



## The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, July 31, 2019

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### Incidents

#### **Yellowstone NP Nine-Year-Old Injured When Tossed By Bison**

A nine-year-old girl from Florida was injured by a bison near Observation Point Trail in the Old Faithful area on the afternoon of Monday, July 22nd.

Witnesses told rangers that a group of about 50 people had been within five to ten feet of the bison for at least 20 minutes before it charged. The bull eventually caught the girl and tossed her into the air. She received initial treatment from a medical provider at Old Faithful Lodge before being taken to Old Faithful Clinic, where she was later released.

The park yet again reminded visitors of the requirement to stay at least 25 yards away from all large animals — like bison, elk and coyotes — and at least 100 yards from bears and wolves.

ABC News, among other media outlets, posted a video taken by a visitor of the bison tossing the girl in the air. It can be seen [at this link](#).

Sources: [Powell Tribune](#); [ABC News](#)

#### **Theodore Roosevelt NP Teenager Gored By Bison**

A 17-year-old girl was gored by a bison bull while hiking on the Lower Paddock Creek Trail near the Halliday Well trailhead in the park's South Unit on the morning of Saturday, July 27th. She was tossed six feet into the air and sustained a serious goring wound to the back of her upper right thigh. She was treated at the scene, then airlifted to a Bismarck hospital. At last report, she was in stable condition.

According to a witness, the girl was walking along the trail when she passed a nearby herd of bison. Two bulls had been fighting and were on either side of the trail when the girl walked between them.

Bison are currently in rutting season, making the bulls more aggressive than usual. It is normal for male bison to fight each other during rutting season.

The park requires visitors stay at least 25 yards away from any large wildlife in the park.

Source: Bilal Suleiman, [Bismarck Tribune](#).

## **Mount Rainier NP Hiker Killed In Fall From Barrier Peak**

Around midday on Friday, July 19th, rangers were advised that a hiker had fallen about 100 feet off Barrier Peak near Owyhigh Lake. The rescue team dispatched to the 6,521-foot peak found that Robert Moll, 41, had succumbed to injuries sustained in the fall.

A helicopter airlifted his body to the White River area, where he was turned over to medical examiners. It was not immediately clear what caused Moll to fall.

The Barrier Peak climb is often combined with nearby Governors Ridge. The two are connected by a saddle.

Moll was a journalist, an editor and author of two books, *The Art of Dying* and *What Your Body Knows About God*. His op-eds were published in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post* and *Huffington Post*, among other papers.

Source: Stacia Glenn, [Tacoma News-Tribune](#).

## **Mount Rushmore NM Woman Fined For Climbing Mount Rushmore**

A Nebraska woman was fined \$1,000 after she climbed Mount Rushmore barefoot and with no rope. The incident occurred on July 12th.

Alexandria Incontro was charged with climbing Mount Rushmore, violating a closure or public use limit, trespassing on property not open to the public, and failure to obey a lawful order. She plead guilty to climbing the monument in federal court and was fined \$1,000. The other charges were dropped.

Rangers repeatedly called to her to come down before she finally did so. At the time, Incontro was moving between the heads of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson as she ascended the monument. She met the rangers near the chins of the former presidents and was arrested and charged.

Incontro was visiting the park with a score of family members, including her children, ages three and seven.

Source: Cassidy Vavra, [New York Daily News](#).

## **Zion NP Hiker Suffering From Overexertion Rescued From The Subway**

Rangers rescued a 48-year-old man from a strenuous slot-canyon hike called The Subway on Monday, July 22nd.

The man had begun his hike on the nine-mile-long trail the previous evening. He overexerted himself and was unable to go any further; he had to stay out overnight until the park's SAR team could get to him on Monday morning with the help of a helicopter from Grand Canyon. The man was okay and declined medical attention.

The Subway is one of several trails in the park that require a permit and are recommended for experienced hikers only, as it requires climbing down waterfalls and scrambling over boulders.

The park again warned visitors that the key to hiking such trails is preparation and prevention and knowing what you're able to handle before you head out for a hike.

“Listen to your body and don’t push yourself past what you can do,” said ranger Eugene Moisa. “It’s okay to come back and try again next time.”

Source: Katie Karalis, [KTVX News](#).

### **Gettysburg NMP Investigation Underway Into Numerous Vehicle Break-Ins**

On July 25th, rangers and Cumberland Township police responded to reports of burglaries from vehicles in the park and at Artillery Ridge National Riding Stables and Cumberland Township campgrounds.

In every case, car windows were broken and the thieves took women's purses and wallets containing credit cards, checkbooks and identification. Several checks were later recovered after an unknown woman attempted to cash them at several different banks in Adams County.

Investigators believe that the break-ins were conducted by a group known as the "Felony Lane Gang." According to the FBI, the gang consists of several organized burglary and identity theft rings operating in jurisdictions throughout the country. They often operate independently, but employ similar MO's: They employ rental vehicles with heavily-tinted windows to conduct surveillance of parking lots, then steal IDs, credit cards, and checkbooks from unattended vehicles where women would be more likely to leave their purses.

Gang members then utilize the stolen checks and IDs to withdraw large sums of money at multiple banks before the victims have the opportunity to close their accounts. They strategically choose the furthest window from the teller in bank drive-thru lanes in order to impersonate the owner while using her stolen ID. This drive-thru lane is commonly known as the "felony lane", hence the name of this criminal enterprise.

Source: [WHP News](#).

### **Badlands NP Man Rescued After Fall Into Ravine**

A 23-year-old man was rescued by rangers, Pennington County SAR team members, and Rapid City FD firefighters after falling into a park ravine on the evening of July 24th.

Around 9:30 p.m., the man fell into a ravine after working on a disabled vehicle near Sheep Mountain Overlook. He was able to call 911 and dispatchers were able to place his location as some point between Sheep Mountain Road and Bombing Range Road.

When rescuers arrived, they found the man 150 to 200 feet down the ravine and wedged between two rocks. He spent three hours in the ravine in a thunderstorm before he was rescued.

Source: Jack Williams, [Sioux Falls Argus Leader](#).

### **Yellowstone NP Man Who Walked Off Geyser Boardwalk Gets Jail Time**

On July 9th, a federal judge in Montana gave a California man jail time for walking off the boardwalks at Grand Prismatic Spring and across a wide expanse of sensitive algal mats, saying that the court “will not tolerate people who damage resources.”

Jason Nguyen, 28, appeared by phone from his home in the San Francisco Bay area. Nguyen had reached a plea agreement with the U.S. attorney to pay a \$1,540 fine for walking hundreds of yards across the outflow stream from Grand Prismatic. He told the judge that he saw the signs warning visitors to stay on the boardwalks but was in a hurry to pick up a friend at the airport so took a shortcut. In later questioning, he admitted that he was picked up by rangers at Old Faithful, where he

went after Grand Prismatic, prompting the judge to note that couldn't have been in too big a hurry if he went to the famous geyser before picking up his friend.

The eyewitness who turned him in said that Nguyen asked a different friend he met in the parking lot if he "got the shot." Nguyen argued in court that he was referring to a good shot of the spring, not his walk, but the judge didn't buy it. He bypassed the sentencing deal, reducing the fine to \$1,040, but tacked on four days in jail, one year's probation and a one year ban from Yellowstone National Park.

Nguyen pleaded with the judge for no jail time, but the judge would not relent, though he did allow the time to be served over several weekends so Nguyen would not miss time from his new job.

The U.S. attorney noted that the video of the shortcut across the algal mats went viral and that it's important to send a strong message to people who see it. The judge agreed, calling Grand Prismatic one of the greatest scenic areas in the country.

Source: John Sherer, [KXLF News](#).

### **Joshua Tree NP Searchers Find Missing Off-Trail Hiker**

A hiker who broke off from his group on the 49 Palms Oasis Trail and headed off trail on his own was rescued by the park's SAR team on the night of Thursday, June 25th.

The park was notified of the lost man around 5 p.m. and quickly mobilized the team. He was found just after 7:30 p.m. and was okay despite the prevailing high temperatures.

The 49 Palms Oasis Trail is considered 'moderately strenuous' and takes approximately two to three hours to hike, with a 300-foot climb each way.

Source: [KESQ News](#).

### **Yellowstone NP Two Habituated Bears Euthanized**

The park has euthanized two black bears that posed a danger to visitors, including one that bit a woman in her tent. They're also trying to capture a third bear that displayed signs of aggression at a campsite.

Park staff have had a particularly busy summer dealing with bears at backcountry campsites, at campgrounds and along roads.

Last month, at a campsite near Little Cottonwood Creek, a black bear bruised a woman's thigh when it bit into her tent. The bite did not break her skin due to the thickness of her sleeping bag and the fabric of the tent. The bear had likely found human food in the same location before. Rangers set up cameras and a decoy tent at the campsite to see if the bear would return; it did, aggressively tearing up the tent. The bear was caught and put down.

Earlier this month, campers left food unattended at a backcountry campsite along the Lamar River Trail, allowing a bear to eat approximately ten pounds of it. Campers who visited the site the following day encountered the same bear, which also had to be killed.

Last week, another black bear at the Indian Creek Campground caused property damage to tents and vehicles. The park is employing cameras to see if the bear returns and will take "appropriate actions based on the current circumstances."

Source: [Yellowstone NP](#).

### **National Park System**

## Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Yellowstone NP* – Correction: Last week, an incident report appeared in this newsletter that said that the fire lookout on Mount Washburn had burned to the ground. It was in fact the fire tower on Mount Holmes; the fire was seen from the lookout on Mount Washburn. Thanks to member Jeff Manoe for spotting and reporting the error.
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – The park continues its slow but steady recovery from last year’s eruption. On July 11th, Napau Crater and a two-mile section of trail in Kilauea’s East Rift Zone wilderness reopened. Pu’u ‘O’o vent will remain closed due to its steep and unstable flanks, but hikers will be able to walk right up to its base. Source: [Hawaii Tribune-Herald](#).
- *Santa Monica Mountains NRA* – All 67 miles of the Santa Monica Mountains’ Backbone Trail are now open after parts of it were closed due to last year’s Woolsey Fire. Now that the Backbone Trail is open, only small park sites at Arroyo Sequit, Peter Strauss Ranch, and Rocky Oaks remain closed. Source: [CBS Los Angeles](#).

## National Fire Situation

### National Interagency Fire Center More Than 70 Large Fires Currently Burning In Alaska

The national preparedness level remains at PL 2. Fire activity centers on the Alaska area, which is at PL 5. As of yesterday, there were 72 large fires burning across the state. Initial attack in the Lower 48 remained light.

No large fires were reported in NPS areas on yesterday’s NICC summary.

### Resource Commitment Trend

Category	July 9th	July 23rd	July 30th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	1	1	2
Type 1 Teams	1	2	2
Type 2 Teams	3	5	5
Crews	97	154	210
Engines	182	203	314
Helicopters	42	39	70
Total FF/Overhead	4,055	5,630	7,220

### Fires/Acreage

Category	2019 Total	2009-2018 Ave	2019 Variance
United States: YTD Fires	25,357	40,330	- 37%
United States: YTD Acres	3,149,811	3,753,045	- 16%
Canada: YTD Fires	3,122	---	---
Canada: YTD Acres	4,232,292	---	---

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

**July 23** – The Senate passed S. Res. 194, designating July 30, 2019, as “National Whistleblower Appreciation Day”.

**July 23** – The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Science, Oceans, Fisheries, and Weather held a hearing to examine America's waterfronts, focusing on addressing economic, recreational, and environmental challenges. Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**July 24** – The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize, focusing on innovative solutions to reduce human-predator conflict, including S. 2194, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to establish the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize for reducing human-predator conflict. Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**July 25** – The Senate passed S. 1275, to require the collection of voluntary feedback on services provided by agencies.

### House Actions

**July 23** – The House passed H.R. 34, to ensure consideration of water intensity in the Department of Energy's energy research, development, and demonstration programs to help guarantee efficient, reliable, and sustainable delivery of energy and clean water resources.

**July 24** – The House passed H.R. 434, to require the secretary of the interior to study the proposed Emancipation National Historic Trail, extending approximately 51 miles from Galveston, Texas, to Freedmen's Town and Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas, following the migration route taken by newly freed slaves and other persons of African descent from the major 19th century seaport town of Galveston to the burgeoning community of Freedmen's Town, located in the 4th Ward of Houston, Texas.

**July 24** – The Committee on the Budget held a hearing entitled “The Costs of Climate Change: From Coasts to Heartland, Health to Security.” Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**July 24** – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change held a hearing entitled “Building America's Clean Future: Pathways to Decarbonize the Economy.” Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**July 24** – The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology approved the following bills:

- H.R. 3597, to guide and authorize basic research programs in the United States for research, development, and demonstration of solar energy technologies.

- H.R. 3607, to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to direct Federal research in fossil energy and to promote the development and demonstration of environmentally responsible coal and natural gas technologies.
- H.R. 3609, to require the Department of Energy to carry out a grant program to research, develop, and evaluate wind energy technologies and systems.
- H.R. 335, to require the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia to develop a plan for reducing, mitigating, and controlling harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in South Florida.

**July 25** – The House passed H.R. 3877, to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, to establish a congressional budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, and to temporarily suspend the debt limit. The bill passed by a vote of 284 yeas to 149 nays. Besides setting limits on federal spending for the next two fiscal years, the bill finally eliminates the automatic spending caps enacted by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011, which Congress routinely ignored over the succeeding years in order to keep federal domestic discretionary spending at reasonable levels while allowing the enactment of additional tax cuts. According to an article in the *Washington Post* on July 27th, “the national debt has grown from \$14 trillion in 2011 to more than \$21 trillion and mounting. Spending on mandatory programs such as Medicare and Medicaid skyrocketed, while revenue was slashed by the GOP’s 2017 tax cut.” Further, “(by) 2021 — the 10th year of the BCA — federal agency budgets will add up to about the same amount as they did in 2011, a little less than \$1.4 trillion.” And, “(according) to estimates, discretionary spending as a percentage of the gross domestic product hit 8.7 percent in 2011 and fell to 6.3 percent in 2019.” This is the part of the budget that provides funding for a host of federal agency programs, including those of the National Park Service. [Click on this link](#) to read the full article.

**July 25** – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled “Increasing Renewable Energy on Public Lands.” Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**July 25** – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a hearing, among other bills, on the following:

- H.R. 335, to require the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia to develop a plan for reducing, mitigating, and controlling harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in South Florida,
- H.R. 729, to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to authorize grants to Indian tribes to further achievement of tribal coastal zone objectives.
- H.R. 3115, to direct the administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to make grants to state and local governments and nongovernmental organizations for purposes of carrying out climate-resilient living shoreline projects that protect coastal communities by supporting ecosystem functions and habitats with the use of natural materials and systems.
- H.R. 3237, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the implementation of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program First Increment Extension for threatened and endangered species in the Central and Lower Platte River Basin.
- H.R. 3541, to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish a coastal climate change adaptation preparedness and response program.
- H.R. 3596, to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to establish a Working Waterfront Task Force and a working waterfronts grant program.

Testimony was heard from Rear Admiral Timothy Gallaudet, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Deputy National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator, Department of Commerce; Karl Stock, Acting Director of Policy and Administration, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.



**July 25** – The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled “When Science Gets Trumped: Scientific Integrity at the Department of the Interior.” Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from the department at this hearing.

**July 25** – The Select Committee on the Climate Crisis held a hearing entitled “Creating a Climate Resilient America: Business Views on the Costs of the Climate Crisis.” Testimony was heard from public witnesses; there were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

The House is now in its annual summer recess and return on September 9th.

## 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.

- *FAA To Begin Effort To Address National Park Overflights* – Although the FAA has held meetings to discuss park overflights since the National Park Air Tour Management Act passed in 2000, the agency has taken little action to enforce it. Now, driven by a lawsuit brought by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility in 2017, the FAA and National Park Service plan on meeting on August 9th to begin work on establishing mandatory air tour management plans or voluntary agreements covering six parks – Death Valley, Mount Rainier, Badlands, Great Smoky Mountains, Glen Canyon and Rainbow Bridge. The list has some obvious omissions, like Grand Canyon, Glacier and Hawaii Volcanoes, all of which have serious overflight problems. The reason, says PEER, is that FAA is going after “low-hanging fruit” – parks where there’s “much less industry push-back.” Source: Kurt Repanshek, [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *BMW Brings EV Charging Stations To Parks* – BMW has finished a nearly two-year-long project to bring 100 electric vehicle charging stations to America’s national parks. The automaker partnered on the project with the Service, the National Park Foundation, and the Department of Energy. BMW’s charging stations can be found at Everglades, Grand Canyon, Death Valley, Mount Rainier, Olympic and Cape Cod. Source: Kirsten Korosec, [TechCrunch.com](#).
- *Busch Beer Bar Scavenger Hunt Sponsored By USFS...Not NPS* – Here’s yet another story that confuses the NPS with the Forest Service. According to a story that appeared last week on WTHR, an Indianapolis television station, Busch Beer was sponsoring a scavenger hunt for a beer bar in “a U.S. national park.” The company had reputedly set up a pop-up bar “in one of the parks” and was tweeting clues on how to find it. Further down in the story you find that the likely location was the Mark Twain National Forest – so, no, this isn’t an offshoot of the Service’s ongoing “Find Your Park” initiative. Source: [WTHR News](#).

### 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.

- *Chaco Culture NHP* – KRQE, a television station in Albuquerque, ran a story last week about the park’s new \$3 million “state-of-the-art” visitor center, which it describes as “a case study in bureaucratic bungling” – an opinion shared by former park employees who are quoted in the story. The VC was designed to put almost 4,000 artifacts collected at Chaco on display, most of them loaned by museums from across the country. “But if you come to Chaco Canyon expecting to see rare antiquities once buried here, you’ll be disappointed. The one thing missing from the exhibit hall are the exhibits. Oops.” The problem centers on the building’s defective HVAC system, which a consulting engineer said “is incapable of consistently maintaining the temperature and relative humidity requirements of the exhibit room.”



Although the problem was detected three years ago, the NPS has yet to repair or replace the equipment. Source: Larry Barker, [KROE News](#).

- *Death Valley NP* – The park has posted two videos of the impact that July 5th’s magnitude 7.1 earthquake, which occurred under the nearby Mojave desert, had on Devils Hole and its occupants, the endangered Devils Hole pupfish. The waves created by the earthquake caused the water to rise and drop between ten and fifteen feet, but evidently had no impact on the fish. Click on the following link to see them. Source: [Death Valley NP](#).
- *Denali NP* – Preliminary numbers are in on this year’s climbing season on Denali. A total of 1,230 climbers attempted to reach the summit, with 793 (65%) reaching the top. Only 21 climbers ascended Mount Foraker; of those, eight reached the top (38%). Source: Maureen Gualtieri, [Denali NP](#).
- *Glacier NP* – A video taken by a park visitor that might be called “Bears Just Wanna Have Fun” has been posted to social media and has gotten a lot of hits. It shows a bear sliding and gamboling across a park snowfield, clearly having a good time. You can see it at the following link. Source: [KPAX News](#).
- *Grand Canyon NP* – The park is seeking to enhance telecommunications services within its developed areas due to both operational needs for more bandwidth for the park and to visitor complaints about limited cell and data services. The proposed action would add up to five telecommunications towers and install cellular nodes and fiber optic cables in portions of the North and South Rims that already have been developed. Public comments on the proposal will be accepted until August 11th at [the park’s PEPC website](#). After they’re received, an environmental impact assessment will be conducted in conjunction with state officials. Source: Tom Maxedon, [KJZZ News](#).
- *Isle Royale NP* – Isle Royale has received “traditional cultural property” status, a federal designation that recognizes the island as the ancestral home of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, who know it as Minong. A ceremony recognizing the new designation was held on the island on July 23rd. A member of the tribal council who spoke at the event recognized two people who had worked to make this recognition of the tribe’s ties to Isle Royale happen – late tribal chair Norman Deschampe and retired superintendent Tim Cochrane. The link that follows provides additional details on the ceremony. Source: Rhonda Silence, [WTIP News](#).
- *Point Reyes NS* – The park will be releasing a draft ranching management plan in August. Up for consideration in the draft GMP and EIS are options ranging from continuing ranching as it currently exists to removing cattle from the seashore. Once the draft is released next month, the public will have 45 days to comment on the way ranching and dairy operations and Tule elk at the national seashore should be managed in the future. This contest between permitted ranching operations and elk has been heated and the subject of a legal fight that came to a head two years ago when a court approved a multi-party settlement agreement in which the park agreed to prepare a GMP amendment and EIS addressing the management of the lands currently leased for ranching in Point Reyes and the north district of Golden Gate. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes NL* – The park has become the first NPS area to allow visitors to use a powerful 'track chair' to experience trails. Park trails can be steep and/or sandy, making them a challenge for people who require hiking mobility assistance. Now, they can rent motorized chairs with treaded tracks to get around. The track chair program, run by Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, is currently operating on a mile-and-a-half loop on the Bay View Trail, which goes through a meadow, past some historic farms, and up a bluff to an overlook of Lake Michigan. Source: Michelle Lou, [CNN](#).

- *Washington Monument* – The monument will reopen to the public next month following a three-year closure in order to construct a new security screening building and to modernize the elevator that takes visitors to the 500-foot observation level. Source: [WJLA News](#).
- *Yosemite NP* – DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite, Inc. (Delaware North), the United States of America, and Yosemite Hospitality, LLC (Aramark) have settled the lawsuit filed by Delaware North related to that company's former concession contract at Yosemite with the National Park Service. The settlement involves the transfer of trademarks and service marks at issue in the lawsuit from Delaware North to Aramark. Under Aramark's Yosemite concession contract with the National Park Service, those trademarks and service marks will transfer at no cost to the National Park Service upon the expiration or termination of Aramark's contract. The settlement also involves Delaware North's transfer of various types of tangible assets (not previously purchased by Aramark) to Aramark and the National Park Service. Finally, the settlement provides for payments to Delaware North from Aramark and the United States to resolve any and all contractual disputes among the three parties arising from Delaware North's departure as a concessioner at Yosemite and Aramark's assumption of its Yosemite concession contract. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Zion NP* – The park is getting ready to receive its first two battery-electric buses as a test for replacing its entire fleet of buses, now almost 20 years old. The new buses, designed by Proterra, will begin running on the Springdale shuttle route in August. The current park shuttles run on propane. The plan is to replace all of them with electric buses over time. Source: Mikayla Shoup, [St. George News](#).

## **The Federal Government**

### **The Administration**

News from the administration – including the Department of the Interior – of consequence to federal land management and environmental protection agencies and to their employees.

- *Final Tab Calculated For President's Fourth Of July Event* – According to ABC News, the president's Fourth of July celebration cost the federal government and city of Washington \$5.35 million. The number came from an Interior Department letter released exclusively to ABC News. DOI and the NPS spent \$2.45 million on staffing, medical services, barricades, and other logistics for the event, called "A Salute to America," which does not include the cost of other Fourth of July events like the Capitol Fourth concert. The city of Washington and the Department of Defense said the Salute to America event and security cost them \$1.7 million and \$1.2 million, respectively, bringing the total cost of the event to \$5.35 million. Source: Stephanie Ebbs, [ABC News](#).
- *Bernhardt Lists DOI Accomplishments Since Becoming Secretary* – On July 24th, Secretary Bernhardt sent an email to all DOI employees entitled "Working Together: Accomplishments Over The Last Hundred Days." The document is too long to cite here in full; what follows are some excerpts either pertaining or of potential interest to the Service: 1) The NPS is discontinuing an internal management practice that has generally limited Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) funds from being used to pay for permanent employees; the new approach permits park superintendents to use these funds to hire permanent staff engaged in FLREA-related work; 2) DOI is continuing "to implement the institutionalization of the unified regional management initiative by establishing the template for Special Field Assistants and establishing Field Committees for each Unified Region; 3) BLM has released a draft EIS on proposed fuel breaks for the Great Basin for a 45-day public comment period (the EIS analyzes a system of up to 11,000 miles of strategically placed fuel breaks to control wildfires within a 223 million-acre area that includes portions of Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California, Nevada and Utah). The message ends with this interesting but somewhat opaque observation: "As decision-makers, please understand that I expect you to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the factual and legal setting, as well as our actual decision

space when making a determination. Our conclusions must be grounded in the facts and the laws as they exist, rather than the facts or laws we might wish to exist to fit a desired policy option.” Source: Department of the Interior.

- *BLM HQ Heads West* – BLM’s headquarters office is headed for Grand Junction, Colorado – subject, perhaps, to approval by Congress (it’s not clear whether the administration can move BLM without Congress first exercising its oversight role). A total of 27 people, including the director, deputy director and their staffs, will move to Grand Junction. Another 222 employees will move to BLM state offices; 85 will relocate to Colorado, split between the state office and BLM’s National Operations Center in Lakewood; 74 will be reallocated to state offices and report to state directors; and 61 will remain at DOI in Washington D.C. Source: Caitlyn Kim and Stina Sieg, [Colorado Public Radio News](#).

## **House and Senate**

News stories on legislation, hearings and other Congressional activities that either supplement or expand upon the “Congressional Actions” section above.

- *DOI’s Proposed National Register Rule Challenged* – Representatives Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Deb Haaland (D-NM) have sent a letter to Secretary Bernhardt and the acting director of the National Park Service criticizing DOI’s proposed rule (issued on March 1st) regarding the preservation of historic properties on the National Register of Historic Places. The letter calls for the Department “to hold meaningful government-to-government consultations with Tribes on the proposed policy, which have not yet occurred despite the proposed rule’s clear negative impact on tribes’ ability to protect sacred spaces on public land.” Source: [Rep. Ruben Gallego](#).
- *Bears Ears NM Restoration* – Representative Gallego has introduced a bill entitled The Bears Ears Expansion And Respect For Sovereignty Act (H.R. 871), which restore the monument to the boundaries established by the Obama administration and expand it to the acreage originally recommended for inclusion by local and regional tribes. It’s been referred to the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, but has yet to be acted upon. Source: Society for American Archeology.
- *New Cahokia Mounds NHP Proposed* – On July 18th, Representative Mike Bost (R-IL) introduced bipartisan legislation to establish national park status for Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site. It would be called the Cahokia Mounds and Mississippian Culture National Historic Park and would include mounds in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties, as well as Sugarloaf Mound in St. Louis. The park would be jointly managed by the Service and local stakeholders. Often called “America’s First City,” Cahokia was built by the Mississippians and, at its peak around 1200 A.D. was home to 10,000 to 20,000 people. Today, Cahokia Mounds is a 2,200-acre state historic site made up of more than 70 mounds. Cahokia Mounds is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a National Historic Landmark and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Source: [The Alton Telegraph](#).

## **Elsewhere In Fedland...**

News items pertaining to other agencies and organizations, both in the nation’s capital and in its far flung outposts.

- *EPA Okays Bee Damaging Insecticide* – “The Environmental Protection Agency [has] approved broad new applications ...for a controversial insecticide,” reports the *Washington Post*, “despite objections from environmental groups and beekeepers who say it is among the compounds responsible for eviscerating the nation’s bee populations. Alexandra Dunn, head of the EPA office that oversees pesticides, said the agency was ‘thrilled’ to be able to approve new uses and lift past restrictions on sulfoxaflor, which she called a ‘highly effective’ tool for growers around the country — but which the agency itself considers ‘very highly toxic’ to bees...” Dunn said

that the act will provide “strong protection for pollinators.” Said an attorney for Earthjustice: “At a time when honeybees and other pollinators are dying in greater numbers than ever before, EPA’s decision to remove restrictions on yet another bee-killing pesticide is nothing short of reckless.” Source: Brady Dennis, [Washington Post](#).

## 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

Reports on the national and international climate and conservation crisis.

- *Climate-Related Disasters Continue To Increase* – According to a warning from top United Nations officials, climate-related disasters are now happening at a rate of one per week. In an interview with the *Guardian*, Mami Mizutori, the U.N. secretary-general's special representative on disaster risk reduction, said that even though major catastrophes such as the drought currently afflicting India are making worldwide headlines, large numbers of "lower impact events" are also causing death, displacement, and suffering and are currently being overlooked. The rate of climate-related disasters is also increasing in the U.S., according to [a new report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), which said that from 2016 to 2018 the average number of billion-dollar disasters totaled 15 each year, while the average for 1980 to 2018 was just 6.2 events per year. Source: Alexandra Patel and Monica Medina, [Our Daily Planet](#).
- *‘Toxic Stew’ Stirred Up by Disasters Poses Long-Term Danger* – Following closely on the above was this report from the New York Times: “New research shows that the extreme weather and fires of recent years, similar to the flooding that has struck Louisiana and the Midwest, may be making Americans sick in ways researchers are only beginning to understand. By knocking chemicals loose from soil, homes, industrial-waste sites or other sources, and spreading them into the air, water and ground, disasters like these — often intensified by climate change — appear to be exposing people to an array of physical ailments including respiratory disease and cancer. ‘We are sitting on a pile of toxic poison,’ said Naresh Kumar, a professor of environmental health at the University of Miami, referring to the decades’ worth of chemicals present in the environment. ‘Whenever we have these natural disasters, they are stirred. And through this stirring process, we get more exposure to these chemicals.’” Source: Christopher Flavelle, [New York Times](#).
- *Speed Of Melting Of Himalayan Glaciers Doubles* – A new study that used declassified images from spy satellites shows that glaciers in the Himalayas melted twice as fast from 2000 to 2016 as they did from 1975 to 2000. A recent report by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, a regional intergovernmental organization in Nepal working on sustainable development in mountains, predicts that the Himalayas could lose 64 percent of their ice by the year 2100. Source: [EarthSky.org](#).

### National Park System Issues

**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:

- *Joshua Tree NP* – A new study that looked at global warming’s impact on the park’s Joshua trees suggests that the iconic trees won’t survive much past this century without dramatic action to reduce climate change. [The study](#), which appeared in the peer-reviewed journal *Ecosphere*, examined data from more than 4,000 trees in order to predict how our warming climate might effect the park’s namesake trees, as well as to find out whether the trees are already in trouble. The researchers found that Joshua trees have been migrating to higher

elevation parts of the park that have cooler weather and more moisture in the ground. In hotter, drier areas, the adult trees aren't producing as many younger plants, and the ones they do produce aren't surviving. Source: Eleanor Imster, [EarthSky.org](#).

- *Zion NP* – “The California condor is North America’s largest bird, a powerful (if not conventionally beautiful) creature that feasts on carrion and can soar to heights of 15,000 feet,” reports Brigit Katz on Smithsonian.com. “In 1982, just 22 of these impressive animals remained in the world, their populations decimated by a slew of human-related factors: lead poisoning, habitat destruction, pollution and hunting. So wildlife experts were thrilled to confirm that a new baby California condor had hatched within the cliffs of Utah’s Zion National Park, making it the 1000th chick to hatch since the launch of an official breeding program to save the species in the ‘80s.” A Utah state biologist called the event a “monumental milestone in the condor recovery program.” Source: Brigit Katz, [Smithsonian.com](#).

**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:

- *Olympic NP* – The ongoing effort to remove exotic goats from the park continues to move forward – 76 mountain goats were successfully moved from the park and from Olympic National Forest to the Cascade Mountains in July. So far, 174 of the nonnative mammals have been rounded up and moved to the Cascades, where they belong, since last September. Another round of goat relocation is planned for August. Source: [KOMO News](#).
- *Everglades NP/Big Cypress NP* – On July 16th, scientists opened 100 vials, each containing 10 lab-raised bugs called thrips, in a Brazilian pepper-infested Broward County park. The event occurred before an audience of journalists and officials and was meant to demonstrate how subsequent releases into the Everglades will work. Brazilian peppers originally were imported as landscape accents more than a century ago but soon escaped into the wild, creating dense thickets where little else can grow. Soft-bodied sap-suckers, these thrips (*Pseudophilothrips ichini*) feast on the tender growing tips of the peppers. The hope is they will be as successful as several other exotic-eating critters, like the air potato beetle and the melaleuca sawfly, both of which have made significant dents in the invasive plants. Source: Amy Bennett Williams, [Fort Meyers News-Press](#).

**Park Carrying Capacity** – Management challenges pertaining to the balance between park protection and use.

- *Rocky Mountain NP* – The Colorado Department of Transportation will expand its Bustang regional bus network with service from Denver to Estes Park, beginning in August. That line will connect to the park’s hiker shuttle, which requires a park entrance pass in order to board. The shuttle runs every 30 minutes from the Estes Park Visitors Center. “That noise you just heard,” wrote reporter John Meyer, “was a collective sigh of relief from all of the drivers who have been stuck in mile-long backups while trying to enter the park.” Source: John Meyer, [Denver Post](#).

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

- *Mid-Atlantic Parks* – The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals has thrown out a USFWS permit for the proposed [Atlantic Coast Pipeline](#), which would run through several parks, forests and other natural areas, because it failed to protect threatened and endangered species in the pipeline’s path. Construction on the natural gas pipeline has been stopped since last December, when a number of permits were called into question or overturned, including those from the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Forest Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Those permits are still outstanding. “[Dominion Energy’s] permitting problems are entirely self-inflicted—it chose a risky and unreasonable route and didn’t let the Fish and Wildlife Service do its job,” said an attorney for the plaintiffs. “Dominion keeps trying to bend the law to its



objectives by exerting political pressure on federal agencies instead of following the law like everyone else is required to do.” Source: [Southern Environmental Law Center](#).

## **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 Issues Statement On President Trump’s Speech On The Environment](#)
- [Opinion by Marcia Blaszak: Alaska’s Parks And Public Lands Deserve Protection](#)

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

## **Park People**

### **NPS Alumni Passing Of Rich Schneider**

Career NPS manager Richard Schneider, 72, passed away on June 3rd in Prescott, Arizona.

Rich grew up in a family that loved nature and the outdoors. Some of his favorite memories included family camping with his aunts, uncles and cousins in Michigan – climbing Sleeping Bear Dunes, and hunting for [Petoskey stones](#). His passion for exploring and preserving the natural wonders of the world sustained a lifelong career in service of these ideals.

Rich attended Michigan State University, where he earned a BS in wildlife biology and an MS in park planning. The definitive experience of Rich’s life was his time in the Peace Corps, where he came to love both the people and natural beauty of the Philippines. He served his first tour with the Pinatubo Aetas where he learned to haul water, eat the occasional beetle larvae, and sleep under a mosquito net while he helped the village in their rice production.

After completing his education, he returned to the Philippines to help with their budding national park system. He met his wife, Barbara Edmondson, a fellow volunteer, while working at the St. Paul Subterranean National Park on the island of Palawan.

Rich’s academic and park management experience led him to a 34-year career as a manager for the National Park Service. He traversed the country with his family to work in some of the nation’s true treasures, and spent the last few years of his career with a national team to help improve and standardize the care of park buildings and resources.

Rich wrote and published articles for the Peace Corps, National Park Service, and the Department of the Interior. In his retirement, he published a memoir of his first years in the Peace Corps as *Living with the Pinatubo Aetas: A Peace Corps Philippines Journal*.

“His personal will power and passion, his desire to help others, and his devotion to environmental organizations impacted more people than he knew,” said a close friend.

Rich is survived by devoted wife, Barbara; son Aaron (Vanessa) Schneider; daughter Katie (Emilio) Sartori; granddaughter Elena Schneider; brother Robert Schneider; sister Suzanne (Hans) Borstad; mother-in-law Donna Edmondson; and aunt Marge Cecil. Rich supported organizations for parks and environmental protection, the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (a scholarship program), and organizations for Parkinson’s research.

Source: [The Daily Courier](#), Prescott, Arizona.

## **From The Archives**



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

- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – A ten-year-old boy became separated from his father while in the park on Tuesday, July 19th, and subsequently became lost. A full-scale search was begun which employed ground searchers, several Tennessee Army Air National Guard helicopters, and an Army helicopter from Fort Campbell equipped with infrared detection equipment. Signs of the boy were found in the Goshen Prong drainage and the Huggins drainage on the 22nd, and he was found walking in the latter area about two miles west of Clingman's Dome early that afternoon. He was in good spirits and physically unharmed despite spending three days and nights alone and without food or water. He was later reunited with members of his extended family at Clingman's Dome. A large media contingent witnessed and reported on the event. Submitted by Chief Ranger Jason Houck.
- *Chiricahua NM* – On the afternoon of July 20th, four brothers hiking near the Heart of Rocks area suffered lightning strike injuries. The oldest, age 40, apparently suffered a direct hit; his three younger brothers were knocked to the ground and suffered assorted minor injuries. One of the brothers, a doctor, began CPR on the eldest and obtained a pulse within five to ten minutes. Another brother returned to the trail head, a distance of about three miles, and flagged down a visitor, who took him to the park's visitor center. Park staff responded on foot, and two Forest Service helicopters from the Rattlesnake Fire on the adjacent Coronado National Forest flew to the scene. A state police helicopter also responded. A landing zone was cleared and the victim was flown to a waiting ambulance, then taken to a hospital. At the time of the report, he was in guarded condition. Submitted by Superintendent Carol Kruse.
- *Yosemite NP* – During the afternoon and evening of July 12th and in the early morning hours of July 13th, Yosemite Valley was hit ten times by car clouters (auto burglars). On July 20th, the park was again hit by clouters, who broke into seven vehicles – five in the Valley, one at Mono Meadows, and one at Wawona Hotel. The MO matched the previous week's burglaries in which windows were opened with a pry tool that left marks consistent with a large, flathead screwdriver. All the vehicles in this round of break-ins were Ford Aerostar mini-vans. Later that night, Valley District rangers staked out several parking lots. Around 1:30 a.m., a 911 call came in of a vehicle break-in at Curry Village. While plain clothes rangers continued to watch this lot for suspects, ranger Chris Pergiel set up a checkpoint on the only road leading to the area. The fifth vehicle to arrive at the check point was driven by a man wearing batting gloves. As Pergiel spoke with him, he noticed a large screwdriver on the floor at the driver's feet. Further examination of the car revealed property stolen in the earlier burglaries. The driver and his passenger were arrested for possession of stolen property. Both are from the Bay Area. The driver was found to have an extensive criminal history, including felony convictions for arson and burglary; his companion had no history. Under counsel of the federal defender, the companion agreed to assist the investigation in return for prosecutorial consideration. A search warrant is being sought for the driver's residence based on information that the companion provided. Also in the car at the time of the arrest was a credit card reported stolen from a Ford Aerostar van at Point Reyes on July 19th. Submitted by Criminal Investigator Dan Horner.

## Acknowledgements

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- Issue Contributors: Maureen Finnerty, Jeff Manoe, Bob Martin, Elizabeth Oster, Larry Hilaire, Andy Ringgold, Bob Marriott, Dick Martin

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 areas administered by the National Park Service have been set aside to preserve a precious part of our national heritage. It is not always realized, however, that this heritage requires sympathetic study and presentation if it is to be of maximum benefit to the public. The interpretative service is designed to fulfill this need and to contribute to the national education and to the maintenance of confidence in the American way of living. This service may well be a potent force in maintaining national equilibrium in the trying times which appear to lie ahead."

[Director Arthur Demaray](#)

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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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