



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, April 17, 2019

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Incidents

Grand Canyon NP Park Records Third Visitor Death In Two Weeks

On the morning of April 3rd, rangers were notified that a man had fallen over the edge of the canyon east of the Yavapai Geology Museum. They subsequently found the body of a 67-year-old man about 400 feet below the rim.

He was the third person to die at the Grand Canyon during a two week period. On March 26th, a body identified as likely being that of a foreign visitor was found in a wooded area south of the Grand Canyon Village away from the rim. The cause of death is under investigation.

Two days later, a 50-year-old tourist from Hong Kong fell into the canyon while trying to take photos at Grand Canyon West, an area that is on the Hualapai Indian Reservation west of the National Park. That fall happened at Eagle Point, an area close to the Skywalk attraction.

Source: Dylan Mckim, [Arizona Republic](#).

Acadia NP Searchers Find Body Of Missing Man

On Thursday, April 11th, the body of Adam Emmett was found on the rocks between Sand Beach and Thunder Hole along the Atlantic Ocean. He'd been missing since the previous Monday.

On Tuesday, rangers noticed that a car belonging to Emmett had been parked at the Schooner Head overlook since before the previous day's snowstorm. They searched the immediate area but were unable to locate or contact Emmett. A friend of Emmett reported that he went to the area on Wednesday evening to look for him; he and another friend found a backpack belonging to Emmett on the rocks near a sheer cliff.

The Maine Warden Service led the ensuing search and brought in a dog team. Also involved were personnel from the Coast Guard, the Maine Marine Patrol and the Maine Association for Search and Rescue. On Thursday, the search continued by land, water and air, and Emmett's body was spotted late in the morning.

The cause of death has not yet been determined.

Source: Liz Graves, [Mount Desert Islander](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The 53-year-old Ohio woman who was the subject of an extended search after she disappeared while on a hike with her daughter last September died of hypothermia according to an autopsy report. The search for Mitzie Sue Clements lasted a week and involved 175 trained personnel from five states and some 50 organizations, plus helicopters, drones and K-9 units. Source: Karen Chávez, [Asheville Citizen Times](#).
- *Zion NP* – The park continues to recover from the flooding and landslides that occurred last month. The Zion-Mount Carmel Highway was closed on April 9th for road repairs and will remain closed for at least three weeks. A section of the existing road will need to be completely removed and rebuilt; a retaining wall below it will also be rebuilt. Access to the east side of the park is limited to vehicles smaller than 7'10" in width and 11'4" in height between the East Entrance and the Zion-Mount Carmel Tunnel. All vehicles entering from the East Side will have to turn around before the tunnel. Other road and trail restrictions remain in place. Source: Zion NP.
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, a USGS facility presently located within the park, may move from the Big Island to Oahu due to damage incurred in Kilauea's eruption last year. Other options include a new site within the park or on the campus of the University of Hawaii at Hilo. The observatory has been located at the rim of Kilauea's caldera for more than a century; its existence predates the establishment of the national park. Source: Associated Press via [U.S. News and World Report](#).

National Park Service

National Park System

David Vela Becomes Acting NPS Deputy Director For Operations – On April 12th, Acting Director Dan Smith sent out the following message to all NPS employees:

"It's been well over a year now since I came back to the National Park Service family as Deputy Director, Exercising the Authority of the Director. Rick Obernesser was by my side as Acting Deputy Director of Operations for that entire time until his well-deserved retirement. Fortunately, Ray Sauvajot, our Associate Director for Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, was willing to step up in an interim role as Acting Deputy Director. He has done an outstanding job and I very much appreciate his guidance and counsel.

"Today, I am extremely pleased to announce that we have asked David Vela, Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park, to serve as Acting Deputy Director of Operations effective Monday, April 15.

"David knows and loves the National Park Service. He began his career at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and has gone on to hold numerous leadership roles including as Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park & the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway since 2014, in WASO as the Associate Director for Workforce and Inclusion, as the Southeast Regional Director, or as a superintendent at parks including the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site, and Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park.

"Many of you have already worked with David and seen his leadership in action. Those of you who haven't will quickly see how important our workforce is to him. We will all benefit from his leadership in building a next generation workforce that will protect our national treasures and serve all who will come to enjoy the parks as we chart a path forward for a second century service.

"I will continue to exercise the authority of the Director.

“David and I look forward to working closely with our entire National Park Service team to support the remarkable work that you are doing across the country.”

Safe Park Selfie Day – You may have missed it, but the NPS declared April 4th as “Safe Park Selfie Day,” with the objective of encouraging visitors to be careful when taking photos in parks. The effort was partly in response to the several deaths that have occurred recently due to people falling while trying to get good selfie shots. The initiative includes a new web page entitled “[Keep Safety In The Picture](#)” that offers tips on staying safe while taking photos, including selfies. Source: Christine Weicher, [CBS News](#).

NPS ISB Issues Annual Report – The National Park Service’s Investigative Services Branch, which oversees law enforcement, security and emergency services within the agency, has issued its annual report for 2018. It is built around reports from the branch’s four regions, the Atlantic, North Central, Southwest and Pacific Field Offices. You can read the 40-page PDF document at [this website](#). Source: [National Park Service](#).

Protection Rangers May Be Moved To 1801 Series – Word is out, though not yet officially confirmed, that the Service is in the process of implementing new OPM position descriptions placing ranger enforcement work in the 1801 series. It appears that the change will not affect 6(c) retirement, that two-grade intervals will be retained, and that current grades will remain the same. OPM has made similar changes to positions in FWS, BLM and the Forest Service. Source: Member Bill Sanders.

Around The Parks

Reports on activities in the parks, listed in alphabetical order.

- *C&O Canal NHP* – The NPS and its partners are planning and designing a project that will revitalize a mile-long stretch of the park from the zero mile marker in Georgetown to the Alexandria Aqueduct. The plan will focus on addressing maintenance issues and accessibility concerns with the C&O Canal towpath, improving connections between Georgetown and the towpath, increasing signage, and optimizing underutilized areas. Updated draft concepts for the Georgetown Canal Plan were presented at a public workshop last week. They include new landscapes and creative spaces for educational programs and events, repair of the canal’s historic structures, a new mule yard and visitor center, and improved access for people with mobility challenges. Source: [WTOP News](#).
- *Death Valley NP* – The park has completed its final environmental reviews of projects to repair flood damage at Scotty’s Castle. Meanwhile, work has already started on projects approved earlier. The popular historic site could be partially open by late 2020, and is expected to be fully open by late 2021. A severe flash flood on the night of October 18, 2015, sent water, mud, and rocks rushing down Grapevine Canyon. The flood broke through the walls of the castle's historic garage, in use by the NPS as the site’s visitor center, and filled it with four feet of debris. Two other historic buildings were damaged by the flood. The main house escaped the path of the flood, but still bore damage from water intrusion from heavy rain. The park prepared two environmental assessments, each of which addressed a different proposed action to repair flood-damaged infrastructure in Grapevine Canyon. The Bonnie Clare road reconstruction EA was finalized in May 2018 and approved proposals to reconstruct 7.6 miles of Bonnie Clare Road, install 4,000 feet of waterline under the road, reconstruct damaged portions of the historic concrete and wire fence, and stabilize the historic bridge and gatehouse. Road crews started work in December 2018 on all four of these projects under contract managed by Federal Highways Administration. The Scotty’s Castle flood rehabilitation EA was finalized last month. Some proposed actions approved in this EA include repairing historic structures, replacing components utility systems, building a second public restroom, building flood control structures, and building a cooling tower for a replacement heating, ventilation, and cooling system. Source: [National Park Traveler](#).

- *Grand Canyon NP* – On April 11th, *USA Today* reposted an *Arizona Republic* article on the causes for visitor fatalities in the parks over the years – a total of about 800, which is a recent average of a dozen or so deaths a year. The four biggest causes, listed in rank order by the number of fatalities, are aircraft accidents, falls, environmental causes (hypothermia, hyperthermia, dehydration), and drowning. The article includes a number of photos. Source: Bree Burkitt, [USA Today](#).
- *Little Bighorn Battlefield NM* – The Service has approved a new visitor center/curation facility for the 765-acre park, but has yet to obtain the funding to build it. The 10,600-square-foot visitor center's price tag is estimated at \$11.4 million. No cost analysis has yet been completed for the curation facility, which would house the 149,000 battlefield artifacts, including uniforms and documents, that are now stored in a facility in Tucson, Arizona. Source: Brett French, [Billings Gazette](#).
- *Mesa Verde NP* – The University of Colorado has received federal funding to update exhibits at the Chapin Mesa Archaeological Museum to make them more interactive. The museum features dioramas showing Ancestral Pueblo life, exhibits with prehistoric artifacts and a chronology of Ancestral Pueblo culture. The NPS is awarding \$30,000 to CU to plan, design and develop updated exhibits at the museum. Source: Madeline St. Amour, [The Daily Camera](#).
- *Redwood NP* – The park is seeking public comment on a plan to remove a mile-long section of a failing road in the Lost Man Creek area. The road, which has been abandoned, is deteriorating and inaccessible. Removing it would protect eight acres of riparian forest immediately upstream from the confluence of the Larry Dam Creek and Lost Man Creek. The project, intended to protect and restore salmonid habitat in both creeks, seeks to reduce the erosion of sediment, restore drainage patterns affected by placement of the road near the stream and restore hydrologic patterns the road altered. Comments may be made before April 22nd at the park's [PEPC website](#). Source: [Del Norte Triplicate](#).
- *Sequoia NP* – Verizon Wireless has won approval from the NPS to build a 138-foot-tall cellular tower in the park to improve cell phone service. The tower will be a “monopine” design intended to disguise it as a pine tree and it will be built near Wuksachi Village, a developed commercial area in the park. The approval follows almost two years of evaluation since Verizon applied for a permit. It also came after a month-long comment period in late 2018 in which a majority of public comments opposed allowing Verizon to install the tower. Verizon's tower would be the first such installation inside the park. Source: Tim Sheehan, [Fresno Bee](#).
- *Washington (DC) Parks* – “Eight organizations have joined forces against a National Park Service proposal that would require activists to pay the government back for the cost of protests and limit where in Washington demonstrators can gather,” reported the Washington Post on April 1st. “In its first collective act, the coalition submitted a letter Monday to members of Congress, urging them to push the acting director of the Park Service to halt attempts to change how the agency handles demonstrations. It is the latest push by civil rights groups and activist organizations to scuttle the Park Service's proposal....Park Service officials have said the agency's limited resources have made facilitating protests difficult as the frequency and size of demonstrations have grown in recent years. But the idea of being asked to repay costs has alarmed activists, who said the charges would probably limit large-scale demonstrations to a select few groups that could afford to incur the costs.” The Service has not yet decided on what course of action to take. Source: Marissa J. Lang, [Washington Post](#).
- *Washington Monument* – The reopening of the monument, which has been closed since August 2016 in order to both construct a new screening facility and modernize the elevator that takes visitors to the 500 foot observation level, has been moved to August due to the need to mitigate possibly contaminated soil in the construction area. The potentially contaminated soil is below the ground surface and poses no risk to public health. The soil in question was likely introduced in the 1880s as the monument was being completed. Source: Mike Litterst, [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#).

- *Wilson's Creek NB* – A \$4.5 million project is planned to make room for more Civil War-era artifacts at the park's visitor center. The project will add 1,873 square feet of exhibit space to the building. Hundreds of artifacts have for years remained in storage because of lack of space. As part of the project, offices and restrooms will be relocated in order to make room for displays of guns, cannons, documents, soldiers' clothing and other artifacts. Source: Associated Press via [U.S. News](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – Scientists have discovered an organism in Washburn Hot Springs that has yielded new information about how its ancient relatives might have survived without oxygen. The newly described organism, called *Methanodesulfokores washburnensis*, is believed to be a modern relative of an obscure group of microorganisms that lived around the time life began on Earth. The unusual microorganism has the genes necessary for two types of metabolism – one that produces methane, the other employs different forms of sulfur to produce sulfide. Neither involves oxygen. The discovery is deemed significant because this is the first microbial population to be described that has both of these abilities. Source: Evelyn Boswell, [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#).

Federal Government

Recent news stories, web postings, statements, and press releases pertaining to Congress (excepting official business, which appears above), the administration, DOI, and other public land management agencies that have bearing on the NPS.

Department of the Interior

Bernhardt Confirmed As Secretary Of The Interior – “Former oil and gas lobbyist David Bernhardt was confirmed by the Senate on Thursday to lead the Interior Department, an agency that controls nearly half a billion acres of public land and the vast amount of oil and gas mineral resources resting beneath it,” reported the *Washington Post* last Thursday. “The 56-to-41 vote Thursday promoted Bernhardt from Interior’s acting secretary, a job he assumed after his predecessor, Ryan Zinke, resigned amid numerous investigations into his behavior and management of the agency. Bernhardt had served as Zinke’s deputy until his departure in December. The vote tally made Bernhardt the Interior Department’s least popular nominee for secretary in 40 years, according to the Center for American Progress, a liberal-leaning policy institute. Before Thursday, Zinke had the most votes in opposition, 31. Before President Trump’s two picks, every nominee over that time received fewer than 25 no votes, the group said.” Source: Darryl Fears, [Washington Post](#).

Bernhardt Under Investigation By DOI IG – Secretary Bernhardt was in office for just four days when Interior’s internal investigators revealed that they’d begun looking into allegations that he had conflicts of interest. The deputy IG wrote Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon on Monday, reporting that her office had launched the probe to address seven separate ethics allegations leveled against Bernhardt, including one from Wyden. The allegations have centered on charges from Democratic senators, environmental groups and others that Bernhardt was violating ethics standards by involving himself in Interior Department deliberations with his former lobbying clients, including a politically influential California water agency. Source: [Associated Press](#).

House and Senate

House Democrats Oppose DOI Reorganization Plan – The April 3rd edition of *Government Executive* ran a story entitled “House Democrats Attack Interior’s ‘Ill-Advised’ Reorg Plan.” Here are the lead paragraphs: “The Trump administration’s plan to spend \$25.3 million to reorganize the Interior Department came under fire at a House appropriations subcommittee hearing on Wednesday, as a Democratic chairwoman blasted it as ‘ill-advised’ and said the department’s justification was too vague. The plan was introduced under now-departed Secretary Ryan Zinke to reorganize Interior’s non-Washington, D.C., offices into 12 unified regions. But Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., told a hearing on fiscal 2020 appropriations for the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S.

Geological Survey that ‘nowhere in these budget justifications does it explain what the American taxpayers get for their money from a reorganization.’” During the hearing, McCollum questioned many of the funding cuts proposed by the administration, particularly to LWCF: “She...expressed puzzlement that President Trump would propose cutting the Land and Water Conservation Fund from \$435 million to \$6 million the day before he signed its authorizing legislation.” Source: Charles S. Clark, [Government Executive](#).

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

The Bad News – The news on climate and conservation issues these days is inevitably grim, but needs to be shared – mitigated, when and where possible, with good news, which follows. First the former:

- *Worldwide Frog ‘Apocalypse’ Caused By Human Pathogen* – In the early 1990s, researchers linked mass die-offs of frogs around the world to a fungus they named *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or *Bd* for short. The fungus ravages frogs’ skin and makes it peel off, which can be fatal. Now, as [NatGeo recently reported](#), “a global team of 41 scientists has announced that the pathogen—which humans unwittingly spread around the world—has damaged global biodiversity more than any other disease ever recorded.” The fungus has led to the decline of at least 501 amphibian species over the past half-century, including 90 presumed extinctions. Source: Monica Medina and Miro Korenha, [Our Daily Planet](#).
- *Glaciers Melting Faster Than Expected Worldwide* – Earth’s glaciers are melting much faster than scientists thought. A new study shows they are losing 369 billion tons of snow and ice each year, more than half of that in North America. The most comprehensive measurement of glaciers worldwide found that thousands of inland masses of snow compressed into ice are shrinking 18 percent faster than an international panel of scientists calculated in 2013. The world’s glaciers are shrinking five times faster now than they were in the 1960s. Since 1961, the world has lost 10.6 trillion tons of ice and snow; melted, that’s enough to cover the lower 48 U.S. states in about 4 feet of water. Source: Seth Borenstein, Associated Press via [KOMO News](#).
- *Alaska Temperatures Rising Faster Than Anywhere In The U.S.* – Temperatures in Alaska reached record highs for the month of March, with an unprecedented 70-degree day in the Southeastern town of Klawock on March 19th. This is the earliest that any spot in the state has hit that high, beating the previous first warm day by almost a month. Meanwhile, Bering Sea ice levels have been found to be at their lowest ever, which is leading climate scientists to conclude that previous low sea ice records were not anomalies. Alaska is warming faster than any other state, with devastating impacts for the way of life in the region. It will mean loss of permafrost that many native Alaskans use as “freezer” storage, will change wildlife migration patterns impacting subsistence fishing and hunting, and will continue to cause unusual storminess over parts of the state and in the Bering Sea. Source: Monica Medina and Miro Korenha, [Our Daily Planet](#).

The Good News – Despite the continuous drumbeat of bad news on the climate and conservation fronts, some headway is being made in meeting and dealing with related issues:

- *Hudson River’s Remarkable Recovery Continues* – The 315-mile-long Hudson River, which runs from the Adirondacks to New York City, was a major player in the growth of the American economy for scores of years, particularly after the newly-constructed Erie Canal linked it to the Great Lakes in 1925. But the price paid was heavy; by the 1960s, the river was a sewer, polluted with sewage, butcher’s waste, industrial chemicals and heavy metals. As a result of more than a half century of intense efforts by environmentalists, the river is now much cleaner.

A hallmark has been the strong recovery of Atlantic sturgeon, which now number about 450 adults in their prime spawning area near FDR's Home. Recently, researchers were shocked to spot a 14-foot-long sturgeon in the river, subsequently determined to be a female about 80 years old. "[Swimming] and kayaking now occur safely and regularly on the Hudson, a marked improvement from just a few decades ago and the survival of the sturgeons suggests it can morph back into a fully functioning ecosystem," reports *The Guardian*. "The largest looming threat may lie many miles south in Washington DC – the Trump administration has vowed to scale back the scope of the Clean Water Act and loosen rules on toxins dumped into waterways by power plants." Source: Oliver Millman, [The Guardian](#).

National Park System Issues

Climate Change – News pertaining to the impacts of climate change on park lands, waters, species and other assets:

- *National Park System* – A recent posting on The Conversation, the website of an independent and not-for-profit global network dedicated to improving public discourse through scholarly and scientific articles, focuses on preservation of national park lands as the climate continues to warm. According to a meta-analysis of 123 research studies conducted between 1990 and 2010, nearly all the land administered by the National Park Service is located in areas of observed warming in the 20th century. And a 2018 study showed that the parks are bearing the brunt of climate change because many are located in regions that are hotter and drier than the nation as a whole. "In effect, many national parks' climates will move two or three hundred miles south during this century," writes author Stephen Nash. "By 2100, if global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, Grand Canyon will be as hot as the climate now is along the Mexican border. The climate of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most popular in the system, will slide nearly to Florida. As soon as two decades from now, according to the latest U.S. national climate assessment, the Grand Canyon region and its wild species could endure 40 to 50 more days with temperatures over 90 degrees yearly... As climate zones shift, many plants and animals will need to migrate into or out of protected natural areas to stay within temperature and moisture ranges where they have evolved over thousands of years. Scientists are outlining plans to ensure futures for at least some of these species by making it easier for them to move to different habitats. But studies on 'climate connectivity' warn that if public lands around national parks are used for drilling, mining, logging and commercial development, they won't function as survival paths for wild species... Congress and federal agencies will need to find new ways of managing the nation's million square miles of federal public lands [if wild species are to be adequately protected]. National parks will need to depend on healthy adjacent national forests, wildlife refuges, monuments and rangelands, maintained in their natural state." Source: Stephen Nash, [The Conversation](#).
- *Eastern Parks* – Extensive land development, invasive species and too many deer may make it difficult for tree migration to keep pace with climate change in the Northeast according to [newly published research](#) posted in a recent edition of the *Journal of Applied Ecology*. The study, led by Kathryn Miller, a plant ecologist with the Service's Inventory and Monitoring Division, and Brian McGill, a University of Maine professor of ecological modeling, analyzed U.S. Forest Service data covering 18 states from Tennessee to Maine. The researchers found a large swath of land in the mid-Atlantic states that was severely lacking in forest regeneration. Even where present, species regenerating on the forest floor were different than those making up the forest canopy. Earlier studies have raised concern about regional regeneration, but this is the first to document the sheer extent and severity of the problem. Coining the term "regeneration debt" to describe this phenomenon, the researchers found the region simultaneously faces challenges of increasing invasive plants, deer overabundance and heavy land development by humans. The zone of regeneration debt raises questions about the future of forests in the immediate region, but also far into the northeastern U.S. Source: Elyse Catalina, [UMaine News](#).
- *Denali NP* – "There's good news and bad news at Denali, North America's tallest mountain," reports *USA Today*. "The bad news is that the 66 tons of frozen feces left by climbers on the Alaska summit is expected to start melting out of the glacier sometime in the coming decades

and potentially as soon as this summer, a process that's speeding up in part due to global warming. The good news is that this year, for the first time, the guide companies that lead many of the 1,200 climbers who attempt the summit each year have voluntarily decided to start packing out their human waste. This comes just a year after the National Park Service instituted a policy that all such waste below 14,000 feet must be carried off the mountain." Climbers leave about two metric tons of feces on the mountain each year. Source: Elizabeth Weise, [USA Today](#).

Native Flora and Fauna – Recent news pertaining to the protection, propagation and advancement of species now or formerly native to the national parks – or removal of those that aren't:

- *Isle Royale NP* – Isle Royale has seen its longtime wolf population of two rise to 15 over the past several months, the result of an effort to bring in more wolves from Canada and Minnesota. The latest batch of seven wolves arrived on the next-to-last weekend in March. One black wolf was net-trapped on mainland Ontario and the remaining six were caught on Canada's Michipicoten Island Provincial Park, where they had been facing starvation. The park's objective is to bring a total of about 30 wolves to the island. It's hoped that they will help control the booming moose population – about 1600 now live on the island and are deforesting the wilderness. Source: Tanda Gmitter, [Mlive.com](#).
- *Presidio of San Francisco* – A rare species of sand-loving bees is making a comeback in the Presidio for the first time in about a century. Ecologists recently spotted hundreds of silver digger bees in the park while surveying for a dune restoration project. It appears that the removal of invasive plants and the restoration of dunes and grasses at the former military base helped bring back the bees, which were common in San Francisco as late as the 1920s but began to disappear when the coastal prairie on the western side of the city was paved over for development. Their habitat has been slowly restored since the military in 1994 turned the land over to the National Park Service. Source: [Associated Press](#).
- *Zion NP* – Park biologists have found a California condor nest on the face of Minotaur Tower to the north of Angels Landing with a pair of the endangered condors caring for the first egg that they've produced so far. The park estimates that the egg was laid mid-March, and should hatch during the first part of May if all goes well. It is the first egg produced by breeding pair 409 and 523. The pair are often spotted in Zion and have been together for two years, though they have yet to produce a chick together. So far, none of the condors in Zion have been able to raise a chick to adulthood. Source: Mikayla Shoup, [St. George News](#).

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:

- *Yellowstone NP* – Researchers have found that the introduction of nonnative lake trout in Yellowstone Lake has affected organisms from the microscopic level in the lake to large animals within the region. The findings appeared in a [research article](#) that appears in the March edition of *Science Advances*. Zooplankton, cutthroat trout, river otters, osprey, bald eagles, bears and likely elk are among the creatures whose numbers, diet and behavior have been altered as a result of the presence of the invasive fish. Monitoring over the past three decades has shown a dramatic drop in the numbers of native cutthroat trout that inhabit Yellowstone Lake and spawn in its tributaries, largely as a result of the illegal introduction in the 1980s of lake trout, which prey on cutthroats and spawn at depths inaccessible to bears, birds and other animals. The article on this report that follows provides details on the ripple effect that these exotic fish have had on animals throughout the park. Source: [Phys.org](#), University of Wyoming.
- *Mesa Verde NP* – As soon as funding becomes available, Mesa Verde will begin removing unclaimed livestock that has been roaming the park's landscape. A year ago, when the park released a draft proposal to deal with the livestock, projections were that it would take five years to remove a dozen cattle and 80 horses that have been trespassing on park property, and that it could take a decade to improve fencing along the park's boundaries to prevent livestock from returning to the park. Under the proposal that has been approved, the park will capture

and remove trespass livestock. It will include a two-phased approach through short-term and long-term removal processes, followed by disposal of unclaimed livestock by public or private sale, auction, adoption, or donation on-site. Boundary fence replacement and maintenance will be prioritized to maximize livestock exclusion. Mesa Verde staff will collaborate with interested livestock advocacy groups during the capture and disposal process when and where appropriate. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).

The Coalition

Summary of recent developments within the Coalition, including some of the actions that CPANP took on your behalf.

Coalition Expresses Disappointment At Bernhardt Confirmation – On April 12th, CPANP issued a statement in which the Coalition “expressed disappointment and concern over the confirmation of David Bernhardt as Secretary of the Interior.” Chair Phil Francis noted that many Coalition members have worked with Bernhardt in the past and “have become familiar with his policy focus, management priorities and relationships beyond the Department.” The overwhelming consensus among them, he said, “is that Mr. Bernhardt poses a serious threat to the good stewardship of our resources and our heritage.” The full statement can be read [at this link](#).

Members Speak Out Against Bernhardt – In the run-up to the vote approving Bernhardt as secretary, several members got to have their voices heard in op-ed pieces in local papers – check them out:

- *Bill Wade* – “Why Interior Secretary Nominee Bernhardt Is Bad For Arizona,” [Arizona Daily Star](#).
- *Steve Martin* – “Why David Bernhardt Is Unfit To Serve As Interior Secretary,” [Tucson Sentinel](#).
- *Laura Rotegard* – “New Interior Chief Poses A Threat To Our National Parks,” [Kitsap Sun](#).

Coalition Comments On Proposed Changes To National Register – CPANP has issued a statement holding that “recently proposed changes to sections of the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR 60, 36 CFR 63) governing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and would substantially impede future efforts to preserve our nation’s historic heritage.” It then lists the issues that are problematic and makes four specific recommendations for revising the proposed changes. The full document can be read [at this link](#).

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

From The Archives

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1994. All entries appear in the original verb tense; “submitters” are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Denali NP&P* – Over the Fourth of July weekend last year, about 35 Alaska Reclamation Crew/Alaska Independence Party members and their families participated in an unsanctioned but monitored drive along the park road as part of a demonstration in which the group(s) claimed state ownership of that road. On Friday, April 1st, two of the organizers were convicted in federal court of driving the road without a 36 CFR 1.6 permit. In order to convict them, the United States had to prove ownership of the road, despite the fact that a 1959 quitclaim deed issued by the Secretary of Commerce purportedly conveyed the road to the state along with the territorial roads that were legitimately transferred at the time of statehood. Although the Department of Interior managed the territorial road system from 1932 until 1956, when Commerce assumed responsibility, the United States was able to prove that the park road was constructed and maintained under separate authorities and funds. No interest in the road therefore passed to Commerce which could be conveyed to the state. The decision is subject to appellate review, and may be attacked by the state in a quiet title suit under 28 USC

2409a. The decision nonetheless represents at a minimum a significant interim determination in this long simmering dispute. Submitted by Russ Wilson.

- *Chaco Culture NHP* – On April 5th, federal grand jury indictments were filed against a woman for ARPA violations and theft of government property. On April 7, 1992, the woman excavated and removed a Gallup black-on-white pot from the park's backcountry. She and her companion, a former level II enforcement officer with the Forest Service, took the pot from an area closed to the public due to its sensitive archeological resources. Ranger Eric Beckert, who was searching the area for visitors after finding an unattended vehicle nearby, stopped and questioned the pair and retrieved the artifact. The woman admitted taking the pot with the intention of removing it from the park. The case was referred to the U.S. attorney in 1992 and the woman and her companion began a court-approved pre-trial diversion program whereby they each paid \$1,000 in restitution in installments. The woman's companion completed the program, but she failed to make any payments after last December. The indictments were accordingly sought and secured. Submitted by Phil Young.
- *Saguaro NP* – On March 14th, a park neighbor who's also a participant in Saguaro's "Park Watch" program advised rangers of a vehicle travelling off road through the desert west of Panther Peak. Rangers and Pima County officers responded and found the operator passed out in his vehicle. Investigation revealed that he'd consumed a large quantity of alcohol before he went four-wheeling in the park. Criminal charges totaled \$4,150; approximately \$6,000 in native vegetation was damaged or destroyed. Civil prosecution is pending. The "Park Watch" program is in its fourth year at Saguaro and now involves 700 park neighbors. It has proved to be a valuable tool in assisting the park's visitor protection and resource management staff. Submitted by Chief Ranger Paula Rooney.

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- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, Emily Thompson, Duncan Morrow, and Mark "Jimmy Olsen" Forbes
- Issue Contributors: David Manski, Mike Murray, Bill Walters, Cathy Halainen,

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to Bill Halainen at the Weekly National Park System Report: BHalainen@gmail.com. Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

A Closing Observation

This week's observation comes from President Clinton's 1996 State of the Union address, delivered following two government shutdowns and the attack on federal employees working in the office building in Oklahoma City. His closing injunction, though a little too late to add to the debate over the most recent shutdown, is worth repeating:

"I want to say a special word for those who work for the federal government. Today the Federal work force is 200,000 employees smaller than the day I took office. The Federal government is the smallest it has been in 30 years, and getting smaller every day. Most of you probably didn't know that, and there's good reason. The remaining Federal work force is composed of Americans who are working harder and working smarter to make sure that the quality of our services does not decline. Take Richard Dean. He worked for Social Security for 22 years. Last year, he was hard at work in the Federal building in Oklahoma City when the terrorist blast killed 169 people and brought the rubble around him. He re-entered the building four times and saved the lives of three women...But his story doesn't end there. In November, he was forced out of his office when the government shut down. The second time the government shut down, he continued helping Social Security recipients, working

without pay. On behalf of Richard and his family, I challenge all of you in this chamber: Never - ever - shut the Federal Government down again."

President Bill Clinton, State of the Union address, 1996

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The *Coalition Weekly Report* is a publication of [The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks](#). 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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