



## The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, June 12, 2019

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### Incidents

#### **Mount Rainier NP Rangers Rescue Four Climbers From Mountain**

Four climbers stranded on Mount Rainier for four days were successfully rescued last Thursday morning in a “daring” helicopter mission by rangers during a short break in the weather. All four were suffering from their long exposure to the unrelenting cold at the mountain’s 13,500-foot elevation. They were taken to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle after their rescue. All four were listed in satisfactory condition.

The climbers – Yevgeniy Krasnitskiy of Portland, Ruslan Khasbulatov from New Jersey, and Vasily Aushev and Kostya “Constantine” Toporov from New York – started their ascent from White River Campground on Friday, May 31st, taking the Liberty Ridge route. They had to halt their ascent because of high winds blowing away or destroying their tent and other climbing gear.

Efforts to rescue them by helicopter were blocked for some time by high winds. On Thursday morning, a brief window of good weather opened up, during which the helicopter’s crew spotted the men in the saddle between Liberty Cap and Columbia Crest. The pilot was able to land and fly them off the mountain in two flights.

The location where the climbers were found was about a half mile from the site where they had last been seen two days ago and in a place much less affected by wind and more accessible to rescue. The route between the two sites requires expert technical climbing skills; according to the park, the climbers contributed greatly to their own rescue.

Krasnitskiy, an experienced climber who’s familiar with the mountain, later spoke to a reporter and described what happened (second link below). Two of his observations are worth highlighting. First: “Every time I go up a mountain, it teaches me a lesson.” Second: “Don’t mess with Rainier.”

Sources: [KOMO News](#); Associated Press, via [Peninsula Daily News](#).

#### **Buffalo National River Rangers, Emergency Personnel Rescue Sixty From Rising River Waters**

Campers near Grinders Ferry along the Buffalo National River called 911 last Friday morning after the river’s rapidly rising waters began flooding their campsite. The call led to an interagency rescue effort involving rangers and county personnel.

Those 14 people were rescued, although they had to leave their cars behind. Later that morning, rangers rescued another ten people at Tomahawk Creek and by day’s end had rescued more than 60

people from the along the river in the stretch from Hasty to Tyler Bend. Victims said that they were surprised by how fast the river's waters rose.

The following article includes a two-minute video on the rescue and flooding.

Source: [KARK News](#).

### **Olympic NP Search Underway For Missing Woman**

Rangers are still searching Lake Crescent by boat daily for the body of 35-year-old Lena Lang, who disappeared on Memorial Day while paddling her white inflatable unicorn raft. It's been deemed "very likely" that she drowned, as there's no indication that she left the lake on her own.

Lang's overturned raft was soon seen west of Barnes Point and she was reported missing just before 6 p.m. Rangers immediately searched the lake by boat, but without success. They also learned that a woman had been seen carrying a deflated unicorn raft out of the woods around the time that Lang was last seen, but that she wasn't Lang. The woman drove away in a dark colored SUV between 5:20 p.m. and 6 p.m. from a lakeside pullout near Mile Marker 226.

Dive teams searched for Lang for two days after Memorial Day, but curtailed their efforts upon realizing that a submersible remote operating vehicle (ROV) would be needed to reach the lake's lower depths (Lake Crescent is 690 feet deep at its maximum depth, and from 300 to 500 feet deep where Lang was last seen). They'll soon be getting an assist from Glen Canyon NRA, which has an ROV that's used in searches of 560-foot-deep Lake Powell.

Anyone who visited the shores of Lake Crescent from Barnes Point to Fairholm on May 27th between noon and 6 p.m. and saw anyone using a white unicorn personal inflatable raft is asked to call or text Olympic National Park on the investigative tip line, 888-653-0009.

Source: Paul Gottlieb, [Peninsula Daily News](#).

### **Yellowstone NP Concession Employee Injured In By Elk**

A woman working for the park concessioner was injured in a cow elk attack at Mammoth Hot Springs around 6:30 a.m. on the morning of May 29th. She was taken to a hospital, but no information is available at present on her status.

Mammoth Hot Springs is a common hangout for elk, including mothers who give birth to calves in the spring and remain protective of their offspring. They are common in the area, often reclining on the grass among the buildings there. The elk was chased away after the attack.

Last year, two women were injured by elk in the same area; in both cases, the cows were acting to protect newborn calves.

Source: [Cody Enterprise](#).

### **Grand Teton NP Rafting Guide Dies In Accident On Snake River**

Brian Allen, a 44-year-old river guide, died in a rafting accident on the Snake River on May 21st

Allen and employees from the Grand Teton Lodge Company were on a training trip when their raft got caught in a snag near the historic Bar BC Dude Ranch. A few of the passengers and eventually Allen fell into the water trying to dislodge the raft. The passengers were able to climb safely onto the log snag and get back into the raft, but Allen disappeared.

Rangers responded to a call for help at about 3:30 p.m. and responded on several rescue boats; Teton County SAR searched for the man by air. Allen's body was found near the snag around 5:15 p.m.

Source: [Buckrail.com](#).

### **Wright Brothers NM Paraglider Crashes In Trees Near First Flight Airport**

A paraglider who'd launched from First Flight Airport was rescued by rangers and emergency responders after landing in nearby trees on the afternoon of June 4th.

The pilot tried to land on the airstrip, but reported that turbulence caused him to instead come down in tall pine trees along Colington Avenue. The parachute, which was part of his paragliding equipment, got caught in the trees and left him suspended approximately 70 feet off the ground.

Rangers, police and firefighters responded. According to the park, the fire department's ladder truck proved to be instrumental in the rescue.

The pilot suffered minor scrapes and did not seek medical care at the scene. His equipment was damaged, though, and at the time of the report the parachute was still stuck in the trees. The park will be contacting him to coordinate removal of the chute.

Source: [WTKR News](#).

### **Gateway NRA Contractor Accident Causes Sewage Spill**

A contractor working for the park punctured a sewer main at Floyd Bennett Field last month, causing roughly 700 gallons of raw sewage to leak into the soil.

The spill occurred on May 9th at Enterprise Avenue and Floyd Bennett Field Drive in the northeast corner of the public park. The contractor was installing an underground electric cable and was unaware that the sewage pipe was there.

The worker assumed full responsibility and the area was cleaned up. None of the sewage entered Jamaica Bay, a storm sewer, or any section of the park where ground water is converted into drinking water.

Source: Scott Enman, [Brooklyn Eagle](#).

### **National Park System Park Operating Status Summary**

A summary of recent openings, closures and other changes in the status of parks and their facilities:

- *Dinosaur NM* – A major roadway into the park has reopened following a closure due to a rockslide. The section of Harpers Corner Road near the Plug Hat Butte area some four miles from the Canyon Visitor's Center was cleared through the assistance of Colorado DOT, which provided heavy equipment to help move the boulders. The article includes a photo of the road being cleared. Source: Clay Thorp, [Post Independent](#).
- *Rocky Mountain NP* – Trail Ridge Road opened on June 5th, twelve days later than last year due to a series of spring storms that slowed plowing operations. Alpine Visitor Center and the Trail Ridge Store were scheduled to reopen this past weekend. Source: John Meyer, [Denver Post](#).
- *Gateway Arch NP* – Cresting Mississippi River floodwaters are creeping up the park's riverfront steps; although the water won't get anywhere near the arch itself, the riverfront road, Leonor K. Sullivan Boulevard, will likely be underwater for weeks. The Mississippi River reached peak

flow at the site last Friday morning at 46 feet, 3.5 feet below the 1993 record. One of the trams to the top of the arch was also shut down for awhile because water from supersaturated soil was seeping into the loading zone area, creating a slipping and falling hazard. Source: [KPLR News](#).

- *Yellowstone NP* – The Mount Washburn trail and trailhead parking area at Dunraven Pass will be closed in August as work continues to improve the trail. Work includes safety improvements and installation of new windows and preservation work at the lookout. The trail from Chittenden Road will remain open during the work. Source: [Casper Star-Tribune](#).

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

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

- *Appalachian NST* – Reverberations continue from last month’s tragic murder on the trail. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has redesigned its safety and incident reporting webpage, which now includes a bright red 911 button, an NPS phone number, an email address, and online reporting forms. The online form has been designed with mobile phone users in mind. The incident reporting page can be found [at this link](#); the conservancy’s safety and crime prevention page is [at this link](#). Source: Henri Gendreau, [The Roanoke Times](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – Last February, Andrew Richards, 24, skied out of bounds from a slope at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort into an area that had been closed due to dangerous conditions, but returned to the resort’s slope after a brief side trip. Two companions who followed his trail, though, missed his turn back and ended up skiing into Granite Canyon in the park and getting lost. A search ensued and the pair were found, both okay. Last month, Richards appeared in court to face charges for his action. In a distinct departure from normal defendant behavior, he waived an attorney and confessed his guilt, despite facing a \$6,000 fine. His subsequent comment to a reporter was as remarkable: “[One] of the most frustrating things I have experienced in society [is] people not owning up to things they have done wrong. I can’t reiterate enough how thankful I am that everyone is OK and how sorry I am.” Source: Allen Best, [Summit Daily News](#).

**National Fire Situation**

**National Interagency Fire Center  
Fire Activity Remains Light To Moderate Nationwide**

NIFC remains at PL 1. The National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) has not yet gone to daily reporting; rather, weekly summaries are issued each Friday.

Significant fires were reported in Arizona (4), New Mexico (1), California (2), Alaska (4), Oregon (1), Washington (2) and Florida (1).

**Current NPS Fires** – Reports on NPS fires that appear on the NICC summary:

- No large fires were reported in NPS areas.

**Current Incident Resource Commitments**

Category	May 17th	May 31st	June 7th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	0	0	0
Type 2 Teams	1	1	1

Crews	4	12	39
Engines	2	56	158
Helicopters	4	5	16
Total FF/Overhead	160	622	1,902

### **Fires/Acreage**

Category	2019 Total	2008-2018 Ave	2019 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	25,911	15,963	- 9,948
Year-to-Date Acres	1,415,399	332,791	- 1,082,608

Source: [National Interagency Fire Center](#).

### **Congressional Actions**

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

### **New Public Laws**

Nothing to report.

### **Senate Actions**

**June 4** – The Senate passed:

- S. 1235, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, giving women in the United States the right to vote.
- S. Res. 135, expressing the gratitude and appreciation of the Senate for the acts of heroism and valor by the members of the United States Armed Forces who participated in the June 6, 1944, amphibious landing at Normandy, France, and commending those individuals for leadership and bravery in an operation that helped bring an end to World War II.
- S. Res. 212, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, providing for women's suffrage, to the Constitution of the United States, which was agreed to by a unanimous vote of 93 yeas.

**June 4** – The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine the nomination of Robert Wallace of Wyoming to be DOI assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks. He was introduced by Senator Enzi and testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

**June 5** – The Senate passed:

- S. Res. 174, expressing support for the designation of the week of June 1, 2019, through June 9, 2019, as “National Fishing and Boating Week.”
- S. Res. 239, designating June 2019 as “Great Outdoors Month.”

**June 5** – The Senate confirmed the nomination of Susan Combs of Texas to be DOI’s assistant secretary for policy, management, and budget, by a vote of 57 yeas to 36 nays.

**June 5** – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to examine the nomination of Robert Wallace of Wyoming to be DOI assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks. He was introduced by Senators Enzi and Barrasso and testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

## **House Actions**

**June 3** – The House agreed to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2157, to make supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2019, by a vote of 354 yeas to 58 nays. As passed by the House and Senate, the bill includes the following for the National Park Service:

- An additional \$50 million for the historic preservation fund account for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, and Typhoon Yutu.
- An additional \$78 million for the construction account for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, Typhoons Yutu and Mangkhut, and the calendar year 2018 wildfires, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

**June 4** – The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled “Member Day”. The hearing was an opportunity for members of the House to testify on specific committee-related legislation or other priorities related to the committee’s jurisdiction. Several members submitted written statements for the record. Testimony was heard from Representatives Costa, Tipton, Curtis, Hill of Arkansas, and Griffith.

**June 4** – The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing entitled “Nature in Crisis: Biodiversity Loss and its Causes”. Testimony was heard from Steven Monfort, director, Smithsonian National Zoo and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, and from public witnesses.

**June 5** – The House passed:

- H.R. 1237, to amend the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act of 2009 to establish an ocean acidification advisory board, to expand and improve the research on ocean acidification and coastal acidification, and to establish and maintain a data archive system for ocean acidification and coastal acidification data.
- H.R. 1716, to direct the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to conduct coastal community vulnerability assessments related to ocean acidification.
- H.R. 1921, to authorize federal agencies to establish prize competitions for innovation or adaptation management development relating to ocean acidification. The bill was passed by a vote of 395 yeas to 22 nays.
- H.R. 988, to provide for a study by the Ocean Studies Board of the National Academies of Science examining the impact of ocean acidification and other stressors in estuarine environments.

**June 5** – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing on:

- H.R. 1371, to withdraw 1,006,545 acres of federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in northern Arizona, surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, including any land or interest in land acquired by the United States after enactment of this bill, from entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws and mineral materials laws.
- H.R. 2181, to withdraw certain federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in northern New Mexico, surrounding Chaco Canyon National Historical Park, Aztec Ruins National Monument, and 39 Chaco Culture Archeological Protection Sites designated in 1995 National Park, from entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws; location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws and mineral materials laws.

Testimony was heard from Michael Nedd, deputy director of operations, BLM, and from public witnesses.

**June 5** – The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence held a hearing entitled “National Security Implications of Climate Change”. Testimony was heard from Peter Kiemel, counselor, National Security Council, Office of the Director of National Intelligence; Jeff Ringhausen, senior naval intelligence manager Russia and Eurasia, Office of Naval Intelligence; and Rod Schoonover, senior analyst, Office of the Geographer and Global Issues, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

## **The National Park Service**

### **National Park System**

A summary of articles pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the National Park System, or to either all or parts of the entire system:

- *Visitor Spending Hit \$40 Billion In 2018* – Visitor spending in communities near national parks in 2018 resulted in a \$40.1 billion benefit to the nation’s economy and supported 329,000 jobs. According to the annual NPS report, more than 318 million visitors spent \$20.2 billion in communities within 60 miles of a park in the National Park System. Of the 329,000 jobs supported by visitor spending, more than 268,000 jobs exist in the park gateway communities. Economic benefits from visitor spending increased by \$2 billion and total output increased by \$4.3 billion in comparison to 2017. As a part of the report, visitor surveys were conducted at 19 parks with the results indicating that people spent more time in the parks, stayed longer in gateway communities and spent more money during their visits. The press release containing this information (see link) also includes a table showing visitation, spending and jobs support over the past seven years. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Reckless Visitor Behavior* – The May 14th edition of the *Washington Post* had an opinion piece with this headline: “If You’re Dumb, There Are Lots Of Good Ways To Have A Bad Time At A National Park.” Columnist John Kelly asked readers to share stories of unsafe visitor behavior that they’d seen. Not surprisingly, most of the responses concern national parks, particularly Yellowstone. There aren’t any real surprises for anyone who’s worked for the NPS, but it’s interesting to see that visitors often share the same perspective. Source: John Kelly, [Washington Post](#).
- *Beaches #1: Two NPS Sites Make Annual List Of Best USA Beaches* – Dr. Stephen “Dr. Beach” Leatherman, a professor and director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University, has again released his list of the ten best beaches in the United States. He employs 50 criteria for rating beaches and has been releasing annual lists each Memorial Day since 1991. This year, two NPS beaches – the beach at Ocracoke in Cape Hatteras NS and Coast Guard Beach at Cape Cod NS – are on the list. You can read about his list and the criteria he uses at his webpage, which follows. Source: [DrBeach.org](#).
- *Beaches #2: Six NPS Sites Included In America’s Best Camping Beaches List* – Another best beach list came out around the same time as Dr. Beach’s list, this one concerning beach camping and naming 15 sites. It includes Park Service campgrounds and camping areas on beaches in Olympic NP (Kalaloch CG), Apostle Islands, Cumberland Island NS (Sea Camp CG), Cape Lookout NS (Harker’s Island), Assateague Island NS, and Padre Island NS (Bird Island Basin). Source: Andrea Romano, [Travel and Leisure](#).

### **Around The Parks**

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

- *Cape Lookout NS* – A “weird dead thing” washed ashore in the park last week and park staff are seeking help in identifying it. The spiny object appears wormlike, but with a tight crust of



ivory-colored thorns. Lots of guesses have been made so far, but there's no consensus on what it might be. If you want to take a crack at it, you can find an image at the following link. Source: Mark Price, [Charlotte Observer](#).

- *Chattahoochee River NRA* – The park is increasing its efforts to keep people from jumping into the river from the Settles Bridge, which has been closed since the 1950s and is now a “decaying relic.” Teens like to jump from the bridge to the river, three stories below. Two people died in jumps in 2017, but that hasn't stopped scores more from making the leap in what one observer called “the idiot Olympics.” Over the winter, the park built stone and timber roadblocks on the road leading to the bridge on one side of the river (access is blocked by dense thickets on the other side) and also installed new signs warning against jumping; last week, it tripled the fine for violations from \$300 to \$1,000. Source: Doug Richards, [WXIA News](#).
- *Glacier NP* – Dick Anderson Construction of Great Falls has been awarded a \$4.73 million contract for the second phase of the Sperry Chalet reconstruction. The chalet was badly damaged in August of 2017 during the Sprague Fire, which burned thousands of acres in the park. The park expects construction to begin in early July and continue through September 30th, weather permitting. The second (and final) phase of the project will include masonry repairs, installation of a permanent roof, and completion of all other interior finishes. It's anticipated that the chalet will be ready for public overnight stays in 2020. Source: [KRTV News](#).
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The *Knoxville News Sentinel* ran a story on June 6th on the upcoming 50th anniversary of one of the largest and most remembered SAR operations in NPS history – the fruitless search for six-year-old Dennis Martin, who vanished on June 14, 1969 while camping in the park with his family. More than 1,400 people searched for Dennis for weeks (it wasn't called off until September 11th), but with no success. The story drew national attention and continues to fuel speculation about the boy's fate. The article includes a gallery of 20 photos and a five-minute-long video in which retired ranger Dwight McCarter is interviewed about the search. Source: Matt Lakin, [Knoxville News](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – A black streak resembling a large crack in Kilauea's caldera has caused a lot of speculation on social media as to what it is and what caused it. The park has provided an explanation – it's flowing water. The water comes from a shallow aquifer impounded by dikes in the southwest rift zone. Water flows southward along and in the sand flat below Crater Rim Drive but is stopped by the dikes, which form a dam. For one of several reasons (increasing water pressure, failure of wet sand, small rock falls), water breaks out of the aquifer and pours into the caldera. The flowing water has eroded ravines or gullies that resemble cracks. Water flow generally lasts several hours and then stops as water in the aquifer is depleted. But, days to weeks later, water reappears. Click on the following link to see an image of the “crack.” Source: [Big Island Video News](#).
- *Katahdin Woods and Waters NM* – This new park is at last seeing one of its most basic needs about to be fulfilled – signs telling people that it exists and how to get to it. The park is currently seeking proposals for installing 11 signs with wooden posts and another 11 signs with metal posts in the Katahdin region, including six large signs for Interstate 95 that will feature concrete foundations and metal posts. Former Governor Paul LePage, a Republican, initially prevented the Maine Department of Transportation from installing signs as he fought against the monument that was created by President Obama, arguing that federal ownership could stymie economic development. He favored keeping the land as working forest. But LePage dropped his opposition to the signs more than a year ago, when it became clear that the monument had survived a federal review ordered by President Trump. Source: David Sharp, Associated Press, via [Kennebec Journal](#).
- *Kings Mountain NMP* – The following comes from the June 7th edition of *The Hill*: “[An NPS] official who bought art for the visitor center at [the park] orchestrated the purchase so that the artist would avoid having their wages garnished to pay back taxes. The transaction centered



around a \$39,000 painting of the park by a local artist and was flagged in a Friday report from the Interior Department's Office of Inspector General for not following the agency's procedures. Rather than buy the painting directly from the artist, the park purchased it from an outside association tied to the park, the Battle of Kings Mountain Brigade of Friends. 'After conflicting statements and denials about his role in the purchase, the official told us during his second interview that he created the entire process by which the painting was purchased through the friends group,' the report says. 'He said that it was his idea to use the friends group as the purchase broker so that the NPS would buy the painting from the friends group rather than from the artist,' the report continued. 'He developed this plan after the artist told him that he was unwilling to sell the painting directly to the NPS due to his tax predicament.' The artist didn't want to sell the painting through regular channels after 40 percent of his wages were garnished in a 2014 painting sale. Under the agreement, the Brigade of Friends would keep \$4,000 for their role in the transaction, the artist would get \$30,000, and the remaining \$5,000 would be paid to another group to settle a prior debt owed by the artist. The Park Service employee structured the sale that way to avoid having to engage in a competitive bidding process for the painting. The artist told investigators it was the NPS official who suggested paying the Brigade of Friends for their role in the transaction. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of South Carolina declined to prosecute. The NPS official is still employed by the agency which is 'weighing appropriate actions in response to the OIG's findings,' a spokeswoman said." Source: Rebecca Beitsch, [The Hill](#).

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* – The saga of the timing and location of events to be held on the Mall this Fourth of July continues. A previous entry in this newsletter reported that the possible conflict between the annual "A Capitol Fourth" event and a second event planned by the president had been resolved (they'd be at opposite ends of the Mall at different times of the day), but that no further details were available. That's more or less still the case. Latest reports are that the president plans to address the nation from the Lincoln Memorial during an event called "A Salute To America," but that "his participation had not been confirmed." A USPP spokesman said that it was "a kind of evolving event," as the White House has yet to provide particulars on what will take place. In a tweet last February, the president first announced his plans for an event, promising one of the biggest gatherings in Washington history, with a "major fireworks display, entertainment and an address by your favorite President, me." The administration has said that it plans to move this fireworks display from the usual location on the Mall to West Potomac Park, and that the event may feature a second entertainment stage in addition to the standard free concert on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol. See the article for all the issues this raises. Source: Fenit Nirappil, Peter Hermann and Peter Jamison, [Washington Post](#).
- *White House* – A \$64 million construction project will begin soon on what eventually will be a 13-foot-high fence around the White House with wider and stronger pickets. The existing fence stands about 6-feet, 6 inches tall. The National Park Service, which provides care and upkeep for the White House and its 18 acres of grounds, has also been involved in the project. The fence design won approval in 2017 from both the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission. A contract was awarded in June 2018 for \$64 million. Active construction, once it begins in the summer, is expected to continue into 2021. The Secret Service concluded that a taller fence was needed after a series of recent White House security breaches. Source: Darlene Superville, Associated Press, via [KOMO News](#).
- *Zion NP* – On June 4th, the Washington County Commission (Utah) approved \$450,000 for park projects, including \$100,000 toward the purchase of private land to ensure access to The Narrows. Based on recommendations from the county's tourism advisory board, the commission approved a resolution granting the funds to the Trust for Public Land for the pending purchase of Simon Gulch, a parcel of land owned by the Bulloch family that has been used to provide public access for the trail to The Narrows. The county, the trust, the NPS, USFS and the Bulloch family (owners of the land) have been in negotiations over the parcel following its temporary closure last September. Public access was restored through December via a recreational license granted to the county; negotiations involving the trust in January resulted continued access through March, which has been renewed by the county commission

as needed. The estimated value of the Simon Gulch parcel is \$1.14 million, a county employee told the commission Tuesday. Speculation is that the property would be turned over to the park after the purchase. Source: Mori Kessler, [St. George News](#).

## **The Federal Government**

### **The Administration**

News from the administration of consequence to federal land management and environmental protection agencies and to their employees:

- *Administration Attacks On Climate Science Accelerate* – “President Trump has rolled back environmental regulations, pulled the United States out of the Paris climate accord, brushed aside dire predictions about the effects of climate change, and turned the term ‘global warming’ into a punch line rather than a prognosis,” write Coral Davenport and Mark Landler in the May 27th *New York Times*. “Now, after two years spent unraveling the policies of his predecessors, Mr. Trump and his political appointees are launching a new assault. In the next few months, the White House will complete the rollback of the most significant federal effort to curb greenhouse-gas emissions, initiated during the Obama administration. It will expand its efforts to impose Mr. Trump’s hardline views on other nations, building on his retreat from the Paris accord and his recent refusal to sign a communiqué to protect the rapidly melting Arctic region unless it was stripped of any references to climate change. And, in what could be Mr. Trump’s most consequential action yet, his administration will seek to undermine the very science on which climate change policy rests.” For more on this latest development in Trump’s war on man and nature, check out the full article. See also the link that follows to an editorial that appeared in the *Washington Post* the next day (“The Trump Administration Takes Climate Denial To New Heights”) concerning this latest assault on efforts to arrest climate change. Source: Coral Davenport and Mark Landler, [New York Times](#); Paul Waldman, [Washington Post](#).

### **Department of the Interior**

News about DOI policies, practices and people:

- *Nominee For AS/FWP Appears At Senate Hearing* – Rob Wallace, the administration’s nominee to serve as the assistant secretary overseeing the NPS and Fish and Wildlife Service, was favorably received by senators at a Senate Environment and Public Works Committee confirmation hearing on June 4th. As summed up by *Greenwire* reporter Michael Doyle, “Wallace touted public-private partnerships, praised ‘bipartisan solutions’ and appeared poised for a straightforward confirmation, free of the customary Capitol Hill rancor.” The Coalition has supported his nomination (see CPANP’s letter to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources [at this link](#)), as have organizations ranging from the National Parks Conservation Association and National Wildlife Refuge Association to Ducks Unlimited. Wallace worked for five seasons as a protection ranger at Grand Teton NP and later served as assistant director for legislative affairs for the Service in WASO. During his testimony, Wallace made two observations of interest for a candidate nominated by this administration. The first was that he believed in the importance and independence of climate science research and that he would “follow the law” and “follow the science” in dealing with climate change issues; the second was that he’ll be working to support employees: “We need motivated men and women in the National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service that get up every day and whistle when they go to work.” Sources: Michael Doyle, [Greenwire](#), and Mike Koshmrl, [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#).
- *Nominee For AS/PMB Confirmed* – Almost two years after being nominated, former Texas comptroller Susan Combs has been confirmed as assistant secretary for policy, management and budget. Combs has been working in that position over the last two years under an acting designation. Environmental groups opposed her nomination due to her track record of

opposing the Endangered Species Act while serving as comptroller. Source: Maria Recio, [The Statesman](#).

## **Elsewhere In DC...**

News from other agencies, Congress, the courts and other institutions in our national capital:

- *Pay Raise Legislation Introduced* – On June 3rd, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government approved a spending bill that seeks to provide federal employees with a 3.1 percent average pay increase in 2020. The legislation would override the pay freeze proposal in the president’s fiscal year 2020 budget request. The proposed raise – a 2.6 percent increase across the board and a 0.5 percent average increase to locality pay rates – would be the largest in a decade and is based on the most recent annual change in private-sector pay measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Employment Cost Index. Source: [National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association](#).
- *Bill Introduced To Streamline Recreational Permitting Processes* – On May 23rd, Senators Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) [introduced S. 1665, the Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation \(SOAR\) Act](#), to improve the permitting process for outfitters, educational organizations, and community groups to access and enjoy our public lands. At the time of its introduction, the bill had ten co-sponsors in the Senate and had been publicly supported by numerous outdoor organizations, ranging from REI to the Wilderness Society. Please click on the following link for a bulleted list of the bill’s highlights and on the link to the act itself (above) for the full text. Source: [Senator Martin Heinrich](#).
- *Forest Service CCC Layoffs Impending* – Employees at the agency’s Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers learned during a conference call on May 24th that the Agriculture Department plans to transfer the centers to the Labor Department by the end of September. While Labor runs the Jobs Corps program nationwide, the Forest Service has operated the Civilian Conservation Centers for decades under an interagency agreement with the department. Labor said it plans to close nine of the centers, which train young people for jobs in conservation and wildland firefighting, and contract out the work at the 15 remaining centers. That means that 1,065 employees will lose their jobs later this year. Source: Katherine McIntire Peters, [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:

- *More Bad News On Climate* – On June 5th, *USA Today* published a piece on an imminent “climate change apocalypse” forecast by an Australian think tank that deals with climate issues. Here are the lead paragraphs: “A chilling Australian [policy paper](#) outlining a doomsday scenario for humans if we don’t start dealing with climate change suggests that by 2050 we could see irreversible damage to global climate systems resulting in a world of chaos where political panic is the norm and we are on a path facing the end of civilization. The worst thing about it, experts say, is that it’s actually a fairly calm and rational look at just how bad things could get — and how quickly — if humans don’t stop emitting greenhouse gases into the environment...The paper was written by an independent think tank in Australia called Breakthrough National Centre for Climate Restoration. It offers a scenario for 2050 in a world where humans didn't lower carbon emissions enough to keep the global temperature from rising.” Source: Elizabeth Weise, [USA Today](#).

- *US Sets Rainfall Record* – On June 10th, the Washington Post reported the United States “had just witnessed its 12 wettest months in 125 years.” Here are the opening paragraphs of the story: “Flooding swamped parts of the Southeast over the weekend, with as much as a foot of rain falling in western North Carolina. At the same time, the Mississippi River continued its long-lasting assault on communities along its banks. Near St. Louis, the crest over the weekend was the second-highest on record. Just the latest high-water news, during what has seemed like a never-ending parade of storms. During May, a stormy pattern, headlined by widespread flooding in the nation’s heartland and a two-week swarm of tornadoes, boosted the nationally averaged precipitation to the second-highest level on record for the month. The 4.41 inches recorded was 1.5 inches above normal, trailing only May 2015’s 4.44 inches, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The substantial May total helped pushed the most recent 12-month output for the Lower 48 states to the highest level in 125 years of record-keeping (since 1895): 37.68 inches. It easily topped the previous record 12-month total of 36.20 inches set just last month.” Source: Ian Livingston, [Washington Post](#).
- *Harbinger Of Things To Come: Extreme Heat Wave Hits India* – A brutal heat wave that’s seen temperatures of over 120° across much of India is in its second week with no signs of cooler conditions ahead. Officials have been pouring water on roads to prevent them from melting while Indians struggle to sleep and work in such dangerous conditions. Not only is India getting hotter but pollution and climate change are destabilizing monsoons, which act to cool extreme heatwaves in the summer. The human body simply can’t function in this type of heat and parts of India may soon become literally unlivable. Source: Monica Medina and Miro Korenha, [Our Daily Planet](#).

**The Good News** – Sorry, nothing of note to report. Maybe next week.

### **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* – The science section in the May 30th *Washington Post* has a story with this headline: “How Your Summer Vacation May Give You An Up-Close View Of The Climate Crisis.” It begins with a description of sites visitors may see in national parks, including the “stark silhouette of burned-out pine trees, blackened and skeletal” in Yosemite, an indicator of the great increase in fires and acres burned across the West; the diminished Muir Glacier in Glacier Bay; and “the lowest average 20-year snowpack in the past eight centuries” in North Cascades. It goes on to cite the recent study that found that human-caused climate change increased the temperature in national parks by 1.1 degrees Celsius between 1895 and 2010, or double the rate of the United States as a whole. Says an NPS climate scientist: “When people go to national parks, [they] will be witnessing the consequences of human-caused climate change. It brings people closer to the real impact.” Source: Liz Weber, [Washington Post](#).
- *Denali NP* – Park staff are attempting to determine whether the existing path of the park’s 92-mile road can be spared from a creeping landslide in what scientists say could be a preview of Denali’s future as its permafrost thaws. The creeping slope, located at Polychrome Pass halfway along the road, consists of more than just rocks falling down a hillside – it’s a whole section of mountain, including the road, that’s slowly sliding downhill. Between last September and this March, the landslide pushed a 100-yard stretch of the gravel road six feet, leaving a head-high cliff where it once connected to the rest of the route. Maintenance staff had to fill the gap with rock and gravel to make it passable. This slow motion landslide is the park road’s most imminent threat, but it’s not an isolated one: Geologists have identified more than 100 other unstable areas along the road corridor. Source: Nathaniel Herz, [Alaska Public Media/NPR](#).

**Ecosystems and Habitat** – News about actions that affect park and adjoining ecosystems and habitat:

- *Everglades NP* – The Federal Highway Administration has announced that it will grant \$60 million to the park through the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects program to complete the Tamiami Trail “Next Steps” project, which is an effort to simultaneously remove the water flow impediments into Everglades National Park, address a key regional water flow imbalance, and sustain a critical transportation link between southwest Florida and Miami. This federal highway funding will match a \$43.5 million commitment announced last November by then-Florida Governor Rick Scott, and subsequently fully supported by Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature. The combined \$100 million federal and state funding will provide for the raising and reconstruction of the remaining 6.5 miles of the eastern Tamiami Trail roadway to allow the water to flow into the park. The park has been deprived of its fresh water for many decades and this project will allow water managers to significantly increase water flows rehydrating the 1.5 million acres of park lands, including Florida Bay. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).

**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:

- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – The park continues its battle against invasive [little fire ant](#). Last November, park staff discovered the stinging pest in the Steam Vents area and the Mauna Ulu parking lot. They were the first known populations of LFA to have been discovered in the park after a long effort to keep them out. Park pest control workers have begun a campaign to eradicate and will be treating the Steam Vents every four to six weeks over coming months. Source: [Big Island Video News](#).

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

- *Carlsbad Cavern NP* – WildEarth Guardians filed a suit in federal court on June 3rd, claiming that the oil boom in southeastern New Mexico is a threat to the park and to the surrounding area’s cave systems and desert slopes. The group also is concerned about deteriorating air quality, arguing that BLM failed to weigh the effects of more leases with the surge in development across the Permian Basin. NPCA and other environmental groups are also pushing for more comprehensive planning in the basin, saying that Carlsbad Caverns needs to be protected from encroaching development since it’s internationally recognized for its system of underground caves, dark night skies, bat colonies, and for the Chihuahuan desert landscape within its boundaries. Source: Susan Montoya Bryan, [Washington Post](#).

**Systemic Pollution** – Issues pertaining to air, light, sound, water and other forms of pollution associated with industrial development, population growth and other sources:

- *Glacier Bay NP&P* – Carnival Corporation has reached a settlement with the federal government in which the world’s largest cruise line will pay a \$20 million penalty because its ships continued to pollute the oceans – including Glacier Bay – despite a previous criminal conviction aimed at curbing similar conduct. Carnival admitted to violating terms of probation from a 2016 criminal conviction for discharging oily waste from its Princess Cruise Lines ships and covering it up. Carnival paid a \$40 million fine at that time and was put on five years’ probation, which affected all nine of its cruise lines. Now Carnival has acknowledged that in the years since its ships have committed environmental crimes such as dumping “gray water” in prohibited places, including Glacier Bay National Park, plus other violations. Under the terms of the agreement, Carnival must meet deadlines in September and October that show the company has developed a compliance plan and made other changes; if not, the company will be subject to fines of \$1 million per day. If a second round of deadlines are not met, the fines could go up to \$10 million a day. Source: Curt Anderson, Associated Press, via [Seattle Times](#).

**[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.

- *Sequoia-Kings Canyon NPs* – Rangers brought an extended investigation of pipe safe thefts to a successful conclusion on May 27th with the arrest of Mark Haley, 34, of Lennox, California. There have been multiple thefts from campground pipe safes over the last year in which the thief employed some sort of "fishing" device to withdraw fee envelopes back through the deposit slot. Recently, Haley and a 19-year-old female companion had been identified as suspects in a pipe safe theft in Cedar Grove. Nightly surveillance of the Potwisha campground was begun and paid off when Haley was observed working for an hour and a half on a pipe safe there at 3:30 a.m. on a recent morning. Haley and the woman were subsequently arrested as they attempted to leave the area. The U.S. attorney declined to press charges against the woman, but Haley was charged with theft of public monies, possession of a loaded weapon, possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number, being a felon in possession of a firearm, and tampering. The investigation is continuing. The couple is believed to have visited other parks, and may have committed similar offenses in campgrounds both in national parks and other jurisdictions. Submitted by Pete Allen, Sequoia-Kings Canyon.
- *Lake Mead NRA* – At 2 a.m. on May 29th, a security guard at the Lake Mohave Resort saw two people, one in a wetsuit, swimming among the boats in the resort's marina. The two swam away when the guard approached and asked them to identify themselves. One of them eluded arrest, but the other, a 17-year-old male, was apprehended as he tried to leave the water. Ernie Soper, the park's criminal investigator, interviewed the young man; Soper determined that the pair were in fact in the process of burglarizing boats, and that his partner was probably hiding back at their camp in the sand dunes. The partner was apprehended and questioned regarding the pair's activities that night and about prior burglaries in the area. The two men stated that there was also a third party, who was the group's ringleader. They provided descriptions of property that had been stolen in prior burglaries, and the house in which these items were stored. A search warrant was secured and served on a residence in Bullhead City, Arizona. Numerous items were discovered, including property stolen in burglaries in the Katherine area. One person was arrested and charged with criminal trespass, theft, and tampering. The juvenile was on parole from a juvenile facility in Phoenix and was therefore turned over to the county. Charges are pending against a second. Bullhead City police and Mohave County deputies are continuing the investigation and hope to clear many more burglaries. Submitted by Bud Inman.
- *Lava Beds NM* – Rangers Terry Harris and Kirk Gebicke contacted a man and a woman who were digging in an archeological site on the east side of Petroglyph Point along the park's border with adjacent BLM lands on May 6th. The two were in possession of human remains; when asked what they were doing, they both replied that they were "digging up bones." A consent search of their vehicle was conducted, during which the rangers found additional human remains and a homemade marijuana pipe containing residue. The pair were charged with possession of a controlled substance and vehicle violations. The park is currently working with BLM, a northern California ARPA task force and the U.S. attorney's office to obtain ARPA charges on both subjects. Submitted by Lava Beds NM.

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

## **A Closing Observation**

"The American experience has been the confrontation by old peoples and cultures of a world as new as if it has just risen from the sea. That gave us our hope and our excitement, and the hope and excitement can be passed on to newer Americans, Americans who never saw any phase of the frontier, but only so long as we keep the remainder of our wild as a reserve and a promise - a sort of wilderness bank...We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope."

Writer, historian and environmentalist [Wallace Stegner](#) in a 1960 letter to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission

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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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