



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, August 7, 2019

Volume 3

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Incidents

Death Valley NP Pilot Killed, Several Injured In Navy Jet Crash

A Navy F/A-18E Super Hornet fighter crashed during a training mission over the park last Wednesday, resulting in the death of the pilot and injuries to seven park visitors.

All seven were treated at the Grossman Burn Center at West Hills Hospital. Two were admitted to the hospital, another four will ultimately require surgery for severe burn injuries, and one person sustained burns that don't require intensive care.

The jet went down on the west side of the park near the Father Crowley Overlook. The overlook is an area informally known as "Star Wars Canyon," which has been used for military training flights since the 1930s.

The aircraft was based at Naval Air Station Lemoore in California. Although military jets are not supposed to fly over national parks, an exception has been made for this section of the park.

Sources: Richard Gonzalez, [National Public Radio](#); [KGO-TV News](#).

Hot Springs NP Bathhouse Closed Due To Legionnaire's Disease Bacteria

Quapaw Bath and Spa was closed last weekend after the park received preliminary positive results of Legionella bacteria from water samples taken at three interior areas and a fountain outside the spa.

The park reports that it is also "aware" of three cases of Legionnaires' disease that have occurred over approximately the last year to spa visitors, but adds that it is as yet unknown if the spa was the source of the bacteria that caused them to become sick.

The National Park Service, Public Health Service officials, and the staff at the Quapaw are "immediately working to ensure that the presence of the bacteria is fully addressed." Also working on the problem are representatives from the Arkansas Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Source: Brent Everitt, [Hot Springs NP](#).

Mammoth Cave NP Visitor Fires Shot After Reportedly Seeing Bigfoot

Rangers are investigating an incident that occurred this past Sunday in which a visitor fired one gunshot after reportedly seeing a [Bigfoot](#) (it's not clear stylistically whether one refers to a Bigfoot singularly or as one of a race of Bigfeet).

Rangers responded to a report of a person with a firearm at one of the park's backcountry campsites around 2 a.m. Sunday morning. Although no additional information has yet been released on what occurred, a man camping there with his girlfriend provided the following report to a local news station.

The camper said that the two of them went to sleep around 11 p.m. and woke up around 1 a.m. to people shining flashlights on their tent. The couple exited their tent to find a man and his young son approaching. The man said that something had destroyed his campsite and that he kept hearing strange sounds, so he was going to investigate because this was "Bigfoot Country." The man reportedly showed the couple his gun and told them if they heard gunshots, they should run.

The pair returned to their tent; five or ten minutes later, they heard at least one gunshot. The man and his son returned to the couple's tent and said that Bigfoot had emerged from the woods, and approached them, so he had fired his weapon. Due to the bizarre circumstances, the man and his girlfriend immediately packed up and left the campsite.

The incident remains under investigation.

Source: Josh Breslow, [Clarksvillenow.com](#).

Hot Springs NP Police Officer And Assailant Both Injured In Exchange Of Shots

On July 28th, a man causing a disturbance and threatening bystanders along Bathhouse Row was shot by Hot Springs police. A Hot Springs officer was struck twice in the exchange of gunfire with the man. He was treated and released later that day.

Central Avenue was blocked for hours because of the incident, which occurred in the national park between the Lamar Bath House, where the Bathhouse Row Emporium is located, and the Administration Building at the south end of Bathhouse Row.

Jonathan Scott, 31, who was hit several times in the exchange, was transported to a local hospital, where he was reported to be in critical condition.

Scott was arrested on Friday, July 26th, and charged with failure to appear on July 23rd on an original charge of public intoxication dating back to July 8th. He was released the same day on a \$1,000 bond. On May 3rd, Scott had pleaded no contest to misdemeanor charges of driving on a suspended driver's license, disorderly conduct and obstructing government operations, stemming from an arrest on April 29th. Scott was sentenced to 30 days' probation at that time, and the court recommended he undergo mental health treatment.

The chief of police for Hot Springs has asked that the investigation be handled by the Arkansas State Police, Garland County sheriff's office, the FBI and the National Park Service.

Source: Steven Mross, [Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#).

Great Smoky Mountains NP Missing Man Found After Five-Day Search

On July 31st, a 58-year-old man who was the subject of a major five-day search was found "alert and responsive" in the southeast area of the park near the Cataloochee Divide Trail.

Earlier that afternoon, searchers found his hat and sunglasses southeast of the trail; a second team then found footprints leading toward Ferguson Cabin. Within a few hours, he was discovered after

responding to searcher's yells – just three-quarters of a mile from the point last seen. He was taken from the park to Haywood Regional Medical Center, where his family was to meet him.

The man was last seen at the Swag Resort in Haywood County the afternoon of July 27th. Search and rescue workers from some 60 agencies and five states joined in efforts to find the man, who suffers from “significant dementia.”

Over the five-day period, searchers worked in groups of about ten people in dense, steep terrain. They hiked all trails in the area looking for him, posting informational flyers at trailheads and interviewing hikers. Local officers and fire department personnel also went door to door notifying homeowners adjacent to the park boundary to be on the lookout for him. They contacted more than 400 residents and also searched outbuildings and barns into which he might have wandered.

Source: Karen Chávez, [Asheville Citizen Times](#).

Yosemite NP One Killed, Two Injured In Separate Falling Accidents

A man died and two others were injured in three separate falls last week at popular tourist stops in the park.

Two of the incidents took place at Bridalveil Fall, including one last Wednesday in which 21-year-old Lucian Miu of Romania died. The other occurred on Monday. In both cases, the men hiked to the viewing platform below Bridalveil Fall, then scrambled up the boulder field toward the plunge pool area; in both cases, they slipped off the wet boulders and fell 20 feet to the base of the fall.

A third incident occurred Thursday at Lower Yosemite Fall. In that instance, the visitor slipped off a boulder, fell into Yosemite Creek, and became trapped underwater between several rocks. The victim was able to escape with the help of bystanders.

Over the last few years, there have been 23 documented incidents at Bridalveil Fall alone in which visitors have slipped and injured themselves.

Source: Marilyn Castaneda, [Sacramento Bee](#).

Voyageurs NP Park Hit By First-Ever Tornado

On July 17th, a severe storm passing over the park produced a tornado – the first confirmed tornado to touch down in the park in its 44-year history.

The tornado touched down shortly after 8 p.m. on the north side of Locator Lake and traveled northeast toward Saginaw Bay. The path was about three-and-a-half miles long. Aerial reconnaissance on July 24th confirmed the tornado's passage and the extent of the damage it caused. Most of the damage occurred within the park's proposed wilderness area, where few visitors venture, but a portion of the Locator Lake trail and a few houseboat mooring sites on Marion Bay, Rainy Lake, were affected.

Two families from were onboard a Rainy Lake Houseboat, enjoying a vacation on Marion Bay West, when the storm came through. They credited staff at both Rainy Lake Houseboats and the park for quickly checking in with them after the storm to make sure they were okay. They were.

“Our climate is changing,” said Steve Windels, a wildlife biologist at Voyageurs National Park. “We already are seeing that severe weather events are getting more extreme in our area, often accompanied with high rainfall amounts in summer storms. We're not sure if this also means a higher likelihood of things like tornadoes in our future.”

Source: Emily Gedde, [International Falls Journal](#).

Great Smoky Mountains NP Visitor Killed In Rock Slide

A 73-year-old Georgia man was killed in a rock slide that occurred on the Gatlinburg Spur on the afternoon of Thursday, August 1st.

Although it's not clear whether the slide directly caused the accident, investigators determined that trees that came down the slope with it fell on the man's vehicle and caused his death.

The Sevier County area received four inches of rain in an hour on Thursday afternoon, causing the slide.

Source: [WVLT News](#).

Rocky Mountain NP Teenager Rescued After Serious Fall

A 19-year-old had to be airlifted to a local hospital after she took a fall on a steep, snow-covered area near Andrews Creek on Tuesday, July 17th. She slid about 80 feet down the slope, landed in some rocks, and sustained numerous injuries. By the time the park's SAR team arrived on scene around 3:30 p.m., she was also suffering from hypothermia.

Team members provided advanced medical care for the woman and called for a Colorado National Guard helicopter to assist with her evacuation. The helicopter crew was able to extricate the teenager using a hoist operation around 8 p.m. with the help of Rocky Mountain Rescue Group members. She was flown to Upper Beaver Meadows and was transferred by ambulance to a local hospital's emergency room.

Source: Stephanie Butzer, [TheDenverChannel.com](#).

Shenandoah NP Missing Dog Rescued After Eleven Days

A dog that was reported missing in the park on July 4th was found on July 15th after hikers happened upon him just off the Stony Man Trail.

Kelly McDuffie said that she and her hiking partner found the dog – Max – hiding in the brush near a spring. They found him purely by happenstance when they ventured a few feet off the trail after hearing a spring and then seeing some wild blackberries.

McDuffie said Max was uncomfortable, growled at them, and appeared to have an injured leg when he was found. Rangers were called and Max was taken to safety on a stretcher as a precaution, quickly warming up to the people attending to him.

A vet said Max lost 10 pounds during the time he was missing. His legs were weak, but other than some scratches, he was healthy and was reunited with his family.

Source: Brian Tynes, [WDBJ News](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Theodore Roosevelt NP* – [Correction](#) (yes, another one – your editor is slipping): The victim in the bison goring at Theodore Roosevelt was a teenage male, not a female. The original article in the *Bismarck Tribune* was silent on gender; evidently my entering it right after the similar story

about a girl being tossed by a bison at Yellowstone led to the error. Thanks to the several people who caught the mistake and sent along notes.

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center National Preparedness Level Raised To PL 3

The national preparedness level has gone up a step to PL 3. Fire activity in western states jumped on Monday, with ten new large fires reported. As of that date, 93 large fires were burning in ten western states and Alaska; together, they've burned 1.7 million acres to date.

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

NPS/Interagency Fire News – Stories pertaining to wildland fire and fire-related activities that involved the NPS and its fellow agencies.

- *Howe Ridge Fire Video Released* – The NPS has released a video documenting the first 36 hours of the Howe Ridge Fire, which burned 14,000 acres in the park in 2018. "The video documents steps firefighters took to attack the wildland fire initially, and the combination of factors that made initial attack unsuccessful," says the associated press release. "The video also documents evacuation and structural firefighting efforts. The goal of the video is to share these efforts and raise awareness about this incident to other public land management agencies, people who visit and recreate on public lands, and residents who live in wildland fire prone areas." The video is just over 27 minutes long and can be seen at the following link. Source: [Fairfield Sun Times](#).
- *All-Woman Crew Working On Alaska Fire* – An all-women fire crew based out of Wyoming was on the fire lines in Alaska as of July 23rd. BLM and the Montana Conservation Corps partnered up in 2017 to train women to get certified for wildland firefighting. According to a press release, the team traveled by plane, helicopter, and boat to reach the Hadweenzic River Fire in eastern Alaska. "Montana Conservation Corp's innovative Women's Fire Crew addresses the gender disparity in wildland firefighting, giving women the opportunity to work alongside and empower one another while providing a platform to break into careers in wildland firefighting," reads the press release. "The Women's Fire Crew gives young female sawyers the chance to receive training and work on habitat restoration and fuels reduction projects without the heavy burden of working against gendered expectations. In the process, they earn certifications that allow them to begin their careers as wildland firefighters." Source: [KTMF News](#).

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	July 23rd	July 30th	August 6th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	1	2	2
Type 1 Teams	2	2	1
Type 2 Teams	5	5	6
Crews	154	210	257
Engines	203	314	390
Helicopters	39	70	101
Total FF/Overhead	5,630	7,220	9,169

Fires/Acreage

Category	2019 Total	2009-2018 Ave	2019 Variance
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United States: YTD Fires	27,606	39,397	- 30%
United States: YTD Acres	3,310,790	4,155,217	- 20%
Canada: YTD Fires	3,348	---	---
Canada: YTD Acres	1,906,094	---	---

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 29 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 290, celebrating 50 years of environmental progress in the Cuyahoga River Valley and Lake Erie.

July 30 – The Committee on Environment and Public Works approved, among other business items, S. 2302, to authorize funds for federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs. This legislation provides funding for the Federal Lands Highways Program managed by each of the federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service. The NPS funding levels authorized are: \$330 million for fiscal year 2021; \$338 million for fiscal year 2022; \$346 million for fiscal year 2023; \$354 million for fiscal year 2024; and \$362 million for fiscal year 2025. There are funds in the bill authorized for other programs that NPS could compete for that would supplement the amounts mentioned above.

July 30 – The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management held a hearing to examine solutions to improve federal hiring. Testimony was heard from Yvonne D. Jones, Director, Strategic Issues, Government Accountability Office; Angela Bailey, Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Homeland Security; and Daniel R. Sitterly, Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security, and Preparedness.

August 1 - The Senate 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. 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. The bill passed by a vote of 67 yeas to 28 nays. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

August 1 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 305, designating the week of September 14 through September 21, 2019, as “National Estuaries Week”.

August 1 – The Senate approved the nomination of Mark Lee Greenblatt of Maryland to be inspector general for the Department of the Interior.

Following completion of its session on August 1st, the Senate began its annual summer recess, It will not return until September 9th.

House Actions

July 12 – Update: As noted in July 24th edition, the House passed H.R. 2500, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, and to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. The text of the passed bill is now available. The provisions related to the National Park Service are found in two sections. The first is Division A, Title X, Subtitle H, which includes the following:

- Sec. 1094, to provide for the inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall of the names of the lost crew members of the *U.S.S. Frank E. Evans* killed on June 3, 1969 (the Department of Defense has jurisdiction over which names go on the memorial wall and has determined that the lost crew members do not meet the criteria for inclusion);
- Sec. 1099, to express the sense of Congress that the secretary of defense should upgrade the general and summary discharges to honorable discharges for each of the Port Chicago 50 sailors prosecuted and convicted following the deadliest home front disaster in World War II;
- Sec. 1099F, to authorize the secretary of defense to contribute up to \$5 million to the National Maritime Heritage Grants program, which is administered by the National Park Service. This action is likely a result of the Defense Department having the law changed a few years back, without any input from the National Park Service, that required all funds from the sale of vessels sold for scrap to be returned to the Defense Department instead of being split with the National Park Service as they had been in the past. The NPS had been in discussions with the Defense Department to have its share of the funds reinstated;
- Sec. 1099O, is similar language to Sec. 1094, above. The repetition is not uncommon in a large, complex bill such as H.R. 2500 that has multiple amendments being coordinated by members of Congress and their staffs (if the language is retained in the conference with the Senate on the bill, the duplication will be eliminated; Sec. 1099U, to increase the limitation on federal funding for the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor from \$12 million to \$14 million.

The remaining provision is found under Division B, Title XXVIII, Subtitle F:

- Sec. 2861-2866, to authorize the establishment of the White Sands National Park consisting of the White Sands National Monument and 8,592 acres transferred from secretary of the army from the White Sands Missile Range. The bill also authorizes the transfer of 3,737 acres from the secretary of the interior to the secretary of the army.

The House is in its annual summer recess and will 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.

- *Summer Park Travel List #1: Best Eastern Lodges* – As noted previously in this newsletter, summer invariably brings with it media “best” lists for national parks. This one from AARP lists the best park lodges in the East – Greyfield Inn on Cumberland Island, The Inn At Brandywine Falls in Cuyahoga Valley, The Lodge at Mammoth Cave, the Pisgah Inn on Blue Ridge Parkway, and Rock Harbor Lodge at Isle Royale NP. The article provides additional info and some fine photos of the inns. Source: Ken Budd, [AARP](#).
- *Summer Park Travel List #2: Best Parks For ‘Thrills’* – CNN Travel has posted a list of the best NPS areas (out of all 419) where you can engage in “adventurous activities.” For each activity,

they provide one main entry and two “other adventurous” options. Here they are by category, with the second and third selections in parentheses: Hiking – The Narrows at Zion (Olympic and Hawaii Volcanoes); bicycling – Acadia (Glacier and Canyonlands); swimming – Trunk Bay at Virgin Islands (Little River Canyon and O’heo Gulch in Haleakalā); beach exploration – Point Reyes (Cape Cod and Gulf Islands); horseback riding – Rocky Mountain (Great Smoky Mountains and Theodore Roosevelt); camping – Denali (Assateague Island and Voyageurs); wildlife encounters – Yellowstone (Saguaro and Glacier Bay); scuba diving and snorkeling – Channel Islands (Dry Tortugas, War in the Pacific); whitewater rafting – Grand Canyon (Dinosaur and Big Bend); rock climbing – Joshua Tree (Sequoia-Kings Canyon and Grand Teton); ice climbing – Pictured Rocks (Wrangell-St. Elias and City of Rocks); wheelchair accessibility – Everglades (Congaree and Great Sand Dunes). Source: Forrest Brown, [CNN](#).

- *Summer Park Travel List #3: ‘Least-Visited National Parks’* – This list comes from Yahoo! Finance and is entitled “Find Real Summer Bucket-List Experiences at the Least-Visited National Parks.” The six sites listed are American Samoa, Tallgrass Prairie, Isle Royale, Cape Krusenstern, Kobuk Valley, and Lake Clark. Source: Sean Dennis, [Yahoo! Finance](#).
- *Eastern National Gets A New Name* – Last month, more than 150 formerly Eastern National store locations in national parks opened their doors to visitors with a new name: America’s National Parks. The following is from their press release: “On July 1, more than 150 of our National Park Service store locations opened their doors to visitors under the name America’s National Parks. This name change represents the first phase of a rebranding effort for the organization, to strengthen visitor awareness about the connection between the park, the park store, and the support their purchases provide for educational programming at that site. In addition to a new look and logo, the America’s National Parks brand brings a renewed emphasis on extending the park experience for visitors. New store signage makes it clear to visitors that the interpretive programs they’ve just experienced were funded by purchases made in the America’s National Parks store, for example.” Source: [Eastern National, aka America’s National Parks](#).

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.

- *Crater Lake NP* – The nonprofit Crater Lake Natural History Association has purchased what is known as Dutton Park, a recreational vehicle, camping and housing site just south of the park’s south entrance, in order to help the park deal with chronic seasonal housing shortages. The 34-acre site is located 14 miles from Crater Lake’s south entrance and 17 miles from park’s main visitor center. It has a main house, two older structures, three one-bedroom mobile home units, an old bath house, seven RV sites with full hookups and 18 campsites with partial hookups. Lack of housing, says the park’s superintendent, “severely impacts our ability to attract and retain personnel. We just don’t have any place to house these folks.” Source: Lee Juillerat, *Mail Tribune*, via [KTVL](#).
- *Fort Monroe NM* – Virginia’s two senators have proposed legislation that would transfer 44 acres of coastal land to the park. Sen. Mark R. Warner and Sen. Tim Kaine, both Democrats, say that the transfer would unify sections of Fort Monroe and achieve an unbroken coastline along the Chesapeake Bay that would be federally managed. If passed, the Fort Monroe National Monument Land Acquisition Act would require the Secretary of the Interior to work with Virginia in solving issues with managing several non-historic buildings on the land. Source: Lisa Vernon Sparks, [Daily Press](#).
- *Grand Canyon NP* – A DOI investigation has determined that buckets of uranium-bearing rock samples stored in a building on the South Rim posed no radioactive risk to park staff or visitors. Concern was raised early this year when a park employee emailed the *Arizona Republic* with claims that three five-gallon buckets with the ore were in somewhat close proximity to

staff and visitors for two decades. An investigative team of radiation, industrial hygiene, and safety and occupational health experts were sent to the park in February to identify the potential level of exposure and risk to visitors and employees. The team contracted with a technical firm to conduct a radiation dose reconstruction to determine the level of exposure when rock samples were stored in the facility; interviewed employees to document the manner in which the materials were stored, employee work practices and likely exposure pathways; analyzed past assessment reports and available radiation safety practices; and developed recommendations for managing collection samples in the future. Additionally, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed the report for accuracy. Source: Kurt Repanshek, [National Parks Traveler](#).

- *New River Gorge NR* – Over the period from July 22nd to August 2nd, the park provided support and activities for the attendees at the 2019 World Scout Jamboree, held at nearby Summit Bechtel Reserve. About 65,000 scouts and adult leaders from over 170 countries attended the event. This was the first time since 1967 that the event was held in the United States. Scouts had the opportunity to visit the park on half-day river trips along middle sections of the river. Hundreds of scouts were shuttled daily by commercial river outfitters to and from river access points at Glade Creek, Thayer, Stone Cliff and Cunard. During the Jamboree, NPS rangers from New River Gorge and other parks operated an outreach tent at the reserve along with staff from other Department of the Interior agencies. Exhibits showcased the diversity of public lands throughout the U.S. Scouts were able to earn the first-time offering of a Department of the Interior World Scout Jamboree patch by participating in a variety of hands-on activities. Source: [Fayette Tribune](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – On July 31st, IMR's acting regional director signed off on the FONSI for the EA for a project in which the park concessionaires, Xanterra and Delaware North, will develop seasonal housing for their employees at Canyon Village and the West Entrance. Housing improvements, funded by concessionaires, could begin as early as this fall. The project will include the construction of up to 14 recreational vehicle sites and six modular homes and rehabilitation of comfort stations to provide shower and laundry facilities at an abandoned camper loop in the Canyon Campground. It will also include construction of up to 25 RV sites and a bathhouse adjacent to the Yellowstone General Stores warehouse near the West Entrance. Source: Morgan Warthin, [Yellowstone NP](#).
- *Zion NP* – The park has taken a strong public stand against the increasingly popular practice of building rock cairns or engaging in the new modern art and hobby of “rock balancing,” where people create abstract towers with rocks. An online publication called Unofficial Networks has posted excerpts from a park press release on the practice along with three remarkable photos of these rock creations. Says the park: “Like graffiti, artistic expression like this has no place in our national parks. When at Zion, every responsible visitor should be following Leave No Trace principles. This means leaving no sign that a person traveled through the area. That’s zero impact!” Source: [Unofficialnetworks.com](#).

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.

- *Opponent Of Public Lands Becomes New Acting Head Of BLM* – “A conservative lawyer and writer who argues for selling off the nation's public lands is now in charge of a nearly quarter-billion acres in federally held rangeland and other wilderness,” reported the Associated Press last week. On July 29th, Secretary Bernhardt signed an order making William Pendley acting head of the agency. “Pendley, a former midlevel Interior appointee in the Reagan administration, for decades has championed ranchers and others in standoffs with the federal government over grazing and other uses of public lands. He has written books accusing federal

authorities and environmental advocates of ‘tyranny’ and ‘waging war on the West.’ He argued in a 2016 *National Review* article that the ‘Founding Fathers intended all lands owned by the federal government to be sold.’” The Wilderness Society called Pendley an “ideological zealot.” Nothing that he’s been selected to head the agency just as DOI is about to put into place plans to move BLM headquarters from Washington and disperse the headquarters staff among Western states, the Society’s conservation director said that his ascendancy “strongly suggests the administration is positioning itself to liquidate our shared public lands.” Source: Ellen Knickmeyer and Brady McComb, Associated Press, via [KOMO News](#).

House and Senate

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

- *Legislation Introduced To Protect Outdoor Workers From Rising Heat* – Two legislators in the House have introduced legislation that would protect Americans from extreme heat conditions in the workplace. The *Asunción Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act*, written by Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA) and Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), is named for a farmworker who suffered fatal heatstroke after working a 10-hour shift in 105-degree-Fahrenheit heat. The bill, says Greenwire, would compel OSHA to create firm requirements for things like workers' maximum duration of exposure to high temperatures in between breaks, access to water and proximity to sufficient shade. The bill would also require employers to train workers to look for the symptoms of heat-related illness. Source: [Greenwire](#).

Elsewhere In Fedland...

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

- *Public Lands And The Fate Of The West* – The *Los Angeles Times* last weekend ran a review of a new book by Christopher Ketcham entitled *This Land: How Cowboys, Capitalism, and Corruption are Ruining the American West*, which the reviewer describes as an impassioned effort to raise awareness of the greed, stubbornness and neglect that is harming public lands. Says Ketcham: “We are not safeguarding our public domain. The government agencies overseeing it are failing us. The private interests that want the land for profit have planted their teeth in the government. The national trend is against the preservation of the commons. Huge stretches are effectively privatized, public in name only.” Although environmental laws passed in the 1960s and ’70s have helped protect public lands and endangered species, federal agencies – particularly the Forest Service and BLM – have frequently failed to enforce regulations while allowing loggers, ranchers and drillers to degrade millions of acres of forests, grasslands and mountains at the expense of future generations. Ketcham, however, is empathetic with federal employees who try to do their best despite opposition from ranchers and extractive industries, often without the support of their own agencies. He closes with a call for action to protect our common lands before they’re lost to future generations. Source: Jeffrey Fleishman, [Los Angeles Times](#).

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.

- *July: The Hottest Month In Recorded History* – On Monday, August 5th, reports the *Washington Post*, “scientists officially pronounced July 2019 the warmest month the world has experienced

since record-keeping began more than a century ago.” How hot did it get? Paris recorded an all-time high temperature of 108.7 degrees; a massive ice melt in Greenland sent 197 billion tons of water pouring into the Atlantic Ocean; Siberia and Alaska were hit by massive wildfires. “July has rewritten climate history, with dozens of new temperature records at [the] local, national and global level,” said Petteri Taalas, secretary general of the World Meteorological Organization. “This is not science fiction. It is the reality of climate change. It is happening now, and it will worsen in the future without urgent climate action.” Source: By Brady Dennis and Andrew Freedman, [Washington Post](#).

- *Major Fires Burning Throughout Siberia* – Russia has declared a state of emergency in five regions in Siberia after a million people signed petitions demanding that the government do something about the unprecedented wildfires. As of last week, 3 million hectares (almost 7.5 million acres) of forest were burning and 12 million hectares (nearly 30 million acres) had already been consumed. People in the worst affected regions say the smoke is blotting out the sun and making it hard to breathe. Firefighters have been trying to put out a few of the fires, but the vast majority were only being monitored. Efforts are being stepped up following the declaration, but it is unclear whether Russia has the capacity to tackle such extensive fires in remote regions. In some places, it appears that dried-out peat is burning, not just the trees. That means carbon accumulated over hundreds or even thousands of years is being released into the atmosphere. It’s estimated that the fires in Siberia released 300 megatons of carbon dioxide in July, the most since satellite records began around two decades ago. This will fuel further climate change, although the amounts are relatively small compared with the 40,000 megatons of carbon dioxide emitted by human activities each year. Source: Michael Le Page, [New Scientist](#).
- *Indonesia Steps Up Response To Massive Fires* – Forest fires burning throughout Indonesia have prompted six provinces to declare states of emergency and deploy thousands of security forces. Firefighting measures included aerial water drops in anticipation of worsening forest fires that each year spread health-damaging haze across much of Southeast Asia. Several fires detected on Sumatra and Borneo islands by weather satellites have led to very poor air quality in six provinces with a combined population of more than 23 million. Authorities have deployed nearly 6,000 personnel to douse the fires that have razed more than 30,000 hectares (about 75,00 acres) of forest and land in those provinces. Source: Niniek Karmini, Associated Press, via the [Washington Post](#).

National Park System Issues

See next week’s edition....

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 Comments On NPS E-Bike Policy](#) – CPANP has written to Acting Director Dan Smith expressing several concerns about an [e-bike \(electrical bicycle\)](#) policy that the Service is reportedly developing.
- [Advocacy in August](#) – The Coalition has posted guidance on contacting members of Congress in their home offices during their summer recess.

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

NPS Alumni
Passing Of Bruce Hasson

Bruce (Dan) Hasson Sr., 67, a career NPS ranger and instructor at FLETC, died in February at the Oakland Veterans Hospital.

Dan was a member and served as secretary of the El Fityet Allaween Syrian Association. He served his country as a member of the U.S. Navy. He enjoyed bike riding and also riding motorcycles.

Dan is survived by his mother; a son, Bruce D. Hasson Jr.; and his wife, Ida, of Evans, Georgia

Online condolences may be offered to the family at www.decarbofuneralhome.com. To plant a tree in memory of Bruce (Dan) Hasson Sr., please visit [Tribute Store](#).

Source: [New Castle News](#).

NPS Alumni Passing Of Dan Babbitt

Dan Babbitt, 85, who for 35 years worked on design and construction of recreational facilities, visitors centers, campgrounds, staff quarters, historic buildings and infrastructure for the NPS, died on July 10th.

Dan worked seasonally for the NPS when he was in college, then permanently after he graduated. He worked for more than three decades on a variety of projects, including the restoration of historic and staff buildings and reconstruction of infrastructure at Crater Lake, reconstruction of the burned hotel at Denali in the middle of winter, extensive work on projects at Yosemite, and design and construction of a suspension bridge on the Wonderland Trail at Mount Rainier. He also worked at parks in Colorado and many other places. He was innovative in his thinking and received many awards for his work, including the Meritorious Service Award. He ended his career with the Service as chief of design for Western Region.

Bike racing was his great passion. During his years of racing as a master cyclist, he won dozens of races and broke numerous records. Notable among his accomplishments were three gold medals in the U.S. Masters National Track Championships and a gold and bronze in the Russian National Championships.

After his retirement, he built a house in Bellingham with his son, but sold it when he moved to Whidbey Island and married Linda Morris in 1999.

Dan suffered from dementia in his later years, which was very hard on him. He spent time in both Maple Ridge and Mukilteo Memory Care. His work ethic and helpful nature remained to the end. If you asked him how his day was going he would often tell you how he was managing the facility and trying to straighten things out.

He leaves behind his wife, Linda Morris; two children, Danielle Fulton (Brad) and Eric Babbitt (Shereen); two stepchildren, Carissa Morris (Angie) and Lyle Morris (Shanshan); four grandchildren, Hunter, Lauren, Sophia, and Rowan; his sister, Sally Rove; and nieces, Jane Whitehead, Susan Thompson and Peggy Simmons.

A service will be held for him at 3 p.m. on August 16th at Langley United Methodist Church. A private reception follows.

Source: [South Whidbey Record](#).

National Park Service Recent NPS Management Changes

Here's a listing of recent personnel changes in the NPS. Click on the links following the brief summaries for additional details:

- *Midwest Region* – Dr. Herbert “Bert” Frost has been named the new director of the Midwest Region, which will transition to Unified Regions 3, 4, and 5 under the Department of the Interior’s plan to realign its regional boundaries. Frost currently serves as the director of the Alaska Region, which will transition to Unified Region 11. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Florissant Fossil Beds NM* – Following 25 years of service at Rocky Mountain National Park, most recently as director of the Research Learning Center, Therese Johnson is moving to Florissant Fossil Beds as the park’s superintendent. Source: Pat Hill, [Pikes Peak Courier](#).
- *Antietam NB* – Tom Jones, the park’s chief ranger, retired from the NPS on July 31st following 24 years with the Service. Source: Dave McMillion, [Heraldmailmedia.com](#).
- *Chesapeake Bay Office* – Wendy O’Sullivan has been named superintendent of the Chesapeake Bay Office, which oversees efforts to manage and develop the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. O’Sullivan currently serves as associate regional director for partnerships, visitor experience, and outdoor recreation for National Capital Region. Source: [Capital Gazette](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – Duane Bubac is the new chief of facility management and operations for the park. Bubac, an 18-year veteran of the NPS and is currently the ARD for facilities and infrastructure in the Midwest Regional Office. He’s been serving as the acting facilities chief at Yellowstone since March. Source: [Buckrail](#).

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.

- *Mount Rainier NP* – Late on the afternoon of July 21st, a 24-year-old climber became ill while at Camp Muir with his climbing party of six. He went from normal activity to unconsciousness in less than 10 minutes. Though only at 10,000 feet, the man showed classic signs of cerebral edema. A doctor at the scene made the diagnosis, which was concurred with by the park medical advisor. Rangers at Camp Muir, assisted by guides from Rainier Mountaineering and the man’s climbing party, loaded him onto a sled while administering high flow oxygen. The man’s climbing party, led by a climbing ranger, then began a rapid descent. Meanwhile, ranger Scott Wanek ran two miles from Paradise to Pebble Creek to set up a landing zone for the helicopter. A MAST helicopter landed at the 7,000-foot level near the creek just as light was fading and picked up the ailing man, who began convulsing while on board the helicopter so was flown directly to Harborview Hospital in Seattle. He subsequently regained consciousness and is expected to make a full recovery. This operation was especially difficult, as the incident occurred just before dark and conditions for the helicopter pickup were marginal. The situation was further complicated by the need to sled the man down to a point below 7,000 feet, which was the upper elevation the MAST helicopter was able to reach. Because of these conditions, Wanek had to run the two miles – with a vertical gain of about 2,000 feet – to set up the landing zone. The MAST air mission commander called the park the next day to commend Wanek for his efforts; he said the landing zone was the best he had flown into and that he would use it as an example for his troops. Submitted by Bill Larson.
- *Big Bend NP* – Earlier this year, rangers at Big Bend initiated Operation Rockcut, a lengthy undercover investigation into illegal reptile poaching in the park. The operation eventually led to the discovery of poaching activities in which many protected species were being illegally collected in Big Bend, Chiricahua, Organ Pipe, Coronado, Fort Davis and on other non-NPS public lands. On the morning of July 20th, Big Bend rangers, Southwest Region special agents and Texas parks and wildlife officers executed federal and state search and arrest warrants in Lajitas, a community just outside park boundaries. At the same time, rangers from Organ Pipe, Montezuma's Castle, Saguaro, Hot Springs, Everglades, Independence, Amistad and San

Antonio Missions, together with Park Police officers from New York, executed federal search warrants and interviewed suspects in Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, and Texas. Arizona, Florida and New York game and conservation officers were also instrumental in this coordinated interagency effort. Three men from Lajitas were arrested on numerous state charges stemming from the investigation into federal Lacey Act violations. Evidence seized in Lajitas included approximately 50 reptiles, articles for hunting and transporting reptiles, documents, photos, cacti, and a firearm. A quantity of illegal drugs was also seized. The investigation into Lacey Act and resource and firearms violations involving both plant and animal poaching from the parks is continuing. As of this date, investigators have identified 27 suspects and 288 state and federal violations, 80 of them Lacey Act offenses.

- *Ocmulgee Mounds NHP (then Ocmulgee NM)* – On November 10, 1993, assistant chief ranger Pete Schula discovered a businessman from Buffalo, New York, who now resides in South Carolina burying approximately \$1.6 million in gold, platinum and currency in a wooded area of the park. The currency, coins and a 1993 Chevy Blazer were seized. Subsequent investigation by the NPS, FBI and IRS led to the discovery that Kayak Manufacturing Corporation of Buffalo, a business controlled by the man and one of the largest manufacturers of above-ground swimming pools in the Northeast, had filed for bankruptcy in 1990 in a case still pending in the Western District of New York. On July 14th, the man appeared in that court and pled guilty to one count of bankruptcy fraud/concealment of assets, a violation of 18 USC 152. This offense carries a maximum possible sentence of five years' imprisonment. In two related civil forfeiture actions pending in the Middle District of Georgia, the man agreed to forfeit the Blazer to the United States as property used to facilitate a violation of ARPA and to forfeit \$125,000 in currency to the United States as property involved in currency structuring and bankruptcy fraud. He also agreed to the return of approximately \$1.3 million to the bankruptcy estate of Kayak Corporation for inclusion in the bankruptcy action that is still pending. Submitted by Assistant Chief Ranger Peter Schula.

Acknowledgements

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Cassie Thomas, Mike Warren, Bill Walters,

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

A Closing Observation

"Men need to know the elemental challenges that sea and mountains present. They need to know what it is to be alive and to survive when great storms come. They need to unlock the secrets of streams, lakes, and canyons and to find how these treasures are veritable storehouses of inspiration. They must experience the sense of mastery of adversity. They must find a peak or a ridge that they can reach under their own power alone."

Conservationist and Supreme Court Justice [William O. Douglas](#)

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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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