



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Volume 3

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Incidents

Arches NP

Two Killed, One Injured In Fall At Delicate Arch

A man and a woman died last Friday morning when they fell into the bowl area near Delicate Arch; a third, younger man, also fell and was injured.

Rangers were notified of the fall around 7:30 a.m. The area was closed while an investigation was conducted, then reopened later that afternoon.

It's unclear if weather played a role in the accident, although it had been raining and snowing in the park. Those conditions can make the trail leading to the arch slippery.

The deceased were identified as a 65-year-old man and a 60-year-old female; a 30-year-old man was injured. All were from California and appear to be related.

Source: Paighthen Harkins, [Salt Lake Tribune](#).

Zion NP

Concession Employee Killed In Fall From Angel's Landing Trail

The body of a hiker was found at the bottom of Angel's Landing Trail on the morning of Thursday, November 28th. The victim was subsequently identified as 19-year-old Savannah McTague, a Maine resident who worked for Xanterra at Zion Lodge.

McTague had been reported missing late on Wednesday afternoon. The park reports that her injuries "were consistent with a high elevation fall." The trail is well-known for its steep drop-offs.

The trail had reopened on Tuesday after being closed for several days because of a rock fall.

Source: [San Antonio Express-News](#).

Yosemite NP

Well-Known Climber Rescued After Bad Fall On El Capitan

Emily Harrington, an elite climber who took a self-described "bad fall" on El Capitan last Sunday, credits "Free Solo" star Alex Honnold and other climbers with her rescue.

Harrington, who posted a photo of herself from her hospital bed at Community Regional Medical Center in Fresno, thanked Honnold and other climbers for coming to her aid.

The Oscar-winning 2018 documentary “Free Solo” covered Honnold’s successful campaign to be the first person to climb El Capitan without a safety rope.

The 33-year-old Harrington, a five-time U.S. sport climbing champion, free-climbed a route on El Capitan in 2015. She also has climbed Mount Everest as well as peaks in Nepal, China, Morocco and Crimea.

The article includes links to Facebook photos of Harrington and the rescue.

Source: Don Sweeney, [Sacramento Bee](#).

Ozark NSR Two Convicted For ARPA Violations

In 2017, national park investigators discovered an illegal excavation taking place near Rymers Campground next to the Jacks Fork River. They found two people at the scene who had dug 164 holes over 2.5 acres, unearthing arrowheads, spear points and other relics left behind by a series of Native American people who had lived along the river as far back as 11,500 years ago.

When investigators approached the couple, they fled in a pickup, eventually rolling the truck on a dirt road and fleeing the scene on foot. They eventually returned to their campsite, where rangers and investigators arrested them on the spot.

The case recently concluded with the conviction and sentencing of Shane Munroe, 41, and Christy Bruton, 45. Munroe will serve a year in prison followed by three years of supervised probation. Bruton has been sentenced to three years of supervised probation. Both must also pay \$2,000 each in restitution. A resource damage assessment completed in March 2018 revealed that Munroe and Bruton caused \$34,974 in damage to the archeological site.

A federal grand jury handed down indictments for Munroe and Bruton last December. Munroe pleaded guilty in June to a felony ARPA violation; Bruton pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor ARPA violation in October.

Source: Wes Johnson, [Springfield News-Leader](#).

National Park System Park Operating Status Summary

A summary of recent openings, closures and other changes in the status of parks and their facilities, mostly related to the recent spate of significant storms across the country.

- *Kings Canyon NP* – The park’s Highway 180 entrance into Kings Canyon National Park was closed last Friday morning due to unsafe road conditions and excessive snow. Crews were working to clear the road, but it wasn’t yet certain when the entrance would reopen. The Highway 198 entrance into Sequoia National Park in Tulare County remained open, but more snow was expected. A major holiday storm blanketed the sierra with 18 inches of snow on Wednesday night and grew on Thursday and Friday morning. Source: Joshua Yeager, [Visalia Times-Delta](#).
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – Several park roads were closed on Sunday due to a winter storm – US Highway 441 and Newfound Gap Road from Gatlinburg to Cherokee, Foothills Parkway East and West, Cades Cove Loop Road, and Cherokee Orchard Road above the Twin Creeks Science Center. Cades Cove Loop Road is scheduled to reopen this Friday, but will be closed again next week for tree work. Source: Allie Clouse, [Knoxville News Sentinel](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Santa Monica Mountains NRA* – Cleanup and recovery from last year’s Woolsey Fire continue. The newest development pertains to the famed Paramount Ranch, which was destroyed by the fire. The park has secured funding in a federal disaster relief bill and has contracted with a local company to clean up the area and begin restoration work. The fire consumed more than 30 structures, including several homes, throughout the park. Over the next few months, a contractor will be taking samples and testing the ash and soil. Cleanup at Paramount Ranch is scheduled to begin in April. Meanwhile, the Service has contracted with a design firm to start drawing up plans to rebuild. Along with money to clean up sites, the park also got funding for reconstruction. First up will be spots deemed critical visitor and operations facilities; the list includes Paramount Ranch and Peter Strauss Ranch, both in Agoura Hills, as well as all park housing destroyed in the fire. Source: Cheri Carlson, [Ventura County Star](#).
- *Appalachian NST* – James Jordan, who was arrested in May for stabbing a hiker to death on the trail, continues to undergo psychological evaluation. In July, he was deemed unfit to stand trial and in October was admitted to a federal medical center for a psychological evaluation. It’s now expected that this assessment will be committed by the end of January and submitted to the federal court. Source: [WLSL News](#).
- *Cape Hatteras NS* – The visitor evacuation order for Ocracoke Island, which has been in place since the days before Hurricane Dorian arrived in September, was lifted on Monday, December 2nd. Here are details on the status of park facilities: All ocean and soundside beaches are open. The park visitor center and associated restrooms, damaged by the hurricane, will remain closed until further notice. The Ocracoke Campground will not reopen until next spring, but the Ocracoke Lighthouse grounds have reopened. The boat ramp parking area and boat ramps are open, but the Ocracoke Beach Access and boardwalk are not open due to ongoing debris removal. Source: [WCTI News](#).

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

November 19 – The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved the following bills, among others:

- [S. 500](#), to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service.
- [S. 1081](#), to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide permanent, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- [S. 2418](#), to amend the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) of 2006 to modify a definition and the disposition and authorized uses of qualified outer Continental Shelf revenues under that Act and to exempt State and county payments under that Act from sequestration, to provide for the distribution of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues to the State of Alaska.

November 21 – The Senate passed [H.R. 3055](#), making further continuing appropriations for FY 2020 by a vote of 74 yeas to 20 nays. The bill continues appropriations for all federal agencies through December 20, 2019. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

The Senate was in recess the week of November 25th for the Thanksgiving holiday.

House Actions

November 19 – The House passed [H.R. 3055](#), making further continuing appropriations for FY 2020 by a vote of 231 yeas to 192 nays. The bill continues appropriations for all federal agencies through December 20, 2019.

November 20 – The House passed:

- [H.R. 182](#), to extend the authorization for the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission. The bill extends the commission through September 25, 2028 and makes the extension retroactive to September 26, 2018.
- [H.R. 1472](#), to rename the Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice, Nebraska, as the Homestead National Historical Park.
- [H.R. 1487](#), to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of portions of the Los Angeles coastal area in the State of California to evaluate alternatives for protecting the resources of the coastal area. The bill would study the coastline and adjacent areas to the Santa Monica Bay from Will Rogers State Beach to Torrance Beach, including the areas in and around Ballona Creek and the Baldwin Hills and the San Pedro section of the City of Los Angeles, excluding the Port of Los Angeles north of Crescent Avenue.

November 20 – The Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies held a hearing entitled “[The Department of Energy's Role in Addressing Climate Change](#)”. Testimony was heard from Vi Lyles, Mayor, Charlotte, North Carolina; and public witnesses.

November 20 – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change held a hearing entitled “[Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: The Challenges Facing Frontline Communities](#)”. Testimony was heard from Alfredo Gomez, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office; Lilian Sotolongo Dorca, Director, External Civil Rights Compliance Office, Environmental Protection Agency; Helena Wooden-Aguilar, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Environmental Protection Agency; and public witnesses.

November 20 – The Committee on Natural Resources approved the following bills:

- [H.R. 307](#), to provide for partnerships among State and local governments, regional entities, and the private sector to preserve, conserve, and enhance the visitor experience at nationally significant battlefields of the American Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War.
- [H.R. 1708](#), to adjust the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor.
- [H.R. 2215](#), to establish as a unit of the National Park System the San Gabriel National Recreation Area in the State of California.
- [H.R. 2250](#), to provide for restoration, economic development, recreation, and conservation on Federal lands in Northern California. Of interest to the National Park Service are: Section 102, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to undertake initiatives to restore degraded redwood forest ecosystems in Redwood National and State Parks in partnership with the State of California, local agencies, and nongovernmental organizations; Section 105, to authorize the establishment of a visitor center in Del Norte County, California, to assist in fulfilling the purposes of Redwood National and State Parks and the Smith River National Recreation Area; Section 107, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to evaluate the feasibility and suitability of establishing overnight accommodations on Federal land at the southern and northern boundaries or on land within 20 miles of the southern and northern boundaries of Redwood National and State parks in consultation with interested Federal, State,

Tribal, and local entities, and private and nonprofit organizations; Section 303, to designate, among other areas, approximately 31,000 acres in Redwood National Park as potential wilderness. The department testified it does not support the designation of potential wilderness while its work to rehabilitate forested watersheds throughout Redwood National and State Parks is in progress; Section 304, to designate, among other river segments, three segments of rivers in Redwood National Park as part of the wild and scenic rivers system.

- [H.R. 2546](#), to designate lands in Colorado as wilderness primarily managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service as well as small portions of lands managed by the National Park Service and Bureau of Reclamation.

November 20 – The Select Committee on the Climate Crisis held a hearing entitled “[Creating a Climate Resilient America: Reducing Risks and Costs](#)”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

The House was in recess the week of November 25th for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Coalition

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

- *NPS Rangers On The Border* – Coalition chair Phil Francis is quoted in a *USA Today* article about the reassignment of rangers to border operations and the impact this is having on their home parks. You can read it [at this link](#).
- *Editorial On LWCF And Deferred Maintenance* – Back in September, CPANP members Bill Wade and Rick Smith met with the editorial staff at the *Everett Daily Herald* to discuss the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the deferred maintenance backlog at national parks. The *Herald* [published this editorial following their conversation](#).

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

NPS Alumni Services Set For Pat Lee

We have received the information from Tomie Lee about services for her husband, Pat. Services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, December 7th, at Strawberry Chapel in the Pines, located at 8579 Fossil Creek Road in Strawberry, Arizona. The church is located next to the fire department in Strawberry, approximately 16 miles north of Payson. A reception will follow the services.

Pat is survived by his wife of nearly 39 years, Tomie, and their six children, thirteen grandchildren, nine great grandchildren (with twins on the way), two great great grandchildren, and one brother.

Pat was born on November 14, 1939, the youngest of seven children and passed away at the age of 80 years and one day, on November 15, 2019 at his home in Pine, Arizona.

Pat's first duty assignment was in Gila Bend, then he transferred to Sunflower, being the first Arizona Highway Patrol officer stationed there. He then transferred to Payson. During his time in Payson, he earned the department's valor award and also did temporary assignments in cadet training and served as a class counselor after being promoted to sergeant. He was then assigned to Flagstaff for a couple of years, then reassigned to Phoenix where he served on the security detail for Governor Castro, then back to Flagstaff where he served until his retirement on June 30, 1981, after 20 years of service.

Pat had recently married Tomie and made her a promise in his marriage proposal on Christmas Eve, 1980, that he would retire at 20 years and would follow and support her career until her National Park Service retirement. During those years, Pat worked as director of security for Little America Hotels,

traveling to their various properties and doing security assessments, and with Tomie's career, they lived in Page, Glynco, Georgia, California, Alaska and finally back in Arizona.

Pat asked that donations in lieu of flowers be made in his name to the AHP/DPS Museum, 2102 W. Encanto Drive Mail Drop 1160, Phoenix, AZ 85009. If you prefer, donations in his name can also be made to the Banner MD Andersen Cancer Hospital in Mesa, Arizona.

Tomie can be contacted either via email at Mohawk.161@hotmail.com or by US mail at PO Box 2032 Pine, AZ 85544.

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:

- *Manzanar NHS/Grand Canyon NHP* – Rader Lane and Rose Masters have been selected as co-recipients of the 2019 National Freeman Tilden Award. Lane, a park ranger and dark-sky advocate at Grand Canyon National Park, was recognized for creating a powerful audience-centered experience (ACE), the “Night Spoken” series. This program explores people's relationships – or lack thereof – with natural darkness. He’s worked for the Service for six years. Masters is a park ranger specializing in oral history at Manzanar National Historic Site. She was honored for her vision and creation of a program called “Katari: Keeping Japanese American Incarceration Stories Alive.” Katari brings together Nikkei (people of Japanese ancestry) student union leaders, former incarcerated persons, and NPS staff for a two-day immersive experience at Manzanar. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Sainte Genevieve NHP* – Chris Collins has been selected as the park’s first permanent superintendent. Collins currently is the chief of business and commercial services at Indiana Dunes, where he provides leadership to a group of administrative professionals assisting multiple national parks in the Midwest. He is a 16-year veteran of the NPS. Source: [Sainte Genevieve Herald](#).
- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP* – Bruce Noble has retired after more than three decades of service. He’s been in charge of operations within national parks for nineteen of those years and departs his career having helmed the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park for the past five. Source: Katharhynn Heidelberg, [Montrose Daily Press](#).

From The Archives

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

- *Mount Rainier NP* – During the 1993 climbing season, rangers conducted an investigation into a company that was guiding visitors on summit climbs of Mount Rainier without a commercial use permit. The park was concerned about both legal issues and the safety of visitors being guided up the mountain. The company, Yeti, Inc., is owned and operated by Timothy Brill, who was convicted of guiding without a permit in 1990 and has been engaged in an intensive letter writing campaign with the park ever since. The investigation encompassed several incidents in which the company attempted to guide visitors on climbs of the mountain, and culminated in the issuance of violation notices to Brill, several guides in his employment, and the owner of a second, related guide service in Alaska. The last of a series of trials was held this September; three parties were found guilty, and the district court judge issued the following sentences in October: Timothy Brill received a year's probation, 48 hours in jail, a \$500 fine, and was barred from entering the park during the probationary period; Donald Beavon, a guide for Yeti, Inc., was fined \$250; and Steve Ricker, another guide for the

company, was also fined \$250. Charges were dismissed against Douglas Buchanan, owner of Alaskan Extreme Adventures, an associate of Yeti. Buchanan had spent several days in jail for failing to appear in court on NPS charges. At his arraignment, the U.S. attorney's office dismissed charges against him, as they felt it was not worth the expense of moving Buchanan from Alaska to Washington for a trial. Submitted by Bill Larson.

- *Lava Beds NM* – Rangers Terry Harris and Kirk Gebicke contacted two individuals - subsequently identified as Michelle Briones and Francisco Chavez - digging in an archeological site on the east side of Petroglyph Point along the park's border with adjacent BLM lands on May 6th. The two were in possession of human remains; when asked what they were doing, they both replied that they were "digging up bones." A consent search of their vehicle was conducted, during which the rangers found additional human remains and a homemade marijuana pipe containing residue. On November 21st, Briones and Chavez both pled guilty to misdemeanor ARPA charges. Briones was fined \$1,000 and sentenced to two years' probation, 200 hours of community service and mandatory drug testing for two years; Chavez was sentenced to 40 days in jail. Local tribes have been consulted on repatriation of human remains in compliance with NAGPRA. Submitted by Kirk Gebicke.
- *Glacier Bay NP* – In May, 1993, rangers Rick Mossman and Mike Sharp investigated the poaching of a brown bear on a remote section of the park's outer coast. Clues found at the scene led them to suspects in Fairbanks, where rangers and Fish and Wildlife Service special agent Mark Webb subsequently served search warrants on two residences and an airplane. Evidence found in one of the residences tied the suspects to the crime. Lengthy interviews and further investigation resulted in charges being filed against Les Zerbe and a companion. Zerbe is a constitutionalist who believes that all state and federal laws and regulations are illegal except for those spelled out in the Constitution. During the search of his house, loaded firearms and ammunition were found in almost every room; an illegally possessed, mounted walrus head was also found and confiscated. Following a lengthy review of the case with the U.S. attorney's office, a violation notice was issued to Zerbe in August, 1994, for violation of the Lacey Act through transportation of a bear which had been illegally taken in the park. Zerbe paid a \$5,000 fine and forfeited the bear's hide and skull and the walrus head. Zerbe's companion was fined \$2,500. The companion has not paid his fine yet and has a court date within a month. Submitted by District Ranger Rick Mossman.

Acknowledgements

This newsletter comes to you through the efforts of a number of people:

- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Cathy Halainen, Mark Forbes, Dwayne Collier

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

"The elements of primary interest in these parks are of many types. They include some of the greatest known illustrations of magnitude, power, beauty and antiquity. We know that their influence removes us for the moment from the weary routine of the commonplace, and develops an attitude of mind favorable to enjoyment of thought on our greater personal problems."

[John C. Merriam](#)

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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.”

To receive a copy of this free publication, join or support the coalition. Any current, retired or former salaried employee (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) of the National Park Service can join the Coalition ([click on this link](#)). Coalition supporters can also join and receive the newsletter ([click on this link](#)). If you need to contact the Coalition office on other matters, including changes of address, [click on this link](#).

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