



## The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Volume 3

Number 25

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### Editor's Note

There will be no issue next week. *The Coalition Weekly Report* will return on Wednesday, July 24th.

### Incidents

#### **Denali NP Climber Killed In Fall Near Igloo Canyon**

Evan Millsap, 26, was killed while climbing with a partner in a rocky drainage off Igloo Canyon last Tuesday evening. The canyon is near Mile 37 of the park road.

As Millsap rappelled down the rock face, an anchor system set up by the climbers failed and he fell about 70 feet. His partner climbed down and sought emergency assistance. Rangers received word of the fall around 11:20 p.m. and reached the accident site at 1:15 a.m.

Rangers pronounced Millsap dead at the scene. Rescue personnel carried his body out.

Source: [KTVA News](#).

#### **Dinosaur NM Rafters Dies In Boating Accident**

On the afternoon of Saturday, July 6th, the park was notified of an accident at Triplet Falls on the Green River in which a boat had overturned and one of its occupants had been underwater for ten minutes before being pulled ashore. The 47-year-old man was reported to be injured and unconscious.

CPR was administered for 90 minutes, but without success. The park, Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Moffat County Sheriff's Office were about to launch a rescue effort when they learned that a medical team with Classic Air Medical, which had arrived at the scene, had declared the man dead. His body was flown by helicopter to the Ashley Regional Medical Center in Vernal.

Triplet Falls is located on the Green River and holds a Class III difficulty rating. The river was flowing at 2,350 cubic feet per second at the time of the incident.

Source: Kim Bojórquez, [Deseret News](#).

#### **Big Bend NP Hiker Succumbs To Heat On Park Trail**

Richard Merrill, 54, died – evidently from heat stroke – while hiking the Marufo Vega Trail on July 2nd.

Rangers who had stopped to check out a vehicle parked at the trailhead found a note left by Merrill stating that he planned to hike from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. and asked that the park be notified if he hadn't returned by 2 p.m.

Since temperatures for the day were dangerously high and humidity excessive, rangers had to wait for safer conditions before looking for him. His body was found that evening about a quarter mile off the trail.

The park's website is explicit about the dangers attendant on hiking the trail in summer: "The route is poorly defined in places and sometimes overgrown with low desert vegetation. Temperatures may well exceed 110°F during spring and summer. You will find NO shade and NO water along this trail—and river water is not potable. This combination of factors make this trail potentially deadly during the late spring and summer. Tell someone your plans before heading out. Always wear a hat, and clothing to protect against the sun's radiant heat, take along plenty of water (one gallon per person/day) and salty snacks, and start early when temperatures are cooler."

Source: Kirsten Geddes, [KHOU News](#).

### **Death Valley NP Hiker, 85, Succumbs To Heat On Solo Hike In Park**

Neil Malloch, 85, described as "a California historian-at-large and one of the last of a dwindling supply of San Francisco eccentrics," was found dead in an isolated canyon near Death Valley on June 21st after setting off alone in midday triple-digit heat in search of an abandoned gold mine.

"Malloch was able to endure extreme temperatures," reported the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "He once fell off a boat he was living on and into San Francisco Bay, where he survived for an hour and 45 minutes before he was noticed missing and pulled from the cold water." He also spent a summer in a metal NPS trailer in Death Valley in an attempt to measure and record the hottest day in California history. He recorded 127 degrees, just shy of the record.

Malloch set off hiking alone in the Panamint Valley at 2:30 p.m. on June 21st in spite of his age and in spite of warnings by a camping partner not to go. When he did not return, he was reported missing at the Lone Pine Sheriff's Substation. It took two days and an aerial search to locate his body in Thompson Canyon and to retrieve it by lowering a hoist from a helicopter.

Source: Sam Whiting, [San Francisco Chronicle](#).

### **Denali NP Rangers, Officers Respond To Shooting**

A man who pitched a tent in the park near the Alaska Railroad tracks killed himself last Sunday.

Rangers approached the tent around 5:45 p.m. because it wasn't in a campground and was close to the tracks. As they approached, they briefly saw the man through the tent screen before they heard a single gunshot. The man did not respond to calls and couldn't be seen after the gun was fired. Alaska State Troopers, rangers and negotiators from the FBI set up a perimeter and approached the tent with an armored vehicle.

At 9:46 p.m. the man was reached and found dead. It was determined that he had died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The railroad delayed a train coming to the depot by about three-and-a-half hours, a railroad spokesman said. Twelve buses waiting to take passengers to lodges were also held up at the depot.

Source: Zaz Hollander, [Anchorage Daily News](#).

## **Mojave NP**

### **Two Rescued Following Plane Crash In Remote Area**

Two people were injured when the pilot of a single-engine aircraft was forced to crash land his plane in the park last Sunday after it developed engine trouble.

The male pilot and his female passenger were en route to Chino from Needles when the plane's engine lost oil pressure and it stalled, forcing the emergency landing in a very remote section of the park. Neither was injured.

Despite the remote location, the pilot was able to make a cellphone call to a San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department patrol helicopter. An H-325 MedFlight helicopter contracted to the country flew from Victorville to the crash site and extricated the couple.

Photos with the article show the crashed plane, the rescuers, and the happy couple.

Source: Matthew Cabe, [Daily Press](#).

## **Lake Mead NRA**

### **Woman Seriously Injured In Boating Accident**

A Las Vegas teacher lost her leg in a boating accident on Lake Mead last week when a wave knocked her into the water and she was sucked into its propeller.

Leslie Burns was reportedly boating with friends when she was overpowered by the wave and pulled underneath the boat. She sustained multiple injuries.

An off-duty nurse and a firefighter paramedic, also boating in the area, responded. They quickly applied a tourniquet to Burns's right leg and stayed with her until she was flown to University Medical Center of Southern Nevada. Due to the severity of the injuries, doctors were forced to amputate her lower right leg.

Burns' popularity as a teacher was validated by the contributions made to the GoFundMe page set up to help her pay for medical costs. There were 336 donors in just one day, and sponsors have raised more than \$28,000 of a \$35,000 goal.

Source: Megan Johnson, [Yahoo News](#).

## **National Park System**

### **Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents**

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

- *Rocky Mountain NP* – Remains discovered in the park last Friday have been identified as those of missing Air Force Academy Prep School cadet Micah Tice. Tice, 20, who was reported missing by the academy on November 26th. His vehicle was found at the trailhead leading to Longs Peak, and two park visitors reported seeing him on November 24th – lightly dressed despite blizzard conditions. On Thursday, searchers affiliated with the Tice family told park staff that they'd found items believed to belong to Tice below the tree line in the Boulder Brook drainage. The park's SAR team found his remains nearby the next day. The Boulder Brook drainage was one of the areas where initial search efforts were heavily focused but remained covered by deep snow through the winter and spring. Source: Ellie Mulder, [Colorado Springs Gazette](#).
- *Appalachian NST* – James Jordan, 30, the man who's been accused of the fatal stabbing attack on the Appalachian Trail last April, has been deemed not competent to stand trial. The court

has ordered that he be transferred to a federal facility to be “restored to competency.” Source: Alex Newman, [Barnstable-Hyannis Patch](#).

- *Cape Cod NS* – Last September, a great white shark killed a 26-year-old man off a park beach in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, the area's first deadly attack in 82 years, prompting the park and local communities to take efforts to ensure swimmer safety and prompt EMS responses if necessary. Those efforts were at least partially validated last week with over a dozen sightings of great whites in Cape Cod Bay. A marine biologist has attributed the increase in shark sightings to the area’s exploding seal population: "They are following the food," he said, "and the food, unfortunately, is very close to shore." Source: [CBS News](#).

## **National Fire Situation**

### **National Interagency Fire Center Significant Fire Activity Continues In Alaska**

NIFC remains at PL 2. Fire activity continues to center on Alaska, where nearly 700,000 acres have burned to date. Another seven large fires are currently burning in Arizona and New Mexico.

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

- *Denali NP&P* – As of last Friday, the Foraker Fire had burned almost 10,000 acres in the northwest corner of the park. The fire was started by lightning about 25 miles west of Wonder Lake on June 26th. Lightning-caused wildfires are natural occurrences in that area of the park, where there are numerous fires each year. Three firefighters with the Forest Service’s Salmon Heli-Rappellers from Salmon, Idaho, have taken command of the blaze. NPS firefighters are helping install sprinklers and pumps to protect nearby structures. Source: Kayla Heffner, [KTVA News](#).
- *Cumberland NS* – As of last Saturday, a wildfire in the wilderness area of North Cumberland Island had burned 354 acres. Firefighters have established structure protection zones in the High Point areas, a tract with historic structures owned by the Candler family. Another zone has been created near the Settlement, an area that included the First African Baptist Church, where John Kennedy Jr. was married in 1996. At the time of the report, firefighters had established a fuel break along North Cut Road, clearing debris and fuels along the road edge. No evacuations had yet been ordered. Command of fire operations has been given to the Southern Area Grey Incident Management Team; 58 firefighters and overhead were assigned to the fire. Closures included Brickhill Bluff Campground, North Cut Road (including the Shell Road to the old wharf ruins), Main Road north from its junction with South Cut Road, Killman Field Trail, Bunkley Trail, Rollercoaster Trail north of South Cut Road, Brickhill Trail, Terrapin Point Trail, and Lake Whitney Trail. The fire will be allowed to burn until it threatens structures and private property because the wilderness area is a fire-dependent ecosystem. The last time the area burned was in 2008. Source: Gordon Jackson, [Brunswick News](#).

### **Resource Commitment Trend**

<b>Category</b>	<b>June 25th</b>	<b>July 2nd</b>	<b>July 9th</b>
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	1
Type 1 Teams	1	1	1
Type 2 Teams	3	3	3
Crews	65	94	97
Engines	104	137	182
Helicopters	31	35	42
Total FF/Overhead	2,689	3,313	4,055

## **Fires/Acreage**

<b>Category</b>	<b>2019 Total</b>	<b>2009-2018 Ave</b>	<b>2019 Variance</b>
Year-to-Date Fires	21,076	32,317	- 35%
Year-to-Date Acres	1,342,116	2,616,209	- 49%

Sources: [NICC Incident Management Situation Report](#); [National Interagency Fire Center](#); [IMSR Archives](#); [InciWeb Incident Information System](#).

## **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**

The Senate was in recess for the Fourth of July holiday.

### **House Actions**

The House was in recess for the Fourth of July holiday.

### **Correction**

In last week's report about the June 25th House passage of H.R. 3055, making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, one amendment was incorrectly stated. The McEachin (VA)/Huffman (CA) amendment, which was passed by the House as part of H.R. 3055, would withhold funds for the Department of the Interior's Executive Resources Board (ERB) unless it is comprised of fifty percent of career Senior Executive Service (SES) members. The intent of the amendment is to remove the dominance of political appointees by having an equal number of career SES members on the ERB. The board makes decisions about eligibility of career employees for the SES and for placement of SES members in the bureaus within the department. The wording found in last week's report made it appear that the amendment would require career SES members to be fewer than 50 percent of the members of the ERB, which is what is currently found on the board. The McEachin/Huffman amendment would eliminate this imbalance by providing parity between political appointees and career SES members on the board.

## **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.

- *Proposal Made For Dealing With NPS Funding And Management Issues* – Retired career NPS employee and superintendent Gil Lusk has an opinion piece on the July 8th edition of *The Hill* on ways to save the national parks from further decline. Here are the opening paragraphs: “The time has come for Congress to address the pressing issues facing America’s living treasures,

our national parks. If they are unable to muster the interest, then lawmakers need to establish a national commission to study, analyze and recommend long-term solutions for the national treasures, their funding and non-political management. Their interest over the past few decades has been to add more parks, reduce the budget, ignore a \$12 billion-dollar deficit to repair and replace documented infrastructure needs required by parks, all while reducing full-time employment by thousands. What is needed is a review of the national parks, which can only be done through the work of a national commission.” Lusk also recommends five actions that Congress should take right now: 1) Reallocate funds and personnel to the most-at-risk national parks from those that are at minimal risk and would suffer the least from being closed or put into a reduced operation for a period of five years; 2) allow entrance fees and other fees collected by parks to be maintained at the point of collection and allow for meaningful fees to be established for parks; 3) severely limit the creation of new national park areas for 10 years and establish new requirements and criteria to assure that the resource being considered is of national significance; 4) establish and fund a new Mission 66 program – a 10-year overhaul that would bring national parks back to health; and 5) remove the authority to control, fire and/or reassign major park superintendents in the senior executive service from the secretary of Interior — a political appointee — and return it to the director of the National Park Service. “The National Park Service is a vision, created over a hundred years ago by men and women who possessed the drive and need to preserve nationally significant resources and places for the future,” he says in conclusion. “It is past time we honor and respect that vision of the National Park System.” Source: [The Hill](#).

- *Clemson University Launches Directors’ Leadership Academy* – Clemson University’s Institute for Parks has developed a new Directors’ Leadership Academy to address “pressing management needs” in U.S. parks. Clemson faculty in the institute designed the academy to train current and future park leaders to meet challenges at the local, state and national park system levels. Parks are facing increasingly complex challenges at a time when many park leaders are starting to plan for retirement, and new leaders will need a broad range of skills to be able to develop sustainable solutions to complex problems of the future. Inspired by the work of six former National Park Service and state park directors (five from the NPS – Ron Walker, George Hartzog, Bob Stanton, Gary Everhardt, and Fran Mainella), programs offered by the academy “will immerse participants in real-world challenges through service learning and case studies so that they can develop skills necessary for leading parks in the 21st century.” Two programs will begin later this year – the Ronald H. Walker Park Leadership Development Program will blend case studies with online and seminar study led by experts as well as current and past business, government and park leaders, and the Gary E. Everhardt Park Break program, which will be offered in partnership with the George Wright Society, will provide graduate students from diverse backgrounds with direct and applied experiences in parks and will be the only service, science and stewardship program that focuses on applied scientific inquiry in a National Park Service park. Source: Shawna Cass and Michael Staton, [Clemson University](#).
- *New Program For Under-Represented Youth Offered By Dixie State, NPS* – The Service has partnered with Dixie State University to create a program that offers free park excursions to under-represented youth. The program — Outdoor Leadership Academy — uses funds provided by the Service to organize trips to national parks. The academy employs NPS standards to define under-represented youth; they include racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ community, those with disabilities and those who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds under the age of 35. The program is meant to help youth experience nature and historical sites while exposing them to diverse career opportunities involved in public lands. By working with the youth and helping them have meaningful experiences, the program hopes some will become community leaders as they finish high school and college. Source: Ryann Richardson, [Travel Connection](#).

## **Around The Parks**

Park reports are in alphabetical order. Included are proposals in the works for new areas or changes in designation for current NPS units.



- *Cape Cod NS* – The park and the town of Wellfleet have signed a new agreement to advance a \$50 million tidal flow project in the Herring River. The objective is to cure ecological problems across the river’s floodplain in northern Wellfleet and South Truro, where a dike was built a century ago at the mouth of the river. Under the terms of the agreement, the town and the NPS have the authority to make their own decisions on the parts of the project that each owns in the case of emergency or unforeseen circumstances. Wellfleet will own the new dike at the mouth of the river, for example, and the park will own a tide gate planned on Mill Creek. Source: Mary Ann Bragg, [Cape Cod Times](#).
- *Cape Hatteras NS* – On July 1st, the park marked the 20th anniversary of moving the 4,800 ton tower more than a half-mile southwest to save it from the encroaching ocean. It now stands about 1,500 feet from the surf, about a thousand feet closer than it was when it was built in 1870. This led one reporter to investigate whether it will have to be moved again, given the constantly changing and receding Outer Banks (even without climate change). The answer, provided by a coastal geologist, was yes, absolutely. He provided some additional interesting information: The sea level has risen two to three feet since explorers landed on the Outer Banks in the late 1500s. The narrow strip of barrier island has since migrated thousands of feet westward, according to surveys going back to the 1800s. And N.C. 12 has to date been moved four times. Source: Jeff Hampton, [Virginian-Pilot](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – On July 3rd, the park held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of a multi-year, multi-million-dollar public-private partnership to renew the Jenny Lake area. “Over the years, the area had become greatly deteriorated as millions of visitors sought the famous views that define Jenny Lake,” reported *Buckrail*, a local newspaper. “The cumulative damage threatened fragile habitat and prevented people with limited abilities from exploring all the area has to offer. NPS crews dramatically improved access to iconic destinations such as Inspiration Point and Hidden Falls by building new stone steps, smoothing and leveling trails, and ensuring better drainage for rainwater and snowmelt. Work completed also reduces congestion and ambiguity by creating suggested directional trails, larger boat docks, increased restroom facilities, and designated areas to rest and take in the stunning views.” Grand Teton National Park Foundation launched the Inspiring Journeys Campaign for Jenny Lake in 2012 and completed the fundraising effort on August 25, 2016, the Service’s 100th birthday. The foundation raised \$14.5 million and the NPS contributed more than \$6 million to make the ambitious vision a reality. For more on the project, including photos, [click on this link](#). Source: [Buckrail](#).
- *Great Basin NP* – The park is employing an innovative means to introduce people to the night sky – a train from the Ely, which is four hours from Las Vegas, one of the brightest cities in the world, to the park, which is an International Dark Sky Association site. Rangers board the Nevada Northern Railway Museum’s historic train in Ely to serve as astronomy guides. The train travels about 11 miles east and climbs 800 feet along a mountain ridge to catch views of the sunset. It then returns on part of the route and stops at a place where rangers set up telescopes outside for visitors. “In the U.S. and Europe, 99% of people never experience a natural night sky, according to a 2016 report,” writes Jay Jones in the *Los Angeles Time*. “The Star Train aims to show visitors what our ancestors saw when they looked up every night.” Source: Jay Jones, [Los Angeles Times](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – On Tuesday, USGS raised the alert level for Mauna Loa from normal to advisory due to increased earthquake and ground deformation rates over the past few months. An eruption is not imminent, the USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said, and current conditions are no cause for alarm. It doesn’t mean that there will be as certain progression to an eruption, but the increase in both rates indicates changes in the shallow magma storage system at Mauna Loa. Source: Nina Wu, [Star-Advertiser](#).
- *Mount Rushmore NM* – The park kicks off a major project this week – upgrades designed to make it easier to “traverse the park” and to provide clearer views of the faces of George

Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Many parts of the park will be closed during construction, including a visitor's center and amphitheater, but visitors will still have good views of the sculpture. Source: [ABC News](#).

- *Sagamore Hill NHP* – In the 1890s, several years before he became president, Roosevelt planted a copper beech tree at the entrance to Sagamore Hill. Now, more than 120 years later, it has become fatally infected with a fungus and is being cut down. The park has saved saplings from the tree and will plant one of them in the same spot. The Theodore Roosevelt Association also plans to use wood from the trunk to make plaques, benches for the historic site, and replicas of furniture at the house, which will then be sold to fund preservation efforts for Sagamore Hill. Said Tweed Roosevelt, the president's great-grandson and chief executive of the Theodore Roosevelt Association: "Like (Roosevelt's) legacy, this tree will live on." Source: Brigit Katz, [Smithsonian](#).
- *Saguaro NP* – The Pima County Board of Supervisors has approved a plan to build a bike ranch on nearly 20 acres in a buffer zone directly across from the park, thus ending a long and contentious debate over allowing a commercial project there. The decision came after conditions recommended by the Audubon Society were included in the plan. The new design met all the county requirements for a conditional use permit in the restricted buffer zone outside the park; the board also received a letter from the superintendent rescinding the park's prior objections. Source: Duncan Moon, [Arizona Public Media](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – The *Powell Tribune*, a Wyoming newspaper, ran a story on July 2nd entitled "Lost Treasures Of Yellowstone." It concerns the thousands of things people lose in the park each year – about 3,000 items annually – and the efforts of a ranger with "lost and found" responsibilities to return them to their owners. It also addresses the 10,000 or so items that are left behind in the park's hotels that are dealt with by the concessioner. The article details the processes both organizations use. Among the more interesting lost items referenced in the story are the following – a toupee, a half-ton tool box, an artificial leg, and a cat who was finally caught and returned to its owner after wandering around Mammoth for 23 days. Source: Mark Davis, [Powell Tribune](#).

## **Climate and Conservation**

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

### **National and Worldwide Issues**

Reports on the national and international climate and conservation crisis.

- *Tick Invasion Spreads In US* – The online newsletter, *Inside Climate News*, reports that – due to climate warming – several tick species have spread to new areas of the country, some carrying diseases that can pose serious health risks to humans, including Lyme disease, which can affect the joints, heart and nervous system, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, a treatable but potentially fatal disease that causes fever and muscle pain. An aggressive tick called the lone star, which has been creeping north and west from its original habitat, can transmit an illness similar to Lyme disease, as well as pass along a sugar molecule that can make humans develop severe allergies to red meat. Since 2013, the Asian longhorned tick has popped up in at least 11 U.S. states, mostly in the Northeast. Previously limited to Asia, Australia, New Zealand and some Pacific Islands, it likely found several ports of entry to North America, hitching a ride on animals or humans. Its ability to clone itself without a mate made colonizing new locations that much easier. Others expanding their ranges include the blacklegged tick, the Rocky Mountain wood tick, and the American dog tick. The article provides more info about all these species. Source: Nina Pullano, [Inside Climate News](#).



- *US Mayors Push For Action On Climate Issues* – Here’s some more encouraging news that has received little or no coverage in the mass media: “The mayors of hundreds of U.S. cities called on Congress [last] week to pass legislation to put a price on carbon emissions, citing the financial and social strains their communities are already experiencing because of climate change,” reports *Inside Climate News*. “After some contention, they also voiced opposition to any congressional action that would limit cities’ ability to sue fossil fuel companies for damage linked to climate change.” The resolutions came at the end of the mayors’ annual conference. The mayors also voted in support of a resolution endorsing the idea of a Green New Deal, called for Congress to adopt “a comprehensive national response” to climate change, and voted to oppose President Donald Trump’s plan to freeze vehicle fuel economy standards. Source: Marianne Lavelle, [Inside Climate News](#).

## **National Park System Issues**

**Climate Change** – News concerning the impacts of climate change on park lands, waters, species and other assets.

- *Alaskan Parks* – Above average heat continues in Alaska. The current issue of *Weatherwise*, a meteorology magazine that tracks the nation’s weather in detail, reports that this past March “was one of the most extreme months on record in Alaska.” Every climate tracking site in northern and western Alaska reported the warmest month on record, and most locations in the remainder of the state recorded temperatures that were almost as high. Probably the most extreme conditions were in Kotzebue, where the average temperature of 23 degrees was 21 degrees above normal for the month. On March 30th, Kotzebue had a low temperature of 35 degrees, the highest daily minimum for any day between mid-November and mid-April. Not surprising, the average sea ice extent in the Bering Sea was only 37% of average for March. On Monday, *Our Daily Planet* reported that Anchorage hit its highest temperature in recorded history – 90 degrees – on the Fourth of July, beating the previous high for the date by more than twenty degrees. Records were also broken all around the state. Sources: *Weatherwise*; Monica Medina and Miro Korenha, [Our Daily Planet](#).

**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:

- *Gateway NRA* – “In a stunning announcement,” reported the *Rumson-Fair Haven Patch* on June 13th, “the National Park Service announced that all outdoor concerts at Sandy Hook/Gateway National Recreation Area have been canceled for the entire summer 2019 season due to the discovery of a piping plover nest near where the concerts are held.” State law, enforced by the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife, prohibits any human activity from taking place within 1,000 meters of a piping plover or its nest. The concerts are organized by the Sandy Hook Foundation, a non-profit organization that is a fundraising partner for Sandy Hook. Their entire summer 2019 line-up had already been announced and published on the web when the decision was made; efforts to find an alternative site within the park proved fruitless due to the ubiquity of piping plover nests. Source: Carly Baldwin, [Rumson-Fair Haven Patch](#).
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes NL* – More piping plover news – this time concerning threats to their nests stemming from the rising waters of the Great Lakes. Their nests along the park’s shoreline are deemed to be “one storm away” from destruction. Conditions are even worse for nesting plovers elsewhere around the lakes. The Great Lakes are reaching some of their highest levels since the Corps of Engineers began keeping records 101 years ago. Many beaches are shrinking or submerged, and lakeside streets, homes and businesses have been flooded. The Great Lakes generally rise with the snowmelt and rainstorms of spring and dip during later dry spells. Normally these swings continue for some time, but some scientists believe climate change is causing more frequent and intense shifts. The park is home to nearly half of the Great Lakes plovers during spring and summer. Source: John Flesher, [WWMT 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:

- *Rocky Mountain NP* – Park staff, members of the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and volunteers will begin a concerted effort to remove invasive species from the Kawuneeche Valley today. Park staff hadn't yet determined which species at the time of the report; in the past, work in that area has focused on scentless chamomile. Plants will be removed "mechanically," that is, by hand. No herbicides will be utilized. Source: [Sky-High News](#).
- *Everglades NP* – The numbers are in on the park's python removal project and they're impressive. Hunters killed enough snakes to stretch for two miles if laid end-to-end; they had a combined weight of approximately 10.4 tons. A total of 1,711 snakes were captured. Unfortunately, there's a long ways yet to go. Scientists estimate that there are at least 30,000 pythons in Florida, and some researchers say that number could be as high as 300,000. Source: [The Hunting News](#).

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

- *Arches NP* – Arches has joined the growing number of NPS areas recognized as International Dark Sky Parks by the International Dark-Sky Association, an organization that's working to protect those last areas on earth where the night sky can be seen as our ancestors saw it. "The certification for Arches is the culmination of more than 10 years' effort to preserve and share dark night skies in southeast Utah," said Kate Cannon, the park's superintendent. Source: Jacob Klopfenstein, [KSL News](#).
- *Grand Canyon NP* – Grand Canyon has also been named an International Dark Sky Park. The park was granted provisional dark sky status in 2016, prompting three years of lighting retrofits throughout its developed areas to minimize light pollution. Nearly 70 percent of the park's lighting is now considered dark-sky compliant. Grand Canyon's efforts included converting roughly a third of the park's more than 5,000 exterior fixtures to shielded or low-emitting lights. Close to 100 of the fixtures qualified as historic and could not be replaced, so they got new bulbs or other changes in consultation with Arizona's State Historic Preservation Office. The park's official nonprofit partner, the Grand Canyon Conservancy, raised almost \$100,000 to pay for most of the work. And park officials aren't finished yet – in coming years, Grand Canyon plans on making 90 percent of its lights dark-sky compliant. Source: Henry Breaun, [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#).

## The Coalition

Summary of recent developments within the Coalition, including some of the actions that CNPCA took on your behalf. They are listed by their webpage headline; the URL to the story is incorporated.

- [Coalition Weighs in On Lack of LE Rangers in Parks](#)
- [Coalition Comments on Growing Costs of July 4th Celebration on The Mall](#)
- [Statement: Trump's Salute to America an Irresponsible Use of National Park Service Resources](#)
- [CPANP Issues Statement on NPS Funds Diverted for Salute to America](#)
- [CPANP Chair Appears on CNN](#) (includes video footage)

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.

- *Zion NP* – On June 20th, the Department of Interior solicitor in Salt Lake City denied the \$20 million plus tort claim filed last January as a result of two fatalities and personal injuries which occurred in accidents on the north boundary of the park on July 15, 1993. On that date, Dave Fleisher, 27, and Kim Ellis, 37, drowned in two separate incidents about an hour apart on private property in Kolob Creek adjacent to the park. The two victims, a surviving adult, and five teen-age Explorer Scouts were on a four-day hike which was scheduled to conclude in the park on July 17th and had a permit for the last night of their trip through Zion Narrows. After they were reported overdue, an extensive helicopter search in very rugged terrain was begun. The six survivors were located and rescued on July 19th through a cooperative effort by Washington County sheriff's department officers and members of the park's SAR team. On January 3rd, the park received multiple tort claims for millions of dollars from attorneys representing families of both victims and survivors and passed them on to the solicitor. A suit in district court is possible. Submitted by Denny Davies, Public Affairs Officer.
- *Yosemite NP* – On the afternoon of the Fourth of July, rangers responding to a report of a single vehicle accident on Highway 120 above Crane Flat found a heavily damaged 1993 Lexus sedan about 60 feet down an embankment. The driver and rear passenger were dead, but the front passenger was alive and unconscious and apparently suffering from major chest injuries and internal trauma. Access to the vehicle and patient were extremely difficult and required considerable effort. Despite the best efforts of park EMTs and a paramedic, the patient expired before he could be removed from the vehicle. Preliminary investigation indicates that the vehicle was traveling at least 60 mph downhill in a posted 35 mph zone when it left the roadway on a curve. No skid marks or evidence of braking was found. Park investigators estimate that the car was completely airborne for over 140 feet before it struck some large trees and came to rest. The impact with two of the 60 foot pine trees was substantial enough to snap off their tops. Both airbags in the vehicle deployed and the driver and front passenger were wearing lap and shoulder belts. The cause of the accident has not yet been absolutely determined and the investigation continues. Submitted by Brian Smith, Criminal Investigator.
- *Lake Mead NRA* – A Grateful Dead concert in Las Vegas led to a dramatic increase in visitation (a total of almost 80,000 people) to the Boulder Basin area of the park over the period from Thursday, June 24th, to Sunday, June 27th. Rangers from Organ Pipe, Death Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, Grand Canyon and Hubble Trading Post were called in to assist; also involved were Boulder City police and Nevada Highway Patrol officers. Checkpoints were established in the Boulder District, which made it possible for rangers to control the situation. An undercover investigative team worked the camping areas and made 16 narcotics cases, including eight for felony possession of hashish, valium, mushrooms and marijuana. A 1991 Dodge truck, a 1992 Lincoln Continental and over \$1200 were seized. Cases were also made on sales of t-shirts, possession of paraphernalia, driving under the influence, resisting arrest, vandalism and numerous traffic offenses. Due to the high weekend temperatures, which reached 122 degrees, there were numerous cases of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. One jet ski accident occurred in which a male rider received multiple injuries. There was a structural fire involving highly flammable explosive materials in a boat repair area on Friday; two engines with their crews were dispatched and suppressed the mid-afternoon blaze. The cause of the fire is under investigation, but spontaneous combustion seems likely. A boat explosion occurred at Katherine's Landing during the weekend. Bullhead city units responded. Only two of the five people on board were injured. Investigation revealed that a flame arrestor on the carburetor was loose and that the blower motor was inoperable. Rounding out the weekends events were two lightning-caused wildfires, two boat fires, three burglaries, a stolen vehicle, and 19 medical calls - three requiring advanced life support. Submitted by Dale Antonich, Chief Ranger.

## Acknowledgements

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Dick Martin, Bob Marriott, Ian and John Townsend

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**

"One of the things Westerners should ponder, but generally do not, is their relation to and attitude toward the federal presence. The bureaus administering all the empty space that gives Westerners much of their outdoor pleasure and many of their special privileges and a lot of their pride and self-image are frequently resented, resisted, or manipulated by those who benefit economically from them but would like to benefit more, and are generally taken for granted by the general public.

"The federal presence should be recognized as what it at least partly is: a reaction against our former profligacy and wastefulness, an effort at adaptation and stewardship in the interest of the environment and the future....the land-managing bureaus all have at least part of their purpose the preservation of the West in a relatively natural, healthy, and sustainable condition...

"[T]he land bureaus have a strong, often disregarded, influence on how life is lived in the West. They provide and protect the visible, available, unfenced space that surrounds almost all western cities and towns--surrounds them as water surrounds fish, and is their living element.

"Neither state ownership nor private ownership--which state ownership would soon become--could offer anywhere near the usually disinterested stewardship that these imperfect and embattled agencies do, while at the same time making western space available for millions. They have been the strongest impediment to the careless ruin of what remains of the Public Domain, and they will be necessary as far ahead as I, at least, can see."

[Wallace Stegner](#), *Where the Bluebird Sings To The Lemonade Springs*, 1992

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

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

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