employees. Sources: [Washington Examiner news story](#); [Huffington Post news story](#),

Zinke Updates – Here’s the latest on Secretary Zinke, who continues to garner more press coverage than anyone in the administration other than the president:

- *Zinke and The Escalating Entrance Fee* – According to the March 13th issue of *The Hill*, which covers Congress, Secretary Zinke testified before a Senate committee that the NPS needs to charge more to enter parks because too many people get in for free. Here’s the comment he

made: "When you give discounted or free passes to elderly, fourth graders, veterans, disabled, and you do it by the carload, there's not a whole lot of people who actually pay at our front door. So we're looking at ways to make sure we have more revenue in the front door of our parks themselves." The article also contains more on his testimony before the committee. The secretary's comments drew fire from myriad sources. Source: [The Hill news story](#).

- *Zinke and The Reassigned Executives* – The publication *Government Executive* has reported that "the top House Democrat with oversight of the federal workforce [has] requested a subpoena of documents related to the reassignment of dozens of senior executives at the Interior Department, saying the Trump administration has so far stymied efforts to bring transparency to the decisions." Rep. Elijah Woods (D-MD) made a similar request last October; the reply consisted of "heavily redacted" documents and considerable padding. So far, the Republican majority in the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has been reluctant (to say the least) to issue any subpoenas on issues pertaining to the administration – Democrats are 0 for 19 to date. Source: [Government Executive news story](#).
- *Zinke and The Baffling Comment* – The secretary has been taking heat for a seemingly flippant comment he made during a recent hearing. Representative Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI) asked Zinke why the administration had cancelled funding for a program to preserve the history of internment camps that held people of Japanese ancestry during WWII, noting that her grandfather had been interred in one of those camps. The secretary replied, affably: "Konnichiwa." The expression means, roughly, "good afternoon." Not only was his reply perplexing on its own merits (or lack thereof), but, as the Congresswoman noted, it was still morning. What he meant when he said it remains unclear. Source: [CBS News](#).

National Park System

Ed Abbey Movie Story Follow-up – The last issue of this newsletter included a summary of an article from the *Moab Sun News* about an upcoming movie on Edward Abbey featuring Sam Elliott. Certainly an interesting prospect, but it turns out that it's entirely false – a hoax perpetrated by an aspiring filmmaker named Steven DeRoch. For the whole tawdry story, see the paper's follow-up story, which gives details of their investigation into DeRoch's fabrication. Source: [Moab Sun News news story](#).

Sundry Actions and Updates – Here, in brief, are additional reports on parks, culled either from park press releases or from newspapers:

- *Glacier NP* – A group called Friends for a Quiet! Glacier Coalition has been working to reduce or halt park overflights and restore natural quiet to the park: "Extremely noisy helicopter scenic overflights are destroying the peace and tranquility of Glacier National Park, Montana. These helicopters serve a very few, and create incessant noise pollution that all other visitors and wildlife must endure. Noise pollution from helicopter overflights must stop... Glacier National Park administration and staff, local residents, and visitors from across the country and around the world have long been concerned about noise pollution in Glacier. It is among the most common complaints lodged by travelers. The issue was thoroughly studied and documented in Glacier's General Management Plan 18 years ago. That plan made a public commitment to eliminate scenic tour overflights." The coalition is seeking to get that commitment fulfilled. For more, see the coalition's [web page](#). You can also [sign their petition](#). Source: Coalition coordinator Mary T. McClelland.
- *Grand Canyon NP* – Level 3 water restrictions have been put into place on the South Rim following a series of breaks in the trans-canyon waterline. The South Rim will remain in water restrictions until water in storage tanks reaches sustainable levels. For particulars on Level 2 and 3 restrictions, see the news release. Source: [Grand Canyon NP news release](#).
- *Isle Royale NP* – The NPS is proposing to introduce 20 to 30 wolves into the park. The proposal is the preferred alternative in a final EIS. Comments will be accepted for 30 days; no date is given, but the news release came out on March 16th. You can submit your comment [at this](#)

[link](#). The NPS preferred alternative calls for introducing the wolves over a three-year period. Source: [Isle Royale NP news release](#).

- *Cumberland Island NS* – The FAA has posted a draft EIS for Spaceport Camden for public comment. Under provisions within the EIS, Cumberland Island and nearby waters would be closed during launches. Spaceport Camden is a spaceport in Georgia that was originally considered for use by NASA in the 1960s. It began limited development as a rocket launch facility in the 2010s, with its first launch taking place in August 2017. Comments can be made until May 7th at [this website](#). Source: Member Linda Finn.
- *Yellowstone NP* – Due to the potentially devastating ecological, economic and recreational impacts that destructive aquatic invasive species (AIS) could have on the park, felt sole waders and boots worn by anglers will be banned permanently starting in 2018. The park will also implement a new boating season in a related effort to keep AIS out of Yellowstone. Source: [Yellowstone NP news release](#).
- *National Capital Parks* – The NPS is asking the public for thoughts on what the [National Desert Storm War Memorial](#) should look like. The memorial, which was approved by Congress and President Trump earlier this month, is scheduled to be built by 2021. Several sites in Washington are under consideration. Comments can be made until April 13th at [this PEPC website](#). Source: [WTOP news story](#).
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* – The park has issued a request for expressions of interest (RFEI) regarding the future use of Bluffs Restaurant at Doughton Park on the parkway. Interested parties are invited to submit their concept(s) for potential future use of the historic coffee shop by May 4th. Complete information about this RFEI is available at https://concessions.nps.gov/news_BLRI007-19_RFEI.html and includes location information, the historic restaurant’s past performance, and submission information requirements for responses. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway news release](#).

Public Lands/Land Management Agencies

Co-Defendant In Malheur NWR Takeover Sentenced To Three Years In Jail – The *Register-Guard*, a newspaper based in Eugene, Oregon, ran an editorial on March 2nd in support of the judge who sentenced Ryan Payne to three years in jail for his part in the Malheur NWR takeover in 2016. Payne had pleaded guilty to conspiring to impede federal employees through the use of intimidation, threat or force during the takeover. Although Payne apologized in court, the judge wanted to be sure that “Payne, his associates and everyone outside the courtroom understood that a serious crime had been committed.” The concluding paragraphs of the editorial are worth quoting in full. As was noted in a prior edition of this newsletter, the government’s case was weakened by numerous errors and by officer malfeasance and misfeasance. That made the sentence even more important: “Prosecutors’ failure to make so many of their charges stick has been read in some quarters as vindication of the Bundys, and of the idea that the federal government is so lacking in legitimacy that public property can be taken, used and destroyed without consequence. Payne’s sentence disrupts that story line. The Malheur refuge takeover was an offense against every American, an offense against the far-sighted idea of natural resource conservation for the common good, and an offense against the Burns-Paiute tribe whose lands and artifacts were treated with recklessness and disrespect. Using grazing land without payment, and allowing cattle to graze in areas designated for the protection of endangered species, is a financial and environmental offense. These offenses would be more clearly recognized, and more widely condemned, if the perpetrators were of another color or class. Payne, a veteran of the war in Iraq, served the country he later turned against — and in recognition of his complicated past, his prison term will be at the low end of the sentencing range. But he is being held to account.” Source: [Register-Guard editorial](#).

Uranium Miners Seek Supreme Court Review Of Mining Ban Near Grand Canyon – The American Exploration and Mining Association (AEMA) and the National Mining Association have submitted a request to the Supreme Court that asks for a review of an Obama-era blanket mining ban that prohibits uranium mining on public lands next to Grand Canyon National Park. According to an

article in *The Hill*, they are questioning “whether Congress, when establishing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act in 1976, intended to give Interior and its secretary ‘unfettered power to make large-tract withdrawals.’” Ted Zukoski, an Earthjustice attorney involved in the case, believes that there’s also a hidden agenda in this request: “It’s also a long-shot attempt to kneecap the Interior Department’s authority to ever again protect large public landscapes from the damage and pollution hardrock mining can have on recreation, cultural resources, wildlife, clean air and water and the communities that rely on those values.” Source: [The Hill news article](#).

Alaska’s Effort To ‘Turn Back The Clock’ On Wild Lands – Mike Dombeck, former chief of the Forest Service, wrote an op-ed piece in the March 13th *New York Times* regarding Alaska’s efforts to undo protections in place for USFS lands, specifically the Tongass National Forest. Says Dombeck: “Efforts to dismantle longstanding protections for Alaska’s wild landscapes continue. The latest, by Alaska’s senior Republican senator, Lisa Murkowski, would deprive nearly 15 million acres of mostly pristine national forest lands of coverage by a 2001 rule that prohibits road construction and commercial logging on those tracts.” Dombeck follows with a pithy analysis of all the reasons that’s a bad idea. His conclusion: “We should keep the Tongass as it is. Rather than passing amendments that micromanage the Forest Service and undo the progress that has been made, Congress should assist the agency on pressing issues like the spiraling cost of wilderness firefighting. To restart road building in Alaska’s most pristine national forests will only repeat history, leading to more lawsuits and uncertainty while undercutting the region’s economic bases of fishing and tourism.” Source: [New York Times editorial](#).

Lawsuit Opposing Delisting Of Yellowstone Area Grizzlies Moves Forward – The *Missoulian* reported this week that “a federal district judge [has] derailed a docket full of legal preliminaries about removing the grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act protection...in hopes of getting the whole matter decided before Wyoming and Idaho open grizzly hunting seasons this fall.” The Fish and Wildlife Service delisted roughly 700 grizzlies in and around Yellowstone National Park last July while leaving protections in place in five other grizzly recovery zones. “The next day,” reports the *Missoulian*, “a Washington, D.C. appeals court overturned the delisting of gray wolves in the Western Great Lakes Region. That case warned FWS that it couldn’t remove Endangered Species Act protections from one distinct population segment without showing how the decision would affect other protected wolf populations.” Source: [Missoulian news story](#).

Conservation, Climate and The Environment

Climate Warming Is Drastically Changing New England Coastline – This issue of *Yankee Magazine* has a feature entitled “Rising Seas” which is about dramatic changes underway along the New England coastline due to rising ocean waters: “New England was built upon the coast. Its fate will depend upon how well we adapt to a future that can no longer be ignored.” Part of the article deals with islands off Acadia National Park that have been studied at the behest of the NPS. They and other coastal islands provide habitat for about 50 percent of all nesting seabirds in the eastern United States. Those birds are “declining very, very rapidly,” including a 40% to 70% drop in the gull population. Says one researcher: “If this were any other group of birds, we’d have headlines and national boards of inquiry, but because it’s just gulls, nobody cares.” Other issues discussed including beach and dune erosion, increased flooding, and new shellfish diseases. Source: [Yankee Magazine feature article](#).

Increasing Number Of Nations Returning Looted Artifacts – “After centuries of cultural theft, the pendulum may be swinging toward repatriation,” writes Husna Haq in the March 13th *Christian Science Monitor*. “It’s a trend that has accelerated over the past decade, thanks to increased awareness of past cultural injustices and renewed respect for national sovereignty, some experts say.” Since 2007, says Haq, the United States has returned more than 8,000 stolen artifacts to 30 countries, including paintings from Poland, manuscripts from Peru, and dinosaur fossils from Mongolia. Other nations are making similar efforts. Source: [Christian Science Monitor news story](#).

From The Archives

This new section, put together for both CPANP veterans who were regular readers of the Morning Report 25 years ago and those who joined the NPS during the ensuing period, will include news and incidents taken from issues published during the corresponding week in the appropriate month and year. Today we go back to the third week of March, 1993:

- *Big Bend NP* – The park reported that it was experiencing the busiest spring break it had ever had. Record-setting amounts were being collected from entrance fees and cooperating association book sales, lines of visitors extended outside the Panther Junction visitor center and restrooms, and all visitor facilities were being taxed beyond limits. The wastewater system at Panther Junction was overwhelmed, necessitating emergency repairs. Campsites remained full throughout the period, and more than 350 groups were camping in overflow campgrounds, double the number of established camping sites. All primitive backcountry walk-in and drive-in campsites were full throughout the week. Numerous law enforcement incidents occurred; the shortage of patrol staff meant long response times to visitor assist calls. Rangers were reportedly "moving from one incident to another, trying to provide temporary resolutions... before moving on to the next call."
- *Zion NP* – Investigators determined that an earthen dam that failed on March 17th gave way at the base due to soil saturation. There was about one surface acre of water behind it, and water rose between eight and ten feet in the downstream channel after the breach. An eight-foot by thirty-foot culvert under Interstate 15 was not large enough to accommodate the wall of water which came down the channel; water therefore flowed over the road to a depth of about a foot and a half. The water covered about 100 yards of roadway and drained off within about 20 minutes. It was the probable cause of four personal injury accidents involving two trailer trucks and two cars. One of the trucks turned over and remained under eight feet of water until it was removed by a wrecker on March 18th. Injuries to passengers were minor.
- *Grand Canyon NP* – Danny Ray Horning, an escaped murderer and bank robber who was the subject of a large-scale manhunt in the park in the summer of 1992, was about to go on trial in Coconino County Superior Court in Flagstaff on a multitude of felony charges, including the attempted murder of four NPS rangers and an Arizona Department of Public Safety officer. The four rangers - Don Miller, Keith Lober, Chris Fors and John Piastuck – had recently been commended for their actions during the initial pursuit and search for Horning. The four rangers thwarted an attempted kidnapping of a family of five and rescued two other hostages Horning had held for nearly two days. Superintendent Bob Chandler had this to say at the award ceremony: "Their quick actions and excellent tactics while facing gunfire averted what could have been a major human tragedy at Grand Canyon."

Acknowledgements

This newsletter comes to you through the efforts of a number of people. First are our "regulars":

- Producer: Steve Pittleman
- Congressional Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- At Large Correspondents: Dennis Burnett and Rick Smith

Thanks also to a host of contributors to this issue. The following members forwarded articles either directly or indirectly for inclusion in this newsletter – Mike Murray, Mark Forbes, Tom Haraden, Steve Hastings, Paul Henderson, Debbie Bird, Erik Hauge, Jeff Ohlfs, Rebecca Post, Duncan Morrow, and Linda Finn.

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

This 1995 observation about the Endangered Species Act by then-Secretary Bruce Babbitt is a little long, but, as you'll see, worth reading (and sharing) in its entirety:

"Recently I read an account of a Los Angeles 'Eco-Expo' last April, where children were invited to write down their answers to the basic question: 'Why save endangered species?' One child, Gabriel, answered, 'Because God gave us the animals.' Travis and Gina wrote, 'Because we love them.' A third answered, 'Because we'll be lonely without them.' Still another wrote, 'Because they're a part of our life. If we didn't have them, it would not be a complete world. The Lord put them on earth to be enjoyed, not destroyed.'

"Now, in my lifetime I have heard many, many political, agricultural, scientific, medical and ecological reasons for saving endangered species. I have in fact hired biologists and ecologists for just that purpose. All their reasons have to do with providing humans with potential cures for disease, or yielding humans new strains of drought-resistant crops, or offering humans bioremediation of oil spills, or thousands of other justifications of why species are useful to humans. But none of their reasons moved me like the children's....

"Whenever I confront some of [the] bills that systematically eviscerate the Endangered Species Act, I take refuge and inspiration from the simple written answers of those children at the Los Angeles expo. But I sometimes wonder if children are the only ones who express religious values when talking about endangered species. I wonder if anyone else in America is trying to restore an ounce of humility to mankind, reminding our political leaders that the earth is a sacred precinct, designed by and for the purposes of the creator.

"I got my answer last month. I read letter after letter from five different religious orders, representing tens of millions of churchgoers, all opposing a House bill to weaken the Endangered Species Act. They opposed it not for technical or scientific or agricultural or medicinal reasons, but for spiritual reasons. And I was moved not only by how such diverse faiths could reach so pure an agreement against this bill, but by the common language and terms with which they opposed it, language that echoed the voices of the children...

"I conclude here tonight by affirming that those religious values remain at the heart of the Endangered Species Act, that they make themselves manifest through the green eyes of the grey wolf, through the call of the whooping crane, through the splash of the Pacific salmon, through the voices of America's children. We are living between the flood and the rainbow: between the threats to creation on the one side and God's covenant to protect life on the other."

"Why should we save endangered species? Let us answer this question with one voice, the voice of the child at that expo, who scrawled her answer at the very bottom of the sheet: 'Because we can.'"

[Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt](#), speech to National Religious Partnership for the Environment, November 11, 1995

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The *Weekly National Park System Report* is a publication of The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. It is prepared by Coalition member Bill Halainen, former editor of the *NPS Morning Report*, and produced and disseminated by Coalition member Steve Pittleman.

The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that "studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service."

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