



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, August 28, 2019

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Incidents

Zion NP

Three Injured In Rock Fall At Weeping Rock

On the afternoon of Saturday, August 24th, a substantial piece of rock broke off Cable Mountain, approximately 3,000 feet above Weeping Rock, and hit the closed East Rim Trail below, knocking down trees and showering visitors at Weeping Rock with smaller rocks, branches, and a plume of dust and sand.

Three visitors were injured; one was taken to a hospital by the park ambulance. Several people were stranded at the end of Weeping Rock Trail for a short time but they were able to self-rescue. Shuttles were stopped for approximately 90 minutes while the dust settled.

The Weeping Rock Trail and Weeping Rock shuttle stop are closed until further notice. The Echo Canyon and Observation Point Canyon canyoneering routes are also closed, as is the East Rim Trail from Observation Point to Weeping Rock.

Source: Aly Baltrus, [Zion NP](#).

Pictured Rocks NL

Falling Cliff Section Narrowly Misses Kayakers

A group of 18 kayakers on a tour of the park on August 12th narrowly escaped disaster when a massive section of cliff fell into Lake Superior about 50 feet away from them. No one was injured.

The kayakers were out on the lake between Miners Beach and Mosquito Beach, where cliffs reach up to 200 feet high. Just before the fall, some smaller rocks had hit the water nearby, so the kayakers “got far away.”

Two professional nature photographers captured the moment with a drone they were operating from a pontoon boat. The video they took can be seen at the link that follows. On it, a geology professor from Northern Michigan University describes what’s happening: “The slope has been over-steepened by waves pounding away at the bottom of the slope. The slope becomes too steep. Gravity takes over, and rock starts to fall.”

Source: [WLUC News](#).

Harriett Tubman NHP

Lightning Fire Damages AME Zion Church

Lightning that struck the Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church in Auburn, New York, during a thunderstorm on August 18th damaged the church's steeple.

The church and neighboring buildings are part of Harriet Tubman NHP, formally established in 2017. Tubman, an abolitionist, civil rights icon and women's rights advocate, raised money to help build the church — it was constructed in 1891 — and attended services there. When she died in 1913, her funeral was held at the church.

The fire caused some charring on the roof, but the didn't advance any further due to the rapid response of the Auburn Fire Department, which quickly extinguished the blaze and prevented it from spreading to other parts of the structure. The department remained at the scene for more than two hours to ensure the fire didn't reignite.

Historic preservationists with the NPS were on scene the next day to assess the damage while park staff began carefully drying out the church. The main concern is the state of historic fabric in the building – if it dries out too quickly, it could crack and delaminate. Instead of using dehumidifiers, a maintenance crew from Women's Rights purchased industrial fans that were placed in the basement. Preservationists removed plywood covering doors and windows to allow for a more natural drying process. Other than the damp fabric, there wasn't any significant water damage from the firefighting operation.

The fire isn't expected to affect the Service's rehabilitation of the church and neighboring parsonage. The church was designated as a national historic landmark in 2000. Nearly 20 years later, it became part of the park.

Source: Robert Harding, [Auburn Citizen](#).

Crater Lake NP Man Dies After Jump Into Lake From Rock Cliff

Divers have recovered the body of a 27-year-old man who jumped off a rock cliff at Cleetwood Cove into Crater Lake on August 18th and never surfaced.

People on scene immediately threw out a life ring and staff from the Crater Lake Hospitality park boat tour operation went to the area in a small boat to help with the search. Park staff mobilized quickly and responded to the location, over a mile down Cleetwood Trail. The search continued by boat, but the water was choppy and visibility was obscured in the area. Divers were called, but due to the remote location there was no time for them to do any searching before darkness fell. After more than three hours from the time of the incident with no sign of the victim, the search was called off for the night.

Divers mobilized on Monday and located the man 90 feet below the surface on a rock ledge. The lake drops off to 1,200 feet beyond that point.

Swimming is only allowed in the area around Cleetwood Cove and along the shore of Wizard Island. The incident occurred at the end of the Cleetwood Trail at a location on the lakeshore where every summer thousands of park visitors jump into the cold lake and then quickly swim to shore. Locals refer to the spot as the 'Jumping Rock.' Park staff are unaware of any previous drownings in that area.

Source: [KOMO News](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Yellowstone NP* – The man who walked dangerously close to Old Faithful last week escaped without being arrested. Although park staff followed him as he left the geyser, he disappeared into a crowded parking lot; by the time rangers arrived, he'd left the area, with no one getting his license plate number or a description of his vehicle. Although there's a video of the incident, it was taken from some distance away and doesn't show his face. Source: [MTN News](#).
- *Cape Cod NS* – Last year, a surfer was killed by a great white shark off a park beach, raising awareness of the steadily increasing number of such sharks off Cape Cod shores. During the second weekend in August, reports the *Boston Globe*, six sightings led to intermittent closures of four cape beaches, most managed by the park. On August 20th, the *New York Times* ran a story on the impact of these increased sightings. Although it opens by stating that “anxiety is hanging over the Cape Cod beaches this summer,” partly due to concerns about drops in visitation and business, it points out that “so far there is nothing to suggest that the sharks have kept people away” and that “most beachgoers seemed to be taking the sharks in stride.” Sources: Maria Lovato and Alyssa Lukpat, [Boston Globe](#); Kate Taylor, [New York Times](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – Four people illegally skied into an area that was under emergency closure last February and had to be rescued. Three of the four subsequently pled guilty to various federal charges; the fourth appeared in court in mid-August and also pled guilty rather than go ahead with a scheduled trial. She was sentenced to two years of unsupervised probation and ordered to pay a few thousand dollars in court fines and restitution after pleading guilty to violating an emergency closure, a federal citation. In the last-minute plea agreement the U.S. attorney dropped a charge of disorderly conduct. Source: Emily Mieure, [Jackson Hole News & Guide](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center NIFC Remains At PL 2

The national preparedness level remains at PL 2. As of Monday, 48 large fires remained active in a dozen states; together, they've burned 315,000 acres. New large fires were reported in Alaska, New Mexico, and Utah.

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

- *Bandelier NM* – The Redondo Fire has burned 195 acres eight miles north of Jemez Springs and is 25% contained. Fire behavior is reportedly minimal.
- *Grand Canyon NP* – The lightning-caused Ikes Fire, which started on July 25th, is burning about three miles east of Swamp Point on the North Rim. It is being utilized to fulfill its natural role in a fire-dependent ecosystem within a defined planning area of 7,785 acres on the Kaibab Plateau. The fire has burned about 6,000 acres within the planning area; as of the last report, the IMT overseeing the fire had met about three-quarters of its planning objectives and was scaling back operations. Although the North Rim remains open, several roads and trails have been closed – Powell Plateau Trail, North Bass Trail, Fire Point, Swamp Point, and the W4 road north of the intersection of W4 and W1. For more information, [click on this InciWeb page](#).

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	August 13th	August 20th	August 27th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	1	2	2
Type 2 Teams	7	2	3
Crews	152	78	128

Engines	286	247	294
Helicopters	55	34	54
Total FF/Overhead	6,311	3,820	5,707

Fires/Acreage

Category	2019 Total	2009-2018 Ave	2019 Variance
United States: YTD Fires	32,242	44,571	- 28%
United States: YTD Acres	3,963,955	5,343,391	- 26%
Canada: YTD Fires	3,819	---	---
Canada: YTD Acres	4,432,685	---	---

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

Congressional Actions

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

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

The Senate is in recess until September 9th.

House Actions

August 16 - The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 57, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to be held on September 10, 2019, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first African slaves to the territory that would become the United States.

The House is in recess until 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.

- *Funding Of NPS Maintenance Backlog Would Support 100,000 Jobs* – Addressing the National Park Service’s nearly \$12 billion maintenance backlog would create or support more than 100,000 infrastructure-related jobs, a Pew-commissioned analysis by the Cadmus Group has found. The jobs and benefits that would result from fully funding NPS’ deferred maintenance include construction workers repairing roads, preservation experts restoring deteriorating historic sites, and engineers overhauling outdated sewer, water, fire prevention, and electrical systems that can threaten visitor safety and drain park resources. The analysis, entitled

[“Restoring Parks, Creating Jobs: How Infrastructure Restoration in the National Park System Can Create or Support Jobs,”](#) contains a state-by-state breakdown that projects the number of jobs that could be created or supported if NPS’ repair backlog is addressed. The analysis found that states with higher unemployment rates could gain the most and that the potential job benefit would be about equally split between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. Source: Marcia Argust, [Pew Charitable Trusts](#).

- *Implementation Of New Tour Operator Fees Delayed* – The Service has delayed an expanded implementation of new fees on tour operators. The application process has been moved back from October 1st to January 1st for entrance to parks after April 1st. Tour operators say they hope to use the time to persuade the NPS to reconsider the new fees. In a letter this week to Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, the International Inbound Travel Association (IITA) requested a meeting and asked that the program be delayed a year. At issue is a proposal to require coaches to pay a \$300 permitting fee at each of the country’s 400-plus national parks (the fee is already in place at some busy parks). That’s in addition to per-person entrance and administration fees that range from \$5 to \$30 per guest. Source: Jen Clausing, [Travel Weekly](#).
- *Engineer Creates Graphic Visualizations Of Park Visitation* – PetaPixel, a blog that covers the world of photography, has posted an article about charts that have been developed to help people avoid parks when they’re at their most crowded. Designer and engineer Jordan Vincent has created a set of data visualizations that plot park attendance by type of lodging, time of year, and average temperature. He created these visualizations for 54 parks using data from the NPS that spanned the period from 2013 to 2019. Each chart plots the number of lodging, RV, tent, and backcountry visitors onto a circle that shows both the time of year, and the average temperature. [Click on Vincent’s webpage](#) to see the visualizations. Source: [PetaPixel](#).

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.

- *Acadia NP* – The park’s Island Explorer bus system is celebrating its 20th anniversary this summer with the integration of 21 new propane autogas buses into its fleet. The Island Explorer is a fare-free transportation system linking hotels, campgrounds and inns with destinations in the park and area villages. Since 1999, the bus system has carried more than 7.7 million passengers and grown from a fleet size of eight buses to 31 buses in operation, plus six spare buses, four vans and two bicycle trailers. Source: Betsy Lillian, [Next-Gen Transportation News](#).
- *Death Valley NP* – The “Chicken Strip” airfield in the Saline Valley is now officially authorized as a backcountry airstrip. Officially known as the Saline Valley Warm Springs Airfield, “Chicken Strip” is an unpaved landing strip that has been in use for decades. For most of that time, the land was managed by BLM, which did not prohibit its use. The airfield was part of about a million acres of land that were transferred to the park by the California Desert Protection Act in 1994. This transfer from BLM to the NPS also closed the airstrip by default, as NPS lands and waters are closed to operation of aircraft unless specifically authorized by a special regulation. However, the closure was never enforced and many park staff were not aware that the strip was not authorized. The problem was resolved by a new special regulation permitting its operation. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *Everglades NP* – Following a two-month hiatus, narrated boat tours have resumed at the park’s Gulf Coast location. The contract held by the previous concessioner, Everglades National Park Boat Tours, Inc., recently came to an end. Circumstances made it impossible to get a new ten-year contract in place, which led to the interruption in service. A new company, Guest Services, Inc., is now running the operation, providing daily boat tours and equipment rentals under a one-year interim contract. Proposals will be sought for a new 10-year contract later this year. Source: Madison O’Connor, [Naples Daily News](#).

- *Denali NP&P* – The park is looking at developing a trail system, trailheads, backcountry campsites, a roadside bike in/hike in campground, and a hostel in the Wonder Lake – Kantishna area. The 1997 entrance area DCP and EIS and the 2006 backcountry management plan and EIS both referenced Wonder Lake and Kantishna as areas that could support additional recreational opportunities. The new plan also provides a range of proposals that include a day use area in the Wonder Lake area, group camping opportunities at the Wonder Lake campground, a local transportation system between the Kantishna and Wonder Lake areas, new administrative sites, and setting visitor capacities. Comments may be made until September 17th at [the park's PEPC website](#). Source: Emily Buhr, [Denali NP](#).
- *Glacier NP* – The Glacier Park Boat Co., Inc., which has offered scenic tours of park lakes on its fleet of historic wooden boats for the past 81 years, has been awarded a new ten-year concession contract for interpretive boat tours and small watercraft rental services. Intermountain Region solicited proposals for this business opportunity last spring and received a number of proposals; Glacier Park Boat Company was selected from among them. Source: Tristan Scott, [Flathead Beacon](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – A FONSI has been signed for the park's telecommunications infrastructure plan EA. The decision allows the Service to issue a right-of-way permit for telecommunications infrastructure improvements – including cellular and broadband services – at strategic locations in the developed areas of the park that currently have significant park staff presence and/or see a high volume of visitors. The decision also includes upgrades to the park's radio system. The decision document is available at [the park's PEPC webpage](#). Source: [KSGT News](#).
- *Hot Springs NP* – Hotel Hale, the latest addition to Bathhouse Row, had its grand opening on the morning of Tuesday, August 20th. Located in the Hale Bath House, which the park says is at least the fourth building to bear that name, the Hotel Hale features sleeping accommodations on the top floor and two restaurants, Eden and Zest, on the first floor. The Hale Bath House has the distinction of being the oldest structure still standing on Bathhouse Row; the current building was built in 1892 and received its first major renovation in 1914 at a cost of \$50,000, or around \$1.2 million in modern dollars. The building continued to serve the community as a bath house until it went out of business in 1978. The park put out an RFP for the Hale in July, 2013; a lease was signed in 2017. Rehab of the property has been underway ever since. Source: Tanner Newton, [The Sentinel-Herald](#).
- *Mount Rainier NP* – On July 31st, the Pierce County hearing examiner held a public hearing on a conditional use permit application for development of the proposed Mount Rainier Resort at Park Junction, 11 miles west of the park's Nisqually Entrance. First proposed in 1994, but yet to be built, the resort would include an 18-hole golf course, a 270-room lodge, a 500-person conference center, a tennis center, swimming pools/spa, restaurants, 300 condominiums, a 20,000-square-foot retail center, 120 employee housing units, a train station, an interpretive center, and a sewage plant. The hearing examiner will accept comments about the proposal until mid-September. For more information, including how to submit comments, [click on this link](#). Submitted by CPANP member Gene Casey (gcasey000@centurytel.net), who can provide more information on this project.
- *Mount Rainier NP* – A historic cabin in the park's Longmire District has been restored and will now provide search-and-rescue crews with a place to eat and sleep. The cabin, which was constructed by the Civil Conservation Corps in the 1930s and had fallen into disrepair, will now serve as a search and rescue volunteer bunkhouse. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* – The park, working with the Natchez Trace Bridge Barrier Coalition, has come up with \$1.2 million in funding to explore the possibility of adding a pedestrian barrier to the Natchez Trace Bridge in an effort to check the numerous suicides that have occurred there (32 to date). Phase 1 of the project will involve exploring options for adding the barriers and whether or not the bridge can hold them (parts of it are nearing load capacity); if

proven feasible, Phase 2 will consist of drawings and construction, which would begin in 2023. Source: Emily R. West, [Nashville Tennessean](#).

- *Theodore Roosevelt NP* – The governor of North Dakota and other backers of a proposed presidential library for Theodore Roosevelt are pushing to build the facility within the park’s boundaries. State legislators in April approved \$50 million to operate the library, but that must be matched by \$100 million in private money to build it and fund an ongoing project at Dickinson State University to digitize tens of thousands of Roosevelt’s papers. The foundation that supports the library said it has \$52 million in private pledges but the sources haven’t been publicly disclosed. All nine members of the foundation’s board plan to meet next month in Medora to discuss possible sites on private, state and federal land. Source: James MacPherson, [Bismarck Tribune](#).
- *Wilson’s Creek NB* – Public and private funding in the amount of \$1 million is paying for renovation of the park’s visitor center. The money was raised via the National Park Foundation and the Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Foundation in the form of \$500,000 in private dollars, a sum that was matched by a federal appropriation. The renovations will make it possible for visitors to see a new exhibit containing a collection of artifacts considered to be one of the finest publicly held museum collections representing the Trans-Mississippi Theater of the American Civil War. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – As noted previously in this publication, Steamboat Geyser reawakened last year and has been on something of a tear ever since. As of Tuesday, August 20th, it had erupted 32 times, tying last year’s record – but with more than four months still to go in 2019. Steamboat is the world’s tallest active geyser, with eruptions that can shoot water more than 300 feet into the air. Source: [KIFI/KIDK News](#).
- *Yosemite NP* – Glacier Point Road will be closed for road construction in 2021. The road rehabilitation project will start in spring 2021 and will likely continue through that fall. A public comment period on the project is open until September 18th. If you’d like more info on the project or have a comment to make, go to [the park’s PEPC webpage](#). Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#).
- *Yosemite NP* – The *San Francisco Chronicle* posted an article last week entitled “What Did Yosemite Get For The \$12 Million Paid To Its Former Concessioner?” Here are the lead paragraphs: “Yosemite National Park recently settled one of the nation’s oddest intellectual property disputes, teaming up with the company that manages the park’s hotels and restaurants to pay the former operator for trademarks the company notoriously claimed were its own. Turns out, Yosemite got a lot more in the \$12 million deal than a few famous place names in the park, like Ahwahnee and Curry Village. According to newly released legal documents, the global hospitality company Delaware North handed over more than 30 park-related names, designs and logos that it had quietly registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office when it operated Yosemite’s visitor facilities. The relinquished property includes seven images of the iconic Half Dome cliff face, symbols like pine cones and badger paws associated with Yosemite and slogans used for park marketing, such as ‘Girls on Granite’ and ‘Go Climb a Rock.’” See the article for additional details. Source: Kurtis Alexander, [San Francisco Chronicle](#).

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.

- *Administration Moves Against ESA* – On August 12th, the administration “took its final step” toward weakening the Endangered Species Act, reports the *Washington Post*. “New rules will

allow the administration to reduce the amount of habitat set aside for wildlife and remove tools that officials use to predict future harm to species as a result of climate change. It would also reveal for the first time in the law's 45-year history the financial costs of protecting them. The long-anticipated changes, jointly announced by the Interior and Commerce departments, were undertaken as part of President Trump's mandate to scale back government regulations on corporations, including the oil and gas industry, that want to drill on protected land." Not surprisingly, opposition quickly mobilized toward the new rules: "Within hours of Monday's announcement, the state attorneys general of California and Massachusetts joined a conservation group, Defenders of Wildlife, in declaring the changes illegal and vowing to challenge them in court. 'You can anticipate that we will see many states join this action,' said Maura Healey, attorney general of Massachusetts. 'The way this was done was illegal under federal laws and this is an administration that needs to be held accountable.'" Source: Darryl Fears, [Washington Post](#).

- *DOI Centralizes Ethics Programs* – The Department of the Interior will be centralizing ethics reviews across its many agencies at its headquarters. Ethics officials at BLM, the NPS and other Interior agencies will report to ethics officials based at DOI headquarters rather than agency directors. "But ethics officials who reviewed the plan criticized its broad focus on all agency employees rather than the high-level officials currently being investigated for ethical lapses," reports *The Hill*. "The centralized ethics office will be housed within Interior's solicitor's office. That's not unusual, ethics experts say, but the man nominated to fill that post and who already fills the role in a de facto capacity, Daniel Jorjani, has been mired in ethical issues of his own. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) has vowed to try and block his confirmation, given concerns about whether he was truthful to Congress during his confirmation hearing about his potential involvement in a controversial ethics policy at the Interior Department that has been criticized for giving political appointees more power over public records." Source: Rebecca Beitsch, [The Hill](#).

House and Senate

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

- *Congress Raises Questions About Plan To Move BLM West* – DOI says that it's going ahead with plans to move BLM to Colorado, having received a "green light" from Congress, but lawmakers who talked to *The Hill* say that no such approval has been granted and that some of their questions about the move have remain unanswered. A spokesperson for the chair of the House Appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Interior Department had this to say: "It's absurd for the administration to assume Congressional approval when the Committee has not yet received sufficient answers to outstanding questions about the plan's feasibility, costs, legality, and personnel issues. This is clearly an attempt by the Trump administration to steamroll ahead with this plan without regard to the concerns of a co-equal branch of government." Disagreement over the move is expected to spill into September, says *The Hill*, as lawmakers work on appropriations for fiscal 2020, which begins on October 1st. The House Natural Resources Committee will also hold a hearing in September to discuss the planning process behind BLM's move. Source: Rebecca Beitsch, [The Hill](#).

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 Change Economic Impacts Detailed In New Report* – On August 19th, the National Bureau of Economic Research [published a study](#) that found that there will be a substantial negative impact on the U.S. economy if we do nothing to curb our greenhouse gas emissions. The bureau projects a 10.5% decline in real income by 2100 as a result of losses due to extreme weather events and declines in worker productivity; the global economy would lose 7.2%. On the other hand, if countries live up to their commitments in the Paris Agreement, the impact would be limited to 1% of per capita GDP. Source: Monica Medina and Miro Korenha, [Our Daily Planet](#).
- *Major International Wildlife Crime Operation Conducted* – “Global police and customs officials have concluded the most widespread environmental crime operation ever organized, involving 109 countries and resulting in nearly 2,000 seizures of protected wildlife, including 440 ivory pieces, more than 4,300 birds, and nearly 10,000 live turtles and tortoises,” reports *National Geographic*. “The effort, coordinated by Interpol and the World Customs Organization (WCO), identified nearly 600 suspects and spurred arrests around the world. Dubbed Operation Thunderball, it’s the third in a series—Interpol executed Operation Thunderbird in 2017 and Operation Thunderstorm in 2018, both of which targeted the illegal wildlife and timber trade and resulted in thousands of seizures.” The two agencies joined forces in this most recent effort due to a spike in wildlife crime over recent years. “The illegal wildlife trade is a multibillion dollar criminal enterprise. It’s the primary threat to the survival of numerous species, including African elephants, which are targeted for their ivory; pangolins, which are targeted for use in traditional Chinese medicine, and many species of birds and reptiles, which enter the exotic pet trade. Wildlife crime is linked to corruption, money laundering, and other forms of organized crime.” Source: Rachel Fobar, [National Geographic](#).
- *US Forests In Peril* – About 40% of all forests across the country are at risk of being ravaged by an array of harmful pests. An estimated 450 overseas pests that damage or feed on trees have been introduced to U.S. forests in recent years due to the growth in international trade and travel. [A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#) has found that the 15 most damaging non-native forest pests destroy so many trees that about 6 million tons of carbon are expelled each year from the dying plants – equivalent to adding an extra 4.6 million cars to the roads every year in terms of the release of planet-warming gases. Source: Monica Medina and Miro Korenha, [Our Daily Planet](#).

National Park System Issues

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

- *Coastal Parks* – “Researchers contracted by the National Park Service have projected that if greenhouse gases keep growing, some iconic national parks could be partially or totally underwater,” reports *Reveal*, a publication produced by The Center For Investigative Reporting. “These maps show estimates of flooding risk at selected parks if a major hurricane were to hit in 2050.” That short introduction precedes sets of comparative maps for ten coastal parks – Boston Harbor, Cape Cod, Canaveral, Dry Tortugas, Everglades, Fire Island, Golden Gate, the National Mall, Padre Island and Wright Brothers. The images – found at the following link – are interactive, so you can enlarge them or move them in either direction. Source: Kavya Sukumar and Elizabeth Shogren, [Reveal](#).
- *Glen Canyon NRA* – Lake Powell continues to benefit from Colorado’s record snowfall last winter. The more than two dozen reservoirs that feed Powell are at 92% capacity and the lake is up more than 19 feet from last year. Water levels were rising six to 15 inches in a 24-hour period in June, but by July the flow had slowed to two inches a day and is now levelling off. Source: Carisa Scott, [KDVR](#).

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:

- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – A wildlife camera at Newfound Gap recently captured images of a nine-banded armadillo in the park – the first documented armadillo to be found within its boundaries. Armadillos first took up residence in Tennessee in 2013 and have been seen all around the park, so park biologists weren't particularly surprised by this discovery. "Now a new icon of the Animal Kingdom stands alongside the majestic elk and the beautiful black bears of the Smokies," reported WBIR. "Just don't expect the non-profit Friends of the Smokies to sell armadillo license plates anytime soon." Source: Jim Matheny, [WBIR](#).

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

- *Petrified Forest NP* – Three environmental groups filed suit against BLM in mid-July to prevent fracking for natural gas and oil in more than 4,000 acres of public land near the park and the state's most important aquifer. When the bureau issued the drilling leases last year near Petrified Forest, it used decades-old environmental impact data, according to the Center for Biological Diversity and other plaintiffs who filed the suit in the U.S. District Court for Arizona. The plaintiffs claim the agency failed to consider new drilling technologies or environmental science, including predicted effects of climate change. Brad Poole, [Courthouse News Service](#).
- *Theodore Roosevelt NP* – Environmental groups are continuing a legal challenge against an oil refinery that's slated to be built on the park's doorstep. The Environmental Law and Policy Center, along with the Dakota Resource Council, filed a notice of appeal on July 15th in the state Supreme Court challenging a lower court decision. In May, a North Dakota judge sided with state utility regulators who said they lacked siting authority over the facility because its capacity falls just under the legal threshold that triggers Public Service Commission review. State law requires a siting permit for facilities capable of refining 50,000 barrels per day or more, but Meridian Energy Group's plans call for a 49,500-barrel-per-day refinery. Opponents, however, have noted that the company holds a permit from a separate state agency for a 55,000-barrel-per-day facility. Source: John Hageman, Forum News Service.

The Coalition

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

- *Proposed USFS Rule On NEPA Compliance* – The Coalition has written to the Forest Service regarding a change they're proposing to the NEPA process: "As a national parks advocacy group, we are very concerned that the proposed rule published in the Federal Register on June 13, 2019 (84 Fed. Reg. 27,544) could adversely affect numerous parks. In brief, USFS is proposing significant revisions to its National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, which would significantly reduce public involvement opportunities." [Click on this link](#) to read the letter and the Coalition's detailed, point-by-point comments.
- *BLM EA On Proposed Drilling* – The Coalition joined the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, NPCA, and the Center for Biological Diversity in commenting an EA for oil and gas drilling in the Uinta Basin: "[The] Environmental Assessment failed to analyze cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable oil and gas wells in the Uinta Basin to resource values such as Dinosaur National Monument, lands with wilderness characteristics, and the climate, among others." [Click on this link](#) to read the letter.

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

NPS Alumni
Passing Of Ben Moffett

Ben L. Moffett, 79, passed away on Monday, August 19th, at his home in Bosque Farms, New Mexico.

Ben was a longtime sports writer for the *Albuquerque Journal*, a news reporter, a National Park Service public affairs officer, and a freelance writer over most of his later working years.

Ben earned BA and MA degrees in journalism and communication at the University of New Mexico while working as a sportswriter, sports editor, and state editor at the *Albuquerque Journal*. He then went on to a successful career with the National Park Service that spanned 23 years in two offices – one in Santa Fe and the other in Denver. During those years, he was responsible for informing the public about the 1988 Yellowstone fires, the wolf reintroduction mission and a host of other issues. During his retirement, he worked tirelessly on a history of basketball in New Mexico – a labor of love, as sports, particularly high school sports, were always close to his heart.

An avid gardener and birdwatcher, he enjoyed all time spent in his yard and the out of doors. He could name birds and wildflowers by the dozens. He enjoyed sports himself, playing a mean game of softball or racquetball or basketball, always a competitor. One could find him just as easily pitching horseshoes or casting a rod from a placid lake bank.

He will be sorely missed for his wry sense of humor, his support for the underdog, his wealth of knowledge on so many subjects, and his care for his family.

Ben is survived by his wife of 59 years, Lesta Davidson Moffett; his three children, Bret Moffett, Marc Moffett, and Pamela Moffett; and seven grandchildren.

You can sign an online guestbook for Ben [at this link](#).

Source: [Albuquerque Journal](#).

NPS Friend Passing Of Park Supporter Dr. Liane Russell

Dr. Liane B. Russell, a pioneer in the study of the dangers of radiation on developing embryos, whose findings are the reason doctors today ask women if they are pregnant before giving them X-rays, died on July 20th in a hospital in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. She was 95.

Russell was also a conservationist who worked for protection of wilderness and national lands and rivers. In 1966 she helped to organize the Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP). In 1976 TCWP helped to obtain protection of the 125,000-acre Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area and obtain National Wild and Scenic River designation for the Obed River. In 1992 Russell received the National Parks Conservation Association's Marjory Stoneman Douglas award.

You can read more about her remarkable life and accomplishments in the *New York Times* obituary below.

Sources: Katharine Q. Seelye, [New York Times](#); [Wikipedia](#).

NPS Friend Passing Of Former BLM Director Tom Fry

Tom Fry, 74, a former deputy director and director for the Bureau of Land Management who worked with many parks during the Clinton administration, died suddenly of natural causes on August 7th.

Tom had an extensive career in government and the private sector. In 1999, he was appointed by President Clinton as director of BLM and confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate, having served as deputy director for the previous two years. While at BLM, one of his proudest achievements was signing a bureau directive creating the National Landscape Conservation System, which

consolidated all of the BLM conservation units into a cohesive system, much like the National Park System.

Before heading up BLM, Tom was chief of staff for DOI Deputy Secretary John Garamendi, a position in which he provided leadership and policy oversight for special departmental initiatives. He also served as director of the Minerals Management Service from 1993 to 1994.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the American Heart Association at <https://www.heart.org>.

Source: [Sparkman/Hillcrest Funeral Home](#).

National Park Service Recent NPS Personnel Actions

Here's a listing of recent personnel actions – promotions, retirements, awards and so forth – that have occurred recently in the NPS:

- *Yosemite NP* – Jack Hoeflich has been named the recipient of the 2018 Harry Yount Award. Hoeflich serves as a park medic, structural firefighter, wildland firefighter, technical rock rescue instructor, law enforcement officer, emergency services manager, supervisor, and helicopter and swift ware rescue technician at Yosemite. His citation adds the following: “His incredible intellect, physical fitness, stamina, climbing prowess, and passion for helping others aligns perfectly with his career of providing assistance to visitors to Yosemite’s beautiful and rugged landscape. Hoeflich has participated in and led some of the most challenging and time critical rescues undertaken by the National Park Service.” Source: Facebook.
- *US Park Police* – Robert MacLean, a 28-year veteran with the Park Police, is stepping down from his current position as chief of USPP to become the director of Interior's Office of Law Enforcement and Security. He will begin his new assignment on September 16th. Source: [E&E News PM](#).
- *Northeast Region IMT* – Ranger Eric J. Pelletier, operations section chief for the Northeast Region Incident Management Team, has received [FLEOA](#)'s National Special Event Award for 2018. His citation reads in part as follows: “For the last several years Eric has served as the operations section chief for the [9/11 commemoration at Flight 93]. Due to his role as chief, Eric prepares throughout the year, giving up his days off and time with his family in order to put on the best possible event to honor these men and women. Eric coordinates with multiple regions and offices within the National Park Service to ensure the staffing levels for the event are met to fulfill tasks from trash removal to the protection of the president of the United States of America. Eric also coordinates with multiple other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to ensure the protection of the site, the resources, and the visitors. Eric has worked tirelessly to help organize an event that honors the passengers and crew of Flight 93.” Source: FLEOA.

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.

- *Lake Clark NP&P* – On the evening of August 11th, rangers and state troopers responded to a report of an aircraft crash in the Fishtrap Lake area of the park. The rangers found a downed de Havilland Beaver an hour later, landed at a nearby lake, and hiked a mile to the scene of the accident. The Alaskan pilot and two hunters from Colorado had been killed in the crash and the plane had burned. Rangers returned to the scene the following day and assisted state troopers with the body recoveries. An investigation of the accident by the park, state and NTSB

is underway. Two days later, a ranger/pilot engaged in a search for an overdue aircraft found the missing plane partially submerged in Big River, just outside the park's east boundary. The pilot contacted the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center and requested an emergency response, then continued orbiting the scene, relaying further information. After landing at a nearby lake, the ranger was transported to the scene by a local helicopter service. One survivor was treated at the scene and later taken flown to a hospital in Anchorage; the pilot and two other passengers in the Cherokee Six died in the crash. An NTSB investigation into this accident is also underway. Submitted by Chief Ranger Joe Fowler.

- *Grand Teton NP* – A 36-year-old Utah man was attacked and mauled by a bear about a quarter mile west of the Two Ocean trailhead during the early morning hours of August 13th. The man, who was training for a marathon, was jogging at the time. He began his planned 18-mile run at Jackson Lake Lodge and was heading eastward when he apparently surprised a bear who was feeding on berries next to the trail in a heavily forested area. The man suffered bites and puncture wounds to his face, a severe laceration to his right thigh, and bites on his back. He fought the bear for about a minute and a half, then elected to play dead; the bear broke off the attack shortly thereafter. The incident is being investigated by rangers with the assistance of the park's biologist. Preliminary indications are that the attack was done by a grizzly who may have had cubs with her. Submitted by Acting Chief Ranger Colin Campbell.
- *Yellowstone NP* – Just before 4 p.m. on August 16th, a man walked into the Mammoth Family Clinic, a park concession, placed a two-foot-long cardboard cylinder on the receptionist's counter, and said "I have a bomb and I'm gonna blow the place up." The man, who appeared to be intoxicated, is an ex Yellowstone concession employee who is currently residing in Gardiner, Montana. After making his threat, he left the area on a bicycle. A clinic employee moved the package away from the counter and notified the park dispatcher. Responding rangers evacuated and secured the building. The package was inspected; it appeared to be a cardboard mailing tube with some rolled up paper in it; X-rays revealed that it was not a bomb. The man was found just inside the park's boundary near Gardiner and arrested by a ranger and a Park County deputy. Under Wyoming law, representing an object to be an explosive device and using it to threaten or intimidate another person is a felony. The exact nature of criminal charge(s) to be filed, however, is pending consultation with the U.S. Attorney's Office. Submitted by Assistant Chief Ranger Mike Murray.

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Mark Forbes, Bill Walters, Gene Casey

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

"Thoreau read Wordsworth, Muir read Thoreau, Teddy Roosevelt read Muir, and you got national parks. It took a century for this to happen, for artistic values to percolate down to where honoring the relation of people's imagination to the land, or beauty, or to wild things, was issued in legislation."

[Robert Hass](#), former poet laureate of the United States

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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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