



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Volume 3

Number 7

Incidents

Zion NP

Hiker Rescued After Two Days Trapped In Quicksand

A 34-year-old Arizona resident was hiking the Left Fork of North Creek (also known as The Subway) on Saturday, February 16th, when one of his legs became trapped in quicksand in the middle of a creek. His leg was buried up to his knee and he was unable to free himself.

A woman who was with him left him with warm gear and clothing and then had to hike three hours to get to a spot with cell phone reception in order to call 911. By the time rescuers arrived, the man was suffering from exposure, hypothermia, and injuries to his extremities. It took them two hours to free the man's leg.

Search and rescue crews decided to camp at the site for the night after getting the man free, staying with him in frigid conditions with four inches of new snow.

A Department of Public Safety helicopter flew to the area; during a break in a series of winter storms Sunday afternoon, the crew extracted the man and took him to a waiting ambulance. The ambulance then took him to a local hospital.

Source: Pat Reavy, [KSL News](#).

Sequoia-Kings Canyon NPs

Park Closes Due To Heavy Snowfall

Two weeks after a heavy snowstorm that closed park roads and left more than 120 visitors and staff snowbound for five days in the Montecito Sequoia Lodge, another storm last Friday brought more heavy snow and whiteout conditions to the park, leading to its closure.

Generals Highway was closed from Hospital Rock, located near Sequoia National Park's southern entrance, to Giant Forest. Access to many of the parks' amenities, including Lodgepole and Wuksachi Lodge, also proved impossible.

National Weather Service forecasters expected the storm to dump between 3 and 6 feet of fresh snow across the region.

Source: Sheyanne N. Romero and Joshua Yeager, [Visalia Times-Delta](#)

Golden Gate NRA

Mudslide Originating In Park Hits Sausalito

A mudslide that originated in the park's Marin Headlands unit during the early hours of Thursday, February 14th, struck a duplex in neighboring Sausalito and pushed it across Sausalito Boulevard and into a house on the other side of the highway. The slide also damaged four other homes and five vehicles.

A woman who lived on the second floor of the collapsed duplex was trapped for 20 minutes before she could be extricated. She was taken to Marin General Hospital, treated for injuries and released. Four adults, a baby, a cat and a dog were rescued from a second home.

Eighty public safety personnel were at the scene for several hours searching for anyone else trapped in the debris. Multiple gas leaks in the area were mitigated, and 25 people were evacuated from their homes until Thursday evening.

The city is working with the National Park Service on efforts to stabilize the mudslide area upslope of Sausalito Boulevard.

The National Weather Service said the Sausalito area received more than five inches of rain in the 24 hours before the mudslide.

Source: [KPIX News](#).

Delaware Water Gap NRA Visitor Bitten By Rabid Raccoon

A man who was walking his dog in an area near Hidden Lake on the Pennsylvania side of the park on January 28th was bitten by a raccoon that later tested positive for rabies.

The man told officials he was walking his dog on a leash when a raccoon suddenly appeared, lunged at his legs, and bit him. The man, who slipped on the wet ground during the incident, was bitten several more times in the leg before his dog attacked the raccoon, breaking its neck and immobilizing it.

The responding ranger put the raccoon down and sent the carcass off for testing. The man was taken to an area hospital, where he underwent standard treatment.

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the nervous system and is usually transmitted to humans from the saliva of an infected animal through a bite. Rabies is always fatal without medical intervention, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Humans are given an injection of human immune globulin and a series of rabies vaccines once it is believed they have been exposed. If given immediately after exposure, the doses are highly effective.

Source: Lori Comstock, [New Jersey Herald](#).

Tumacácori NHP Vandals Carve Names Into Historic Mission Walls

Vandals carved the names "Ferny and Nicky" into the interior walls of the historic 1800s-era mission complex in late December.

Agents with the National Park Service Investigative Services Branch are helping park staff investigate the vandalism to the park's convento ruins. The vandalism happened during the government shutdown when the mission grounds were closed and entry was prohibited.

According to the park, the carvings will be costly and difficult to remove and repairs may not fully restore the mission to its former condition.

Source: Danyelle Khmara, [Arizona Daily Star](#)

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* – After last year’s Woolsey Fire burned more than 150 square miles in the Santa Monica Mountains, questions arose as to how long it would take plants and animals to recover and which ones would thrive and which would die out. In order to answer those questions, a research team has begun a months-long study of more than 50 burn areas to closely monitor the recovery of native plants, invasive grasses, insects, slugs, snails and more. With nearly 90 percent of park land burned, a slow recovery of those smaller species could spell trouble for small mammals and reptiles that escaped the flames. The team is headed by researchers from UCLA, USGS and the park and staffed by 104 mostly student volunteers. Source: Alison Hewitt, [UCLA Newsroom](#).

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

February 11 – During continuing debate on S. 47, the Natural Resources Management Act, the Senate defeated a Lee (R-UT) amendment to limit the extension or establishment of national monuments in the State of Utah. The Senate tabled the amendment by a vote of 60 yeas to 33 nays.

February 12 – The Senate passed S. 47, the Natural Resources Management Act, by a vote of 92 yeas to 8 nays. The bill now heads to the House, where it has been held at the desk, allowing the speaker to call it up for debate at any time without having to go through the regular committee process.

The bill had some modifications from the version introduced last month. Those sections are highlighted in the summary below. Note that the highlighted sections (**those in red**) mean the section was not reported in the previous summary, was an addition to the bill during Senate floor debate, or was slightly modified from the language shown in the previous summary. Since the bill contains the text of over 100 individual bills, only those affecting the National Park Service are listed below:

- *Public Land and National Forest System Management* – Sec. 1114, to improve wildfire management operations and the safety of firefighters and communities with the best available technology.
- *Wilderness Designations and Withdrawals* – **Sec. 1203, to withdraw specified National Forest System land in the Methow River watershed in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest near North Cascades National Park from location, entry, and patent under mining laws; and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing; and Sec. 1204, to withdraw specified National Forest System land in the Custer Gallatin National Forest in Park County, Montana, north of Yellowstone National Park from location, entry, and patent under mining laws; and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral and geothermal leasing.**
- *Wild and Scenic Rivers* – Sec. 1301, to designate segments of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook in Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; Sec. 1302, to designate certain river segments within the Wood-Pawcatuck watershed in Rhode Island and

Connecticut as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System; Sec. 1303, to designate segments of the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

- *California Desert Protection and Recreation* – Sec. 1401 – 1461, to provide for conservation and enhanced recreation activities in the California Desert Conservation Area. These sections make several changes to the California Desert Conservation Act (P.L. 103-433), including the following provisions – expand the Death Valley National Park Wilderness by 87,999 acres, transfer 35,292 acres from BLM to NPS to add to the boundary of Death Valley National Park, authorize the continued operation and maintenance of the Mormon Peak Microwave Facility on one acre of land within the Death Valley National Park wilderness, transfer 25 acres from BLM to NPS in Mojave National Preserve where an NPS-owned maintenance facility exists, transfer 2,879 acres from BLM to NPS along the northern boundary of Joshua Tree National Park, and adjust the boundary of the park to include a donation of 1,639 acres from the Mojave Desert Land Trust; provide for the administration by the National Park Service of 25 acres of lands that were added to Joshua Tree National Park via a Federal Register Notice in 2003, authorize the NPS to acquire the Joshua Tree Visitor Center outside the boundary of the park, now owned by the Joshua Tree National Park Association, and designate as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System 7.5 miles of Amargosa River and 7.1 miles of Surprise Canyon Creek, both near Death Valley National Park.
- *Special Resource Studies* – Sec. 2001, to authorize a special resource study of the President James K. Polk Home in Columbia, Tennessee, as a potential unit of the national park system; Sec. 2002, to authorize a special resource study of Public School 103 in West Baltimore, Maryland, which former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall attended as a youth, and any other resources in the surrounding neighborhood that relate to his early life; Sec. 2003, to authorize a special resource study of President Street Station, a railroad terminal in Baltimore, Maryland; Sec. 2004, to authorize a special resource study of the site known as "Amache", a Japanese American relocation site in World War II in the State of Colorado.; Sec. 2005, to authorize a special resource study of the childhood home of former President George W. Bush, which is located at 1412 West Ohio Avenue in Midland, Texas.
- *National Park System Boundary Adjustments* – Sec. 2101, to expand the boundary of Shiloh National Military Park in Tennessee and Mississippi, and to establish the Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the national park system; Sec. 2102, to redesignate Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia as Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, to revise its boundaries to include additional properties, and to study a portion of the Ocmulgee river corridor to determine if it should be protected as part of the national park system; Sec. 2103, to revise the boundary of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Georgia to include the Wallis House and Hairston Hill; Sec. 2104, to expand the boundary of Ft. Frederica National Monument in Georgia; Sec. 2105, to modify the boundary of the Fort Scott National Historic Site, Kansas; Sec. 2106, to modify the maximum acreage available for inclusion in the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Colorado, to allow NPS to accept a donation of land; Sec. 2107, to transfer administrative jurisdiction from BLM to NPS for several properties within the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota and to authorize the exchange of lands between NPS and Minnesota for a couple of state-owned properties within the park's boundaries; Sec. 2108, to clarify the boundary of Acadia National Park, Maine, and to allow traditional taking of marine species, marine worms, and shellfish on certain land in the park; Sec. 2109, to modify the boundaries of the St. Genevieve National Historical Park in St. Genevieve, Missouri to allow land to be used as a visitor center for the park. The section also would modify the boundary of the Harry S Truman National Historic Site to authorize the acquisition of approximately one acre of land from the city of Independence, Missouri for use as a visitor center; Sec. 2110, to authorize the acquisition of the 89-acre Morgan property for addition to the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in the State of New York.
- *National Park System Redesignations* – S. 2201, to redesignate the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in New Hampshire as the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park; Sec. 2202, to redesignate the small triangular property located in Washington, DC, and designated by the

National Park Service as reservation 302 as "Robert Emmet Park"; Sec. 2203, to establish the Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park in the State of South Carolina, by placing Fort Moultrie and the Sullivan's Island Life-Saving Station Historic District, both of which NPS has managed for many years, within the boundary of the park and by redesignating the park as a national historical park; Sec. 2204, to redesignate the Reconstruction Era National Monument in South Carolina as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park and to establish the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network; Sec. 2205, to redesignate Golden Spike National Historic Site as Golden Spike National Historical Park and to establish within the NPS a program to commemorate and interpret the Transcontinental Railroad; Sec. 2206, to establish the Pearl Harbor National Memorial in Hawaii and to remove it from the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, to redesignate the areas of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument in California as the Tule Lake National Monument, to redesignate the areas of the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument in Alaska as the Aleutian Islands World War II National Monument, and to redesignate the Honouliuli National Monument in Hawaii as the Honouliuli National Historic Site.

- *New Units of the National Park System* – Sec. 2301, to establish the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in the state of Mississippi upon the acquisition of sufficient lands to constitute a manageable unit; S. 2302, to establish the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument in Kentucky as a unit of the National Park System upon the donation of sufficient lands to constitute a manageable unit; S. 2303, to establish the Camp Nelson Heritage National Monument in the State of Kentucky as a unit of the National Park System, upon sufficient lands being acquired to constitute a manageable unit and upon donation of the land.
- *National Park System Management* – Sec. 2401, to amend the Denali National Park Improvement Act to clarify certain provisions relating to the natural gas pipeline authorized in Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska; Sec. 2402, to reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation grant program through fiscal year 2025; Sec. 2403, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a cooperative management agreement for park lands within the District of Columbia; Sec. 2404, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish fees for medical services provided in units of the National Park System. Under current law, fees collected for medical services provided to visitors and park employees in about a dozen remote western parks must be returned to the treasury. This section establishes a fund within the treasury for these fees, which can then be used at the parks where they are collected, subject to being appropriated by Congress each year, making this language less than optimal for the parks involved; Sec. 2405, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to grant to States and local governments easements and rights-of-way over Federal land within Gateway National Recreation Area for construction, operation, and maintenance of projects for control and prevention of flooding and shoreline erosion; Sec. 2406, to establish the Adams Memorial Commission, a federal commission, to carry out the provisions of Public Law 107-62, which had previously authorized the Adams Memorial Foundation to establish a memorial on federal land in Washington, D.C. to honor the legacy of President John Adams and his family and their service to the nation; Sec. 2407, to redesignate the U.S. Civil Rights Network as the African American Civil Rights Network; Sec. 2408, to promote continued use of the James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory at Gateway National Recreation Area by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Sec. 2409, to authorize the transport of bows and crossbows not ready for immediate use in vehicles traveling across NPS lands; Sec. 2410, to authorize the use of qualified volunteers in wildlife management on NPS lands; **Sec. 2411, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey the reversionary interest held by the United States in the Western Trails Interpretive Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa, if the secretary determines it is no longer in the public interest to operate and maintain the center; Sec. 2412, to designate the bridge located in Blount County, Tennessee, on the Foothills Parkway (commonly known as Bridge 2) as the "Dean Stone Bridge."**
- *National Trails* – Sec. 2501, to revise the authorized route of the North Country National Scenic Trail in northeastern Minnesota and to extend the trail into Vermont to connect with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; Sec. 2502, to amend the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail; Sec. 2503, to authorize the Secretary of the

Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to place signage on Federal land along the trail known as the "American Discovery Trail"; Sec. 2504, to provide for the study of the Pike National Historic Trail as a potential addition to the National Trails System.

- *Land and Water Conservation Fund* – Sec. 3001, to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and also amend the LWCF by requiring that 40 percent of the receipts deposited into the fund would be available for grants to the states (current law only requires that 40 percent of the fund be available for federal land acquisition purposes and is silent on the amount to be used for state grants); **Sec. 3002, to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a conservation incentives landowner education program to provide information on federal conservation programs available to landowners interested in undertaking conservation actions on their lands.**
- *Sportsmen's Access to Federal Lands* – Sec. 4105, to require each federal land management agency, including NPS, to submit a list of areas where access is restricted for hunting, fishing, or recreational purposes, and options for providing access to the areas.
- *Hazards and Mapping* – **Sec. 5001, to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish within the U.S. Geological Survey a system, to be known as the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System", to monitor, warn, and protect citizens of the United States from undue and avoidable harm from volcanic activity.**
- *Heritage Areas* – **Sec. 6001(a)(1), to establish the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area in the states of West Virginia and Maryland; Sec. 6001(a)(2), to establish the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area in the state of Washington; Sec. 6001(a)(3), to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the state of Washington; Sec. 6001(a)(4), to establish the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area in the state of California; Sec. 6001(a)(5), to establish the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area in the state of Arizona; Sec. 6001(a)(6), to establish the Susquehanna National Heritage Area in the state of Pennsylvania; Sec. 6002, to include Livingston County, the city of Jonesboro in Union County, and the city of Freeport in Stephenson County, Illinois, to the Lincoln National Heritage Area; Sec. 6003, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area, New York; Sec. 6004(a), to increase the authorization of appropriations for the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania from \$17 million to \$20 million; Sec. 6004(b), to increase the authorization of appropriations for the Essex National Heritage Area in Massachusetts from \$17 million to \$20 million; Sec. 6004(c), to increase the authorization of appropriations to \$20 million for the Ohio and Erie National Heritage Canalway in Ohio; Sec. 6004(d), to increase the authorization of appropriations for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area in North Carolina from \$12 million to \$14 million, and to change the expiration date for this assistance to September 30, 2021; Sec. 6004(e), to increase the authorization of appropriations for the Motor Cities National Heritage Area in Michigan from \$10 million to \$12 million; Sec. 6004(f), to increase the authorization of appropriations for the Wheeling National Heritage Area in West Virginia from \$13 million to \$15 million; Sec. 6004(g), to change the expiration date for financial assistance to the Tennessee National Heritage Area to September 30, 2021; Sec. 6004(h), to change the expiration date for financial assistance to the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area in Georgia to September 30, 2021; Sec. 6004(i), to change the expiration date for financial assistance to the South Carolina National Heritage Area to September 30, 2021; Sec. 6004(j), to change the name of the management entity for the Oil Region National Heritage Area in Pennsylvania to the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Tourism, and Industry; Sec. 6004(k), to change the name of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in New York to the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.**
- *Wildlife Habitat and Conservation* – Sec. 7001, to plan and carry out activities on land managed by the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of the Army for land managed by the Corps of Engineers, and the Secretary of Agriculture to protect water and wildlife by controlling and managing invasive species.

- *Miscellaneous* – Sec. 9001, to establish a program, to be known as the “Every Kid Outdoors program”, to provide free access to federal land and waters for fourth-grade students and up to three accompanying individuals or all accompanying adults in a car. This section would codify the program begun under the Obama administration to allow every fourth grader free access to federal lands and waters. The program would sunset seven years after the enactment of this Act; S. 9002, to direct the Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Agriculture to expedite access to certain Federal land under the administrative jurisdiction of each Secretary for good Samaritan search-and-recovery missions; Sec. 9003, to amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to establish the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps to place youth and veterans in national service positions to conserve, restore, and enhance the great outdoors of the United States; Sec. 9007, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an “American World War II Heritage City”; Sec. 9008, to designate the Quindaro Townsite in Kansas City, Kansas, as a National Commemorative Site, which shall not be a unit of the national park system; Sec. 9009, to officially designate the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York as the National Comedy Center, which shall not be a unit of the national park system.

February 13 – The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine the invasive species threat, focusing on protecting wildlife, public health, and infrastructure. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at this hearing.

February 13 – The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs approved the following, among several items:

- S. 195, to require the Director of the Government Publishing Office to establish and maintain a website accessible to the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place.
- S. 196, to save taxpayer money and improve the efficiency and speed of intragovernmental correspondence by requiring any report or other recorded information required to be submitted to Congress by an agency under any provision of law, and any response from an agency to a request by a congressional office for any report or other recorded information, to be transmitted by the agency in an acceptable electronic format; and to require any congressionally mandated report, any structured data, and any transmittal letter associated with the report, to be posted on the public website of the agency submitting the report.
- S. 395, to require each agency, in providing notice of a rule making, to include a link to a 100-word plain language summary of the proposed rule.
- S. 387, to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer.

February 14 – The Senate agreed to the conference report to accompany H.J. Res. 31, to make further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2019. This joint resolution includes appropriations for the remainder of the fiscal year for a number of federal agencies whose appropriations bill had not yet been signed into law, including the Department of the Interior. The joint resolution passed by a vote of 83 yeas to 16 nays. The joint resolution now returns to the House for further action. The joint resolution includes similar amounts for NPS programs as found in H.R. 648, which passed the House on January 23. The amounts provided for the NPS are found in Division E of H.J. Res. 31, and the only addition to the NPS provisions found in H.R. 648 is section 427, which extends the recreation fee program for one year through October 1, 2020. A link to the Coalition report of January 30, 2019, which outlines the provisions of H.R. 648, [is provided here](#).

February 14 – The Committee on Environment and Public Works announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 116th Congress:

- *Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure* – senators Capito (Chair), Inhofe, Cramer, Braun, Rounds, Sullivan, Boozman, Wicker, Shelby, Cardin, Sanders, Whitehouse, Merkley, Gillibrand, Booker, Markey, and Van Hollen.

- *Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife* – Senators Cramer (Chair), Capito, Braun, Sullivan, Boozman, Wicker, Shelby, Duckworth, Cardin, Sanders, Whitehouse, Merkley, and Van Hollen.
- *Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety* – Senators Braun (Chair), Inhofe, Capito, Cramer, Rounds, Sullivan, Boozman, Wicker, Ernst, Whitehouse, Cardin, Sanders, Merkley, Gillibrand, Booker, Markey, and Duckworth.
- *Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management, and Regulatory Oversight* – Senators Rounds (Chair), Inhofe, Shelby, Ernst, Booker, Gillibrand, and Markey.

Senators Barrasso and Carper serve as ex-officio members of each subcommittee.

February 18-22 – The Senate will be in recess for the Presidents Day holiday.

House Actions

February 11 – The House passed H.R. 1079, to require each federal agency to accept electronic identity proofing and authentication processes for the purposes of allowing an individual to provide prior written consent for the disclosure of the individual's record or to access their records. The intent of the legislation is to make it easier for members of Congress to make inquiries with federal agencies on behalf of their constituents through electronic means in order to expedite responses to their constituents, instead of having to use paper consent forms. The bill passed by a vote of 379 yeas to 0 nays.

February 12 – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled "Climate Change: Preparing for the Energy Transition". There were no witnesses from federal agencies at this hearing.

February 12 – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States held a hearing entitled "The Impacts of Climate Change on Tribal Communities". There were no witnesses from federal agencies at this hearing.

February 13 - The House agreed to H. Res. 125, electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives and ranking Members on a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives, which included the following – Committee on Natural Resources: Mr. Cartwright.

February 13 – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing entitled "Climate Change and Public Lands: Examining Impacts and Considering Adaptation Opportunities". There were no witnesses from federal agencies at this hearing.

February 13 – The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing entitled "The State of Climate Science and Why it Matters". There were no witnesses from federal agencies at this hearing.

February 14 - The House agreed to the conference report to accompany H.J. Res. 31, to make further continuing appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2019. This joint resolution includes appropriations for the remainder of the fiscal year for a number of federal agencies whose appropriations bill had not yet been signed into law, including the Department of the Interior. See Senate action on H.J. Res. 31, above, for further information. The joint resolution passed by a vote of 300 yeas to 128 nays. The joint resolution now goes to the president to be signed into law.

February 18-22 – The House will be in recess for the Presidents Day holiday.

National Park Service

National Park System

Superintendent Chris Lehnertz Exonerated By DOI IG – On February 7th, Deputy Director Dan Smith, exercising the authority of the director, sent out this message to employees at Grand Canyon NP:

“You were notified October 19, 2018 regarding the Department of Interior’s Office of Inspector General (DOI OIG) investigation of allegations regarding Superintendent Lehnertz.

“The investigation has been completed and I am extremely pleased to let you know the allegations were determined by OIG to be wholly unfounded. Chris has been fully exonerated of all allegations.

“Chris will be returning to the park soon to join all of you and assume her duties as superintendent. As we work out the details of her return, she asked me to send her appreciation to you for the work that you have done over the past several months in her absence.

“Superintendent Lehnertz is a talented and dedicated executive of the National Park Service and her commitment to building a respectful and inclusive workplace is sincere, broadly demonstrated, and widely respected. Together, you all have worked tirelessly to change the culture at Grand Canyon National Park. I thank all of you for the progress you have made at the park and for your contributions to the greater culture change within the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service. Your continuing commitment to these changes is crucial.

“Please join me in welcoming Chris back to Grand Canyon upon her return.”

Add One More National Park To The System – Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore has been renamed Indiana Dunes National Park, making it the system’s 61st unit with a “national park” designation. The change came last Friday, when the president signed House Joint Resolution 31, which provides \$1.4 billion for Mexican border fencing and also includes the redesignation, long sought by leaders in the region around the park. Indiana Dunes is already Indiana's top tourist attraction, with 3.6 million visitors in 2018. Lorelei Weimer, executive director of Indiana Dunes Tourism, said this about the name change: "Indiana Dunes National Park is Indiana's first national park, and will be a significant boon to Indiana's economic development, specifically tourism, which already pumps \$476 million into our economy annually. From a marketing perspective, the national park status will put our destination into an elite group of 61 national parks and will significantly increase our already successful marketing initiatives for our region." Source: Dan Carden and Joseph S. Pete, [Munster Times](#).

Newest Junior Ranger Born Before NPS – The Service’s popular Junior Ranger program, which has no age limits, just stretched the age range of its members a bit further. Rose Torphy, 103, became a junior ranger at the Grand Canyon on January 14th while vacationing at the national park with her daughter. Torphy is more than three years older than the park, which is celebrating its centennial this year. Torphy, who is the mother of three, grandmother of nine, great-grandmother of 18, and a great-great grandmother of 10, grew up in northern Wisconsin, and her parents took her to area lakes to learn about nature. "I started talking to people about the junior ranger program because it teaches kids to protect the Canyon," Torphy told “Good Morning America.” "My parents taught me to care for the land but not all kids have that." The web story includes some great photos. Source: Genevieve Shaw Brown, [Good Morning America](#).

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.

- *C&O Canal NHP* – The park laid out its plans for a new multi-million-dollar headquarters building at a meeting in Williamsport last week. The NPS will spend about six months working on the planning and design for the headquarters, which will be located in that town.

Groundbreaking is expected around August or September; construction will begin in the late fall, and staff will move into the facility around September 2020. Source: Dave McMillion, [Hagerstown Herald-Mail](#).

- *Grand Canyon NP* – The park and the Grand Canyon Conservancy will be holding a celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of Grand Canyon’s designation as a national park on February 26th. Entrance fees will be waived for the day. Commemoration activities will start at 10 a.m. with cultural demonstrators and family activities at the Grand Canyon Visitor Center on the South Rim. Flagstaff’s Sechrist and Knoles Elementary school choirs will present two concerts in honor of Grand Canyon at 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Visitors are invited to participate in the commemoration ceremony at 1 p.m. featuring remarks from Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Canyon Conservancy leadership, and a commendation reading and plaque reveal by Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs. After the ceremony, Grand Canyon School’s fourth grade class will lead a Happy Birthday sing along. In the evening, visitors are welcomed to join Sunny Dooley for a program on Diné winter stories at 7 p.m. at the Grand Canyon Visitor Center Theater. These commemorations kick off a yearlong celebration with events at Grand Canyon and throughout Arizona. All centennial activities are a joint effort between the park and the conservancy to engage with the next generation of park stewards. For a full list of centennial events, please visit https://go.nps.gov/2019_events. Source: Vanessa Ceja and Emily Davis, [Grand Canyon NP](#).
- *Natchez NHP* – SEAC archaeologists began searching the grounds of Melrose earlier this month in an effort to locate burial sites of enslaved people who might have been interred on estate grounds (Melrose is one of the best-known and grandest antebellum mansions in Natchez and is part of the park). The archeologists have mapped and recorded the hits made by a human remains detector dog; those sites match up with historical records of the cemetery’s location. The investigation continues. Source: Nicole Hester, [Natchez Democrat](#).
- *Pecos NHP* – The park has been awarded funding to rehabilitate the historic Kozlowski's Trading Post along Highway 63 in Pecos. The project, which will begin in late February, will transform the building into a visitor contact station, museum, and employee office space. Weil Construction from Albuquerque is the general contractor; they have teamed with Avanyu General Contracting of Española and Pat Taylor Historic Preservation of Mesilla for the rehabilitation phase of the project. Receipts from visitor entrance fees from parks around the country will fund the rehabilitation of this building. Source: Becky Latanich, [Pecos NHP](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – A [FONSI](#) was signed for the EA to replace the Lewis River Bridge in December, clearing the project to move forward. The bridge is located south of the Lewis Lake Campground on the South Entrance Road. The replacement will be built on a new alignment directly east of the existing bridge. Parking and pedestrian areas located north and south of the existing bridge will be redesigned and reconstructed. Depending upon funding, roadwork could begin as early as spring 2020 and last for two consecutive years, followed by the spring of a third year. Source: Morgan Warthin, [Yellowstone NP](#).
- *Zion NP* – [Sting](#) and the Utah Symphony will be performing together in August at a benefit for the park. The concert will be at the USANA Amphitheater, located just outside of Salt Lake City. The performance will celebrate the park’s centennial; all proceeds will go to the Zion National Park Forever Project to benefit the park. “The project's primary goals are to unite the community and partners to protect and promote the beautiful landscape and natural state of the park.” Source: Hanna LaFond, [Deseret News](#).

Federal Government And Congress

Recent news stories, web postings, statements, and press releases pertaining to Congress (excepting official business, which appears above), the administration, DOI, and other public land management agencies that have bearing on the NPS.

Administration and Government

Government Ordered To Pay Damages To Feds Who Worked During 2013 Shutdown – “The government must compensate 25,000 federal employees for damages they incurred during the 2013 shutdown, a federal judge ruled this week in a case filed more than two years ago,” reported *Government Executive* last weekend. “U.S. Court of Federal Claims Judge Patricia Campbell-Smith ordered the compensation for the individuals who signed onto the collective action lawsuit against the government, alleging a violation of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. More than 200,000 employees who were forced to work during the shutdown because their salaries were paid from non-annually appropriated accounts or because their jobs protected life or property were eligible to join the case. While their pay was guaranteed, they did not receive it until the shutdown concluded after 16 days. The exact damages for each of the more than 25,000 employees who proactively signed onto the case will vary for each individual...” Heidi Burakiewicz, an attorney at the law firm Mehri & Skalet, which is representing the workers, “said she could not think of an FLSA case that had this many individuals opt in.” Source: Eric Katz, [Government Executive](#).

Department of the Interior

President Turns To DOI For Capital Parade – The president didn’t get the big military parade he wanted in DC last year for a variety of reasons, including cost, but hasn’t given up on the idea. The following is from the February 12th *New York Times*: “After being stymied last year on his proposal for a military parade like one he saw while visiting Paris, Mr. Trump has now turned to the Interior Department to give him what the Pentagon would not. He even has a name for it. ‘A Salute to America parade,’ the president said at a meeting of his cabinet at the White House. He called it more of ‘a gathering, as opposed to a parade, I guess you’d have to say.’” Since he was blocked by the former secretary of defense last time, he’s turning to DOI this time. Acting Secretary Bernhardt has been tasked with working out the particulars. Source: Helene Cooper, [New York Times](#).

Other Agencies

EPA Inspections Fall To Ten-Year Low – “Under President Trump, the Environmental Protection Agency inspected fewer industrial facilities during 2018 than at any time over the past decade, according to data released by the agency Friday,” reported the *Washington Post* on February 8th. “The sharp drop in inspections and evaluations last fiscal year — to roughly 10,600 — is only half the number EPA conducted at its peak in 2010, and continues a downward trend that began in 2012. Other enforcement activities at the agency experienced similar declines, according to EPA figures: The number of civil cases the division started and completed in 2018 hit a 10-year low, and the \$69 million in civil penalties it leveled represents the lowest in nearly a quarter-century.” Source: Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis, [Washington Post](#).

TVA Defies Trump And McConnell, Closes Coal Plants – On February 14th, the Tennessee Valley Authority’s board voted to retire the 49-year-old Paradise power plant in Kentucky despite opposition by the president and the state’s top elected officials. The board’s resolution calls for the Paradise plant to close by the end of 2020, and a second plant at Bull Run in neighboring Tennessee to shut down by the end of 2023. On February 11th, TVA released an environmental assessment of the Paradise plant’s last operating coal unit that concluded it was no longer needed, unreliable and too expensive to repair and operate. Keeping it open would burden TVA’s customers with higher costs and more pollution, according to the assessment. As TVA has shifted away from coal in recent years to more nuclear, natural gas and renewable energy, it has shaved fuel costs by \$1 billion a year. “The shape of demand is changing,” said TVA’s chairman, with a “growing appetite for cleaner, more renewable energy.” He said alternatives to coal have become competitive, and “TVA must adapt to these changes if we are to serve our customers successfully.” Incidentally, most of the coal shipped to the Paradise plant during the first nine months of 2018 came from Kentucky mines that are part of Murray Energy Corp., which is led by coal baron and Trump supporter Robert E. Murray. Murray has pushed for a government-ordered bailout of coal. Source: James Bruggers, [Inside Climate News](#).

House and Senate

Park Maintenance Backlog Funding Bill Reintroduced – On February 14th, Senator Angus King (I-Maine), ranking member of the Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, joined Senators Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Mark Warner (D-Va.), and Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) in reintroducing the “Restore Our Parks Act,” bipartisan legislation that would address the nearly \$12 billion backlog in long-delayed NPS maintenance projects. The legislation has 21 additional original cosponsors, including Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine). A similar bill was introduced in the House of Representatives the same day that had more than 90 cosponsors. The act would establish the “National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund” to reduce the maintenance backlog by allocating existing revenues the government receives from onshore and offshore energy development. This funding would come from 50 percent of all revenues that are not otherwise allocated and deposited into the General Treasury not to exceed \$1.3 billion each year for the next five years. Source: [Office Of Senator Angus King](#).

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

The Bad News – The news on climate and conservation issues these days is inevitably grim, but needs to be shared – mitigated, when and where possible, with good news, which follows. First the former:

- *Chronic Wasting Disease Spreads* – CNN reports that [chronic wasting disease](#) has now been detected in wild deer, elk or moose in 24 states and that CDC has is warning hunters to avoid handling or eating potentially infected meat. The disease, which is progressive and always fatal, affects the central nervous system. Infected animals can show signs of drastic weight loss, listlessness, and lack of coordination. It can also make them more aggressive and less afraid of human contact. CDC has a [webpage](#) that shows all the counties and states where CWD has been found. Source: Susannah Cullinane, [CNN](#).

The Good News – Despite the continuous drumbeat of bad news on the climate and conservation fronts, some headway is being made in meeting and dealing with related issues:

- *Reforestation And Climate Change* – A new study has found that replenishing the world’s forests on a grand scale could suck enough carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to cancel out a decade of human emissions. The researchers determined that there’s room for an additional 1.2 trillion trees to grow in parks, woods and abandoned land across the planet and said that adding that number of trees would exceed every other approach for dealing with climate change. Using new technology, the researchers found that previous estimates of the current number of trees on the planet were far too low – that, in fact, there are about 3 trillion trees on the earth, about seven times higher than a previous NASA estimate. By employing machine learning and AI to analyze the new data, they were able to predict the number of trees that could feasibly be planted in empty patches around the world. Source: Josh Gabbatis, [The Independent](#).
- *Australia To Plant A Billion Trees* – Fitting right in with the above is the recent announcement by the Australian government that they intend to plant a billion trees by 2050 as part of a new forestry plan they say will help the country meet its Paris Agreement climate targets. Plantings on that scale would contribute to the removal of 18 million tons of greenhouse gas per year by 2030 in a country currently producing in excess of 500 million tons of CO₂-equivalent per year. Source: James Thornhill, [Bloomberg](#).

National Park System Issues

Native Flora and Fauna – Recent news pertaining to the protection, propagation and advancement of species now or formerly native to the national parks – or removal of those that aren't:

- *North Cascades NP* – Another six fishers have been released into the North Cascades, bringing the total number released into the region to 24 since last December 5th. Fourteen females and 10 males are now settling into area forests. The fishers were brought from Alberta, Canada, with help from the Calgary Zoo and were surgically implanted with radio transmitters to keep wildlife biologists apprised of their whereabouts. The plan is to release a total of about 80 fishers into the North Cascades through 2020. Source: Kimberly Cauvel, *Skagit Valley Herald*.

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

- *Grand Canyon NP* – Cindy McCain, the widow of Sen. John McCain, and Mark Udall, former Democratic congressman and senator from Colorado, had an opinion piece in the February 17th Washington Post on protecting the park from potential uranium mining all around its boundaries: “The clock is ticking on a 20-year ban on new mining claims on about 1 million acres of public land surrounding the national park,” they write. “Thousands of uranium claims were put on hold in 2012 because of mounting evidence that uranium mining in the headwaters of Grand Canyon creeks can contaminate life-giving seeps and springs in the desert basins below...Let’s challenge all of America’s elected officials to become better caretakers not only of the Grand Canyon but also of all public lands. In this new Congress, let’s sit down and see what we can do — together — to permanently ban uranium mining around the Grand Canyon as our gift to the next generation.” Source: Cindy McCain and Mark Udall, [Washington Post](#).

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

- *Everglades NP* – A company that owns 20,000 acres in the Everglades won a key legal fight last week when a state appeals court ordered the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to issue the company an oil drilling permit. The potential threat of a spill that would affect water and wildlife throughout the Everglades has led to a firestorm of opposition from both environmental organizations and political entities. Legal action is planned to block the drilling. Source: David Fleshler, [South Florida Sun Sentinel](#).

The Coalition

A summary of recent developments within the Coalition, including some of the actions that CNPCA took on your behalf:

The big news this past week was the Senate's passage of the Natural Resources Management Act. On February 12th, we put out a statement entitled “Coalition Celebrates Passage of S. 47, Natural Resources Management Act.” You can read it by [clicking on this link](#).

Otherwise, we had a few media inquiries on the shutdown surveys, and also some related to the possibility of another shutdown. Thanks to our executive council members who have handled those!

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

From The Archives

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

- *Yellowstone NP* – A 17-year-old visitor was injured when his snowmobile struck a bison about four miles south of Madison Junction around 8:30 p.m. on February 11th. At the time of the accident, he was traveling northbound at about 50 mph with a group of other snowmobilers after spending the day touring the park. The first snowmobiler in the group saw the bison in the road and swerved to avoid it; the 17-year-old, who was second in line, struck the animal and was ejected from his machine. He suffered a broken jaw and bruised chest and his snowmobile came to rest in the Firehole River. The bison, which apparently was not seriously injured, left the scene. Rangers responded and transported the teenager to West Yellowstone in the Old Faithful oversnow ambulance, a Type I ambulance with a track conversion for travel on snow. He was then taken to a hospital in Bozeman by conventional ambulance. During the winter, bison tend to travel along the groomed road system, particularly at night, in order to save energy. Submitted by Chief Ranger's Office.
- *New River Gorge NR* – On the evening of February 1st, rangers and Fayette County sheriff's deputies responded to an accident at North Fayette Station in which a train struck a vehicle. Neither the 22-year-old driver nor her 24-year-old passenger was seriously injured. The driver had crossed the tracks and parked her vehicle at Fayette Landing, a dead end road on the banks of the New River. The couple then heard a train coming and decided to exit the area by backing across the tracks. The right front wheel of their 1989 Plymouth dropped into a ditch, though, and the vehicle became stuck with its front end extending out approximately a foot into the path of the oncoming train. Neither had time to get out of the car before the train clipped its front end, throwing it about five feet from the track. Although the woman and man were both sitting in the front seat, they suffered only minor bruises and emotional trauma. The vehicle was totaled because of a badly twisted frame and damaged engine. Submitted by District Ranger Rick Brown.
- *Olympic NP* – Early on the afternoon of February 14th, park dispatch received a report of two suspicious people on private land along a road at Lake Crescent. The reporting party said that they appeared to be in the process of burglarizing an unoccupied residence and that at least one of them had a rifle; the caller also provided an excellent description of their vehicle. Rangers responded and located the vehicle eastbound on Highway 101. A high speed pursuit ensued which lead rangers out of the park. The pair eventually took a dead end road, abandoned their car, and headed into the woods with their rifles near Lake Sutherland, a heavily developed residential/summer recreational lake two miles east of Lake Crescent. A total of 15 people, including rangers and county, state, tribal and fisheries officers, began an area search. A Coast Guard helicopter assisted briefly, but had to depart because of mechanical difficulties. Between four and five inches of rain fell during the 24-hour search, and temperatures hovered in the thirties. Both suspects were located on the afternoon of the 13th - one walking in the area in stolen clothes and posing as a local resident, the other huddled in front of a space heater in a basement of one of the residences. Both rifles were recovered. Investigation has tied these two men, ages 18 and 20, to a car theft which had occurred on the 10th and to at least five burglaries which occurred throughout the western and northern sides of the peninsula between the 10th and 12th. Eight additional rifles and over 600 rounds of ammunition were recovered from the stolen vehicle. During their interview, the pair said that they were high on some "bad crank" (amphetamines) and that they intended to get killed in a big shootout with police. Both have extensive juvenile records. The investigation is continuing. Reported by Acting Chief Ranger Curt Sauer.

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, Emily Thompson, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Tony Sisto, Dan Kirschner, 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

"It is hard to imagine more dedicated people than those who run the parks. I have never met a single one whom I would not be glad to meet again, and I have invariably regretted the time to say goodbye. The range of their interests, their high intelligence, their devotion, make them a separate and wonderful breed."

Publisher [Alfred Knopf](#), former chairman, Secretary's Advisory Board on National Parks

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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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