THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION FALL 2010
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National PARKS

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF A DREAM

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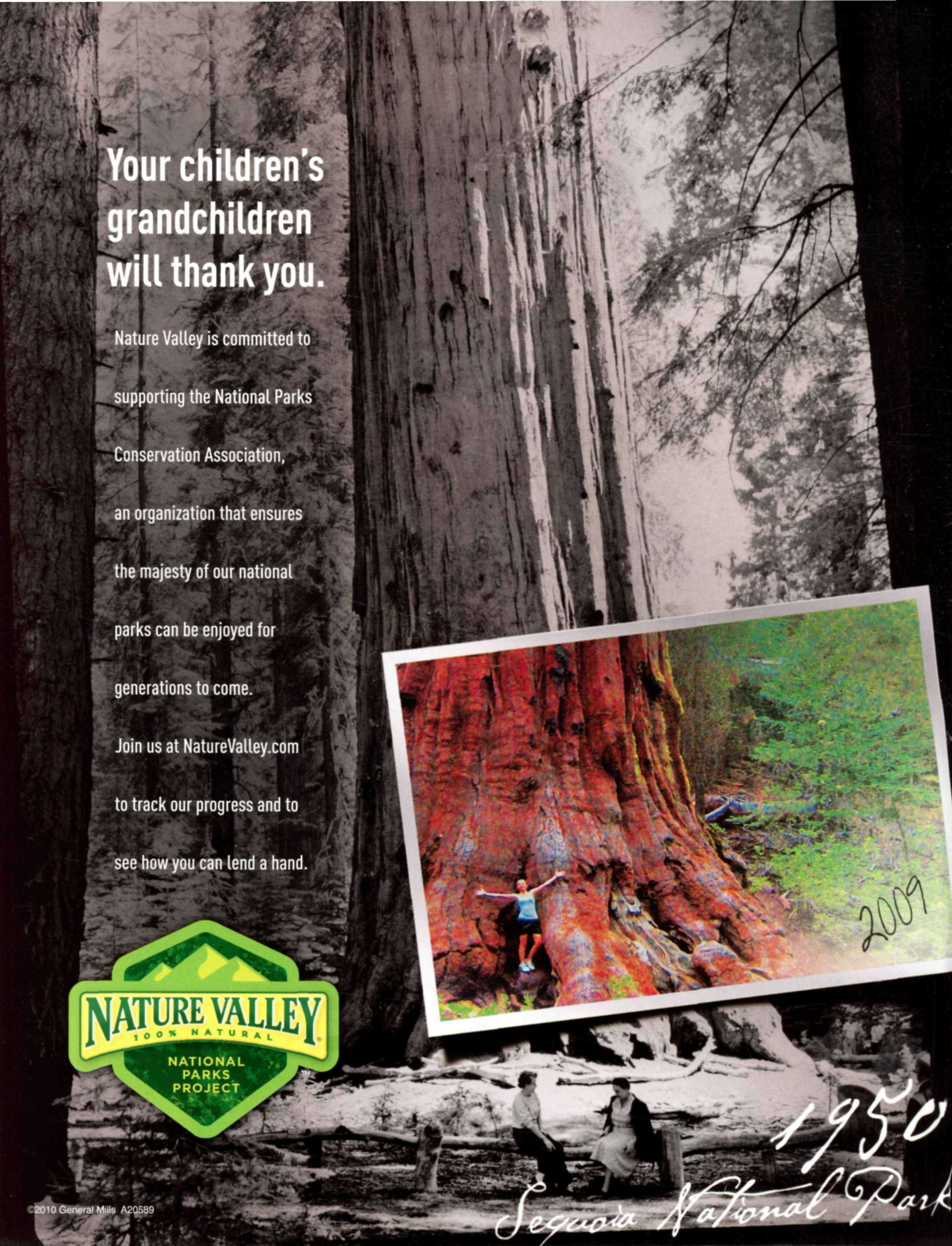
A NEW DAWN FOR FORT MONROE VALLES CALDERA: THE NEXT PARK? **NIGHTMARE IN THE GULF**



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PARKS

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THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE on the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, where civil rights marchers were attacked by armed officers as they headed for the state capitol in Montgomery, Alabama, in March 1965.
© MEGGAN HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO

COVER PHOTO:
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. in 1966.
© CHARLES MOORE/BLACK STAR

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CANYON DE CHELLY, 1942, from the book *Ansel Adams in the National Parks.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: © ANSEL ADAMS PUBLISHING RIGHTS TRUST; NPS; © SAMUEL A. MINICK; © JOE AUSTIN PHOTOGRAPHY/ALAMY

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Turn to page 26 to read about New Mexico's Valles Caldera and meet the people who want to see it become a national park unit—then take a virtual tour of its gorgeous landscapes through stunning video, photos, and interviews at www.npca.org/vallescaldera.

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Oil and Water

© IAN SHIVE

Earlier this summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Gulf Islands National Seashore to see firsthand what the Deepwater Horizon disaster meant for our national parks. Our team of NPCA staff met many of the clean-up workers at the seashore, toured the site, met with Park Service leaders at the Unified Command Center in Mobile, Alabama, and flew over the gulf in a small plane to get a first-hand look at the oil spill. Although all of these experiences were informative, none of them had the emotional impact of our time spent walking along the beaches of Gulf Islands National Seashore.

Wind and rain pelted us as we stood watching the brown-tinged surf bring, with every wave, a thin sheen of oil up onto the beach. Though officials advised against it, I reached down and grabbed some of the oily sand and ran it over my hands. I was not prepared for the sensation on my fingertips; it was a slight, persistent, chemical sting.

The Gulf oil spill and the danger it posed to wildlife and a way of life were no longer an abstraction or a two-dimensional photo; it was now real and it was toxic. By touching even a small portion of the oil that was spread over the entirety of Gulf Islands' beaches, into its wetlands, and on to its wildlife, I could now in a very small way feel the long-lasting pain brought by the Gulf spill. The sting on my fingers also further crystallized for me the importance of reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.

We must take action for parks in the Gulf region and across the country. At the national level, we are pushing Congress for full funding for the national parks in the coming year's budget. And we will continue our efforts to ensure full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). After decades of advocacy by NPCA, national park supporters like you, and our allies, full funding for LWCF is currently included in the House and Senate oil-spill bills. If these bills become law, they will provide lasting benefit for our national parks and monuments. (See page 10 for more on the Gulf parks and the pending legislation.)

Our national parks can't protect themselves. They need us, with your support and help, to ensure they will be there for your children and grandchildren. Thank you so much for standing with us to help ensure a better future for our national parks, and we look forward to your continued support. We filmed our visit to Gulf Islands so we could share the experience with you. I invite you to watch the video at www.npca.org/oilspill.

Thomas C. Kiernan

EDITOR'S **NOTE**

What's Old Is New Again

©BLAKE GORDON

VALLES GRANDE, inside Valles Caldera National Preserve, New Mexico.

Most of us think of national parks as timeless. They've always been there and they'll always be there. And it's true that the sheer cliffs of Yosemite, the geysers of Yellowstone, and the mountains that rise up from Shenandoah were all formed so long ago that they are essentially prehistoric. But this issue of the magazine reminds us that the definition of our National Park System is always changing as new parks emerge, both historical and natural. In New Mexico, the crater of a dormant volcano called Valles Caldera is gaining more attention as a potential park unit for its geological significance and its stunning beauty. On the other side of the country, an aging fort on Virginia's coast will soon be decommissioned, and some people think it's ripe for national park status, given its role in freeing escaped slaves during the Civil War. Even the travel piece in this issue focuses on some of the new kids on the block—key sites in the Civil Rights movement, which hadn't achieved any significance when Yellowstone turned 75 years old, back in 1947.

I know there are plenty of travel buffs out there hoping to fill their park passports with stamps from each of the 392 national parks, and every time that list grows a little bit longer, you see that goal stretching just beyond your reach, but maybe you'll find solace in that old cliché: "It's not the destination, it's the journey." If that doesn't quite cut it, we'll keep delivering a few parks to your mailbox every three months, and hope that eases your pain just a little bit.

SCOTT KIRKWOOD
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WHO WE ARE
Established in 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association is America's only private, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the U.S. National Park System.

WHAT WE DO
NPCA protects national parks by identifying problems and generating support to resolve them.

WHAT WE STAND FOR
The mission of NPCA is to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.

EDITORIAL MISSION
National Parks magazine fosters an appreciation of the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, educates readers about the need to preserve those resources, and illustrates how member contributions drive our organization's park-protection efforts. The magazine uses the power of imagery and language to forge a lasting bond between NPCA and its members, while inspiring new readers to join the cause.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE
Members can help defend America's natural and cultural heritage. Activists alert Congress and the administration to park threats; comment on park planning and adjacent land-use decisions; assist NPCA in developing partnerships; and educate the public and the media. Please sign up to receive Park Lines, our biweekly e-mail newsletter. Go to www.npca.org to sign up.

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QUESTIONS?
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DIFFERENT STROKES

I read your Editor's Note ["The Whole Spectrum," Summer], and I agree with you. My son and I have traveled to all 50 states and visited more than 150 national parks and monuments, and the crowds of people we see are middle- to upper-class Americans, leaning toward the older set. I think the national parks are a treasure for this country, but most people I know in my area only travel to Carolina beaches for their vacations—and when I ask if they've been to Cape Hatteras or the Blue Ridge Parkway, they just don't seem to be interested. I find it very sad, because we have really enjoyed our trips to state and national parks. I keep trying to get the word out, and encourage people not to wait until retirement to see this country; with so much to see, you won't get it all done.

LIZ MITCHELL
Pittsburgh, PA

Thank you for the engaging article on diversity in our national parks. The work highlighted in this story coincides with the work of the South Florida Community Partners (SFCP). Originally spearheaded by the National Parks Conservation Association, SFCP is one of six groups in the U.S. that's focused on engaging diverse audiences, introducing them to the national parks, and strengthening their connections to the National Park Service.

The mission of SFCP is to increase awareness and participation in South Florida's national parks and preserves among underrepresented, culturally diverse communities. Every March, SFCP hosts a free, day-long event called "March for Parks," which takes place at a national park in South Florida and is open to everyone in the community. This year, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the event at Big Cypress National Preserve. More than 1,500 people attended, compared to 200 participants the first year—a testament to our progress.

For the past decade, SFCP has helped increase diversity in visitation, park planning, and park protection. Our members include Park Service employees, students, individuals, and organizations that share a keen interest in implementing a long-term plan for greater minority participation in the park system. SFCP will continue its work to encourage more diverse communities to be represented in our national parks as visitors, rangers, and subjects of interpretation.

NADINE C. PATRICE
SFCP COORDINATOR,
via e-mail

Thank you for your article, "Expanding the Palette." I was reminded of my own experiences years ago, first as a Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern, and later as a park ranger. As an SCA intern at a Civil War battlefield in Georgia, I quickly realized that almost all the park visitors were white (as were the park staff and volunteers). Yet as I traveled around the Southeast that summer, visiting other parks like Tuskegee Institute and Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Sites, I also realized that this racial divide was hardly unique to Civil War sites or natural parks—and, in fact, worked both ways. At Tuskegee and MLK, for instance, the situation was just the opposite: All the visitors and staff were black, and I was often the only white person on tours or in the visitor centers.

Later, during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, rangers from the National Mall in Washington, D.C., where I then worked, were assigned to the Martin Luther King, Jr. site in anticipation of the large crowds expected for the games. But the crowds never showed up. The reason: People were unwilling to leave the security of downtown Atlanta to go to a part of the city that seemed less safe—a perception of American cities that is hardly unique to Atlanta.

Clearly, more is involved here than minorities not feeling safe hiking or camping in the woods. The same can also be said for many other people in urban parks, if not elsewhere. The Park Service should be applauded for its efforts to break down these racial and cultural barriers—its efforts are long overdue. But I think it faces some huge hurdles and deep-seated attitudes that undergird so much of American life. Perhaps the challenge is not just to get African Americans or other minorities into campgrounds, but to recognize that as Americans, we tend to segregate our history and culture much like we have traditionally segregated our neighborhoods, churches, and, indeed, our lives in general—and that those same attitudes tend to include where and with whom we take vacations.

STEVEN MOORE
Milford, VA

I read "Expanding the Palette" with interest and noted the typical economic reasons given by the [middle class] "experts" explaining why ethnic minorities do not use certain services. Does it ever occur to them—as the Park Service's own Mickey Fearn said in the article—that some experiences may simply not appeal to every cultural or ethnic group?

I was also surprised to read about racial discrimination in the national parks. In the early 1950s, when I was 12 to 13 years old, my family and I traveled a great deal when my father could afford the vacation time. We always went to the national parks because they were inexpensive (we had very little money), and as my father said, they were the only places where we would not encounter racial discrimination. I learned a lot about

this beautiful country and will always value those experiences. I still have hundreds of photos that I took with my little Brownie camera. Those experiences encouraged me to be respectful of the environment and understand the need to protect these incredible resources.

ROCHELLE WILLIAMS
Inglewood, CA

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

I was thrilled to see an article on Seasonal Law Enforcement Training ["Back to School," Summer]. As chief ranger for Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Parks, I can tell you first-hand that this training program prepares its graduates for the intense and rewarding work of a National Park Service law enforcement ranger.

A challenge for students interested in becoming seasonal rangers from South Florida and the Caribbean has been that the nearest training program is located in North Carolina and it is often fully booked a year in advance. To address this, Everglades National Park and NPS staff are working with NPCA and Miami Dade College to establish a new National Park Service Seasonal Ranger Academy located in south Florida. This South Florida Seasonal Law Enforcement Training Program will provide a new career path for local community members who are eager to protect and preserve our natural and cultural treasures by becoming park rangers.

The establishment of this new ranger academy is an exciting opportunity that will combine the best of Miami Dade College's faculty and facilities with an established Park Service training program, and ultimately produce the next generation of well-trained park rangers.

BONNIE FOIST
Homestead, FL

CORRECTIONS:

Our review of "Running Dry" incorrectly identified the headwaters of the Colorado River [Summer, p. 12]. Although the writer's journey began atop Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park, the river originates on the west side of the park at La Poudre Pass.

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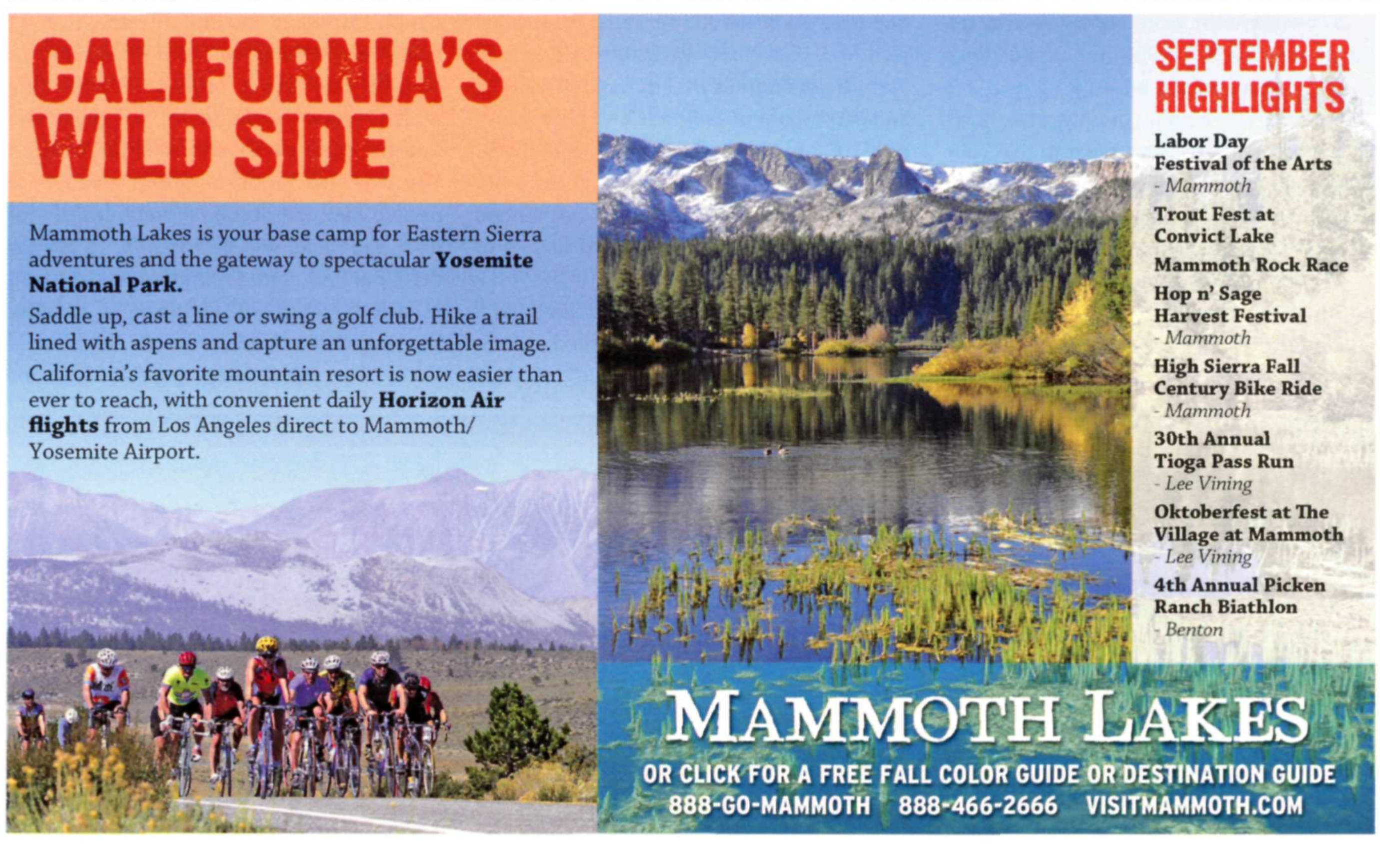
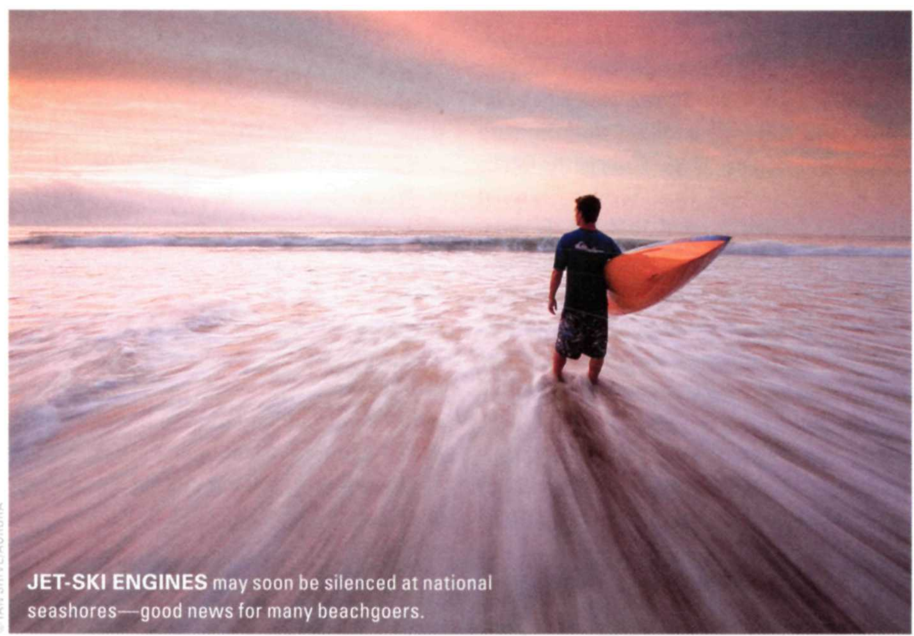


RUNNING ON FUMES

Do Jet Skis belong in our national parks?



JET-SKI ENGINES may soon be silenced at national seashores—good news for many beachgoers.

©IAN SHIVE/AURORA

Ten years ago, the Park Service banned Jet Skis and other personal watercraft from its lakes and national seashores, raising hopes that once again, visitors might be able to hear the sound of waves lapping quietly on a shoreline. But there was one caveat to that rule: Individual parks could make exceptions if they proved personal watercraft wouldn't threaten park resources and visitor safety.

It was a reasonable plan, until it got political.

Under pressure from the Bush Administration, a handful of parks reopened their waterways to these "thrill craft," but did so hastily, without researching the consequences. As a result, personal watercraft returned with their toxic emissions and two-stroke engines that dump between 25 and 30 percent of their gas and oil mixture directly into the water. Noise levels rose and tranquil waters turned into racetracks, placing stress on wildlife like bottlenose dolphins and endangered sea turtles—and many visitors, too.

NPCA's allies cried foul and sued. And this July, Judge Gladys Kessler ruled in their favor, focusing on Gulf Islands National Seashore in Florida and Mississippi, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan, where Kessler said that allowing the "highly polluting and noisy vehicles" was a clear violation of federal law.

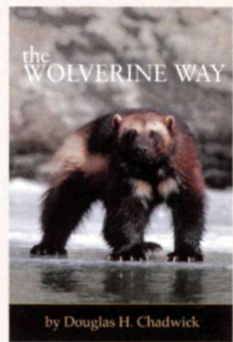
"The Park Service, at the direction of the previous Administration, wasn't taking wildlife and public safety into account, and the judge called the agency out on it," says Kristen Brengel, NPCA's legislative director. "The court decision isn't a slam dunk, because it doesn't offer immediate protection for the visitors, wildlife, and natural resources threatened by personal watercraft. But at least these parks have to look at the issue seriously now. That's a victory in itself."

To date, The Park Service has banned personal watercrafts in six of the 21 parks where they might be used. They're generally accepted in national recreation areas with lakes that have been formed by dams, but NPCA is more concerned with bans in national lakeshores and seashores, where resources are especially fragile.

"Gulf Islands National Seashore can't handle another negative impact right now," says John Adornato, director of NPCA's Sun Coast regional office. "It's already been devastated by Hurricane Katrina, and now this horrible oil disaster. There are more appropriate places where people can use personal watercraft." For now, the parks will be required to review their policies, but a timeline hasn't been revealed; NPCA will continue to monitor developments closely.

—Amy Leinbach Marquis

EYE-OPENER



When Montana-based writer and wildlife biologist Douglas Chadwick volunteered with the Glacier Wolverine Project, a groundbreaking five-year study of the species in Glacier National Park, he faced down blizzards, sheer mountain walls, and grizzly-bear encounters in an effort to capture and tag as many wolverines as possible. But nothing compared to meeting this fierce park predator in the flesh. "I was never going to get used to dealing with the intensity of a wolverine when it's up close and cornered," he writes in his newest book, **THE WOLVERINE WAY**, which chronicles the project. "Nobody did." But Chadwick grew fond of the animals, and all those rattled nerves paid off when the team's research revealed wolverine habitat, social structures, and reproduction habits—shedding new light on a species that had long eluded scientists. Given the threats wolverines face from shrinking wilderness and global warming, this book adds urgency to the call for wildlife corridors that would connect viable habitat. Look for an excerpt in the next issue of National Parks magazine (Patagonia Books, $25.95, 277 pp.).

NUMBER 34

Vision for Eisenhower Memorial emerges for National Mall

FRANK GEHRY'S DESIGN CONCEPT for the Eisenhower Memorial.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EISENHOWER MEMORIAL COMMISSION

Washington's got one. Lincoln's got one. Jefferson and FDR, too. And the next president in line for a D.C. monument is Dwight D. Eisenhower, who occupied the White House from 1953 to 1961.

Eisenhower rose to prominence when he took command of U.S. forces in Europe in 1942; he went on to lead Allied Forces in WWII, and ended the war as a five-star general. During his time in office, Eisenhower sent federal troops to oversee the integration of Little Rock Central High School, brought the Korean War to an end, established the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and presided over the designation of Hawaii and Alaska as states.

Congress created the Eisenhower Memorial Commission in October 1999, and the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts approved its choice for a site just south of the Air & Space Museum back in 2006. This spring, the 12 commissioners revealed their preferred design concept for the memorial, conceived by Frank Gehry's architectural firm. Gehry is known for curving structures that seem to defy the principles of classic architecture, if not gravity itself (see the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles), so it may be a surprise to some that his concept for Eisenhower's memorial hews to the more traditional pillars and columns that mark much of Washington's memorials, echoing classical European architecture.

The memorial is expected to cost between $90 to $110 million; the Commission has received full federal funding through the design period and is now seeking public/private funding through the construction period. If all goes as planned, you'll be able to walk through those columns and pay your respects to our 34th president as soon as Memorial Day 2015. For more images and further information, visit www.eisenhowermemorial.org.

—Scott Kirkwood

2

PORTABLE, SOLAR-POWERED monitoring stations that have been recording sounds in Zion National Park, Utah, since 2008, from natural sounds like cicada symphonies and trickling streams to human-made sounds like jets and helicopters overhead. The monitoring program will help park staff prevent or minimize sounds that could harm park resources or take away from the visitor experience. Zion would be the first national park in the U.S. to implement a management plan aimed at preserving the landscape's natural acoustics; park staff hope to complete the plan later this year. (For more on noise impacts caused by aircraft, see page 18.)

ECHOES

© GERALD HERBERT/ASSOCIATED PRESS

When a hurricane comes, you've got shutters on the windows, you've got water in the bathtub. With this, there's no tool. I'm not sure we know what we can do.

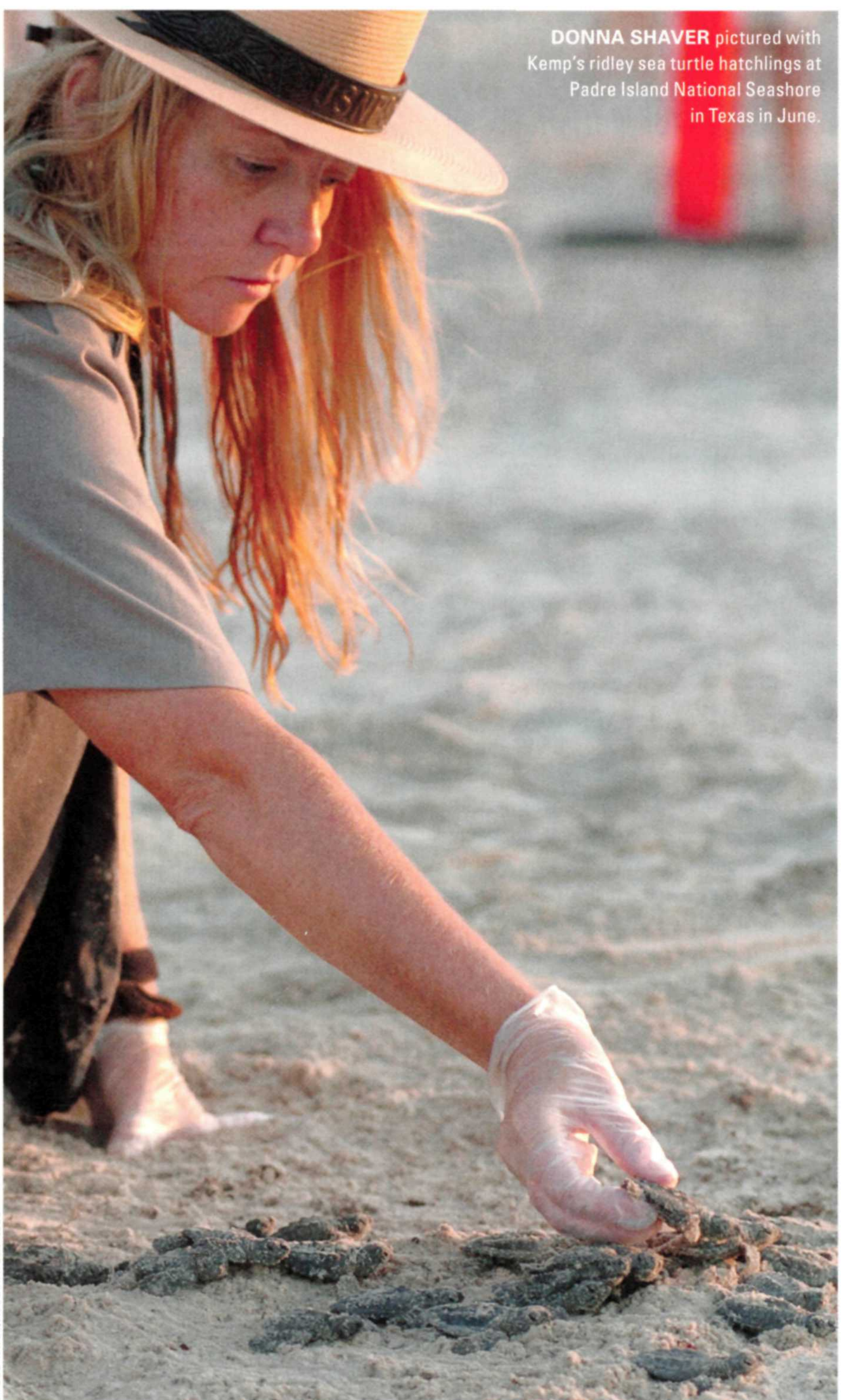
John Adornato, director of NPCA's SunCoast regional office, quoted in U.S. News & World Report on the initial challenges of preparing Gulf Coast parks for the impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (above). For an update, *see page 10.*

Any park can use more money and more staff, but [that] won't do any good unless we're able to reach the public and have them appreciate why the park is here.

Don Barger, senior director of NPCA's Southeast regional office, quoted by the Fort Mill Times, on a recent NPCA report indicating that three Revolutionary War sites in South Carolina—Kings Mountain National Military Park, Cowpens National Battlefield, and Ninety-Six National Historic Site—are unknown to most Americans.

[Our national parks contain] an incredible collection of museum artifacts, and 45 percent of the... collections haven't even been catalogued. We don't even know what we've got, and we don't have places to store it.

Jim Nations, vice president of NPCA's Center for the State of the Parks, quoted by National Geographic Online, explaining the challenges facing the Park Service's archivists, as revealed in dozens of NPCA reports completed in recent years.



DONNA SHAVER pictured with Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings at Padre Island National Seashore in Texas in June.

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THE AFTERMATH

Months after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, what's next for the national parks along the Gulf of Mexico?

It's been called the biggest environmental disaster in our nation's history. In case you somehow missed the nonstop media coverage, a rundown of the critical details: In April, an oil rig perched 50 miles off the Louisiana coast exploded, killing 11 workers and spewing as much as 200 millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, 20 times the amount spilled by the Exxon Valdez in 1989. Oil flowed from BP's Deepwater Horizon for nearly two months, and the recovery could last for decades, if the Valdez disaster is a guide. The media have focused plenty of attention on the broader environmental impacts and the damage to the commercial fishing industry, but little attention has been focused on the national parks along the coast, ranging from Padre Island National Seashore in Texas all the way to Biscayne National Park in Florida (see map, page 12).

As details of the spill's enormity were first revealed, park biologists feared critical damage to wildlife, coastal habitat, and cultural resources, like sea grass beds that serve as important nursery habitat for sea turtles, young fish, crabs, shrimp, and other crustaceans to salt marshes, which offer refuge for birds and buffer the mainland during storm events. Shipwrecks, archeological sites, Civil War defenses, and other historic structures were also in the path of the dark plume spreading through the Gulf.

Fortunately, the worst-case scenario didn't emerge. But it's not over yet. So far, Gulf Islands National Seashore in Mississippi and Florida has been the most obvious victim. The collection of barrier islands is home to great blue herons, loons, sea turtles, and even armadillos. In June, NPCA President Tom Kiernan was invited to tour the park and view the impact from a helicopter, along with Executive Vice President Theresa Pierno and Sun Coast Regional Director John Adornato III.

"I was definitely expecting to see significant amounts of oil in the water, tar balls, tar sheets, horrible expanses of tar all over the beaches, and dead animals, but thankfully, we didn't see that," says Adornato. "Still, I was hit by the reality of the situation: seeing the surf crashing on the beach,

with a pinkish-brown color due to the hundreds of thousands of gallons of dispersant that had been dumped into the ocean. There's no question the use of those chemicals lessened the visual impact of the spill, and gave the impression that BP and the government were taking immediate action, but no one knows what the long-term impact will be. This disaster is essentially a large-scale unplanned experiment in the use of dispersants at such large volumes, and it's a case where the federal government fell down on its responsibilities. If we're going to allow drilling off our shores, emergency-response situations need to be addressed before the emergency happens, not as it's unfolding. We've got to use this as a learning opportunity and institute some serious changes."

For now, the Park Service is working with several state and federal agencies to focus on the immediate impacts on Gulf Islands while continuing to craft long-term recovery and monitoring plans for all of the parks in the affected area.

"One of the first key decisions we made involved reviewing when and where to allow mechanized equipment for beach clean-up," says Rick Clark, chief of science and resource management at Gulf Islands. That was especially important with respect to Horn and Petit Bois Islands in Mississippi, which are designated as wilderness (restricting the use of modern equipment for any purposes). Both areas had significant damage, and hand crews alone just weren't able to remove the oil before it retreated into the sand's subsurface, at which point it's nearly impossible to extract. "We moved ahead with a controlled approach to allow mechanized equipment—basically large-scale sand sifters that remove tar balls—with very tight restrictions between the waterline and the dune ridge, away from documented sea turtle nests and sensitive vegetation," says Clark.

"We've also been closely involved in the relocation of established sea-turtle nests that are threatened by the oil spill," he says. "The consensus of biologists from the federal and state agencies is that we would be putting turtle hatchlings into harm's way if we let them hatch naturally and emerge

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EIGHT NATIONAL PARK UNITS could be affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster in the coming years.

into the Gulf waters in this region, so at about 50 days into gestation, or 75 percent of the way, confirmed sea-turtle nests are relocated to an area near Cape Canaveral, Florida, and, upon hatching, they're to be released in a refuge or Park Service site on the Atlantic Coast to minimize the risk of oiling that could otherwise be fatal." Three nests from Gulf Islands had been relocated as this issue went to press, and a dozen remaining nests were slated for removal at the appropriate time, ensuring the safety of loggerheads, Kemp's ridley, green, and leatherback turtles that call the park home for brief spells.

Adornato applauds these early efforts, but believes the Park Service needs more staff devoted to the work of recovery and restoration. So far, its employees have simply been reassigned to new tasks, but as 20 years of recovery in Alaska have shown, this work is far from over; simple monitoring and data collection will pose a huge challenge for years to come. The $20-billion fund already established by BP is dedicated to individuals and businesses and doesn't aim to address natural-resource damage in the parks, so Adornato believes BP should compensate Gulf Islands and other park units for the additional staff time devoted to the spill, and fund the hiring of experienced natural-resource professionals who can plan the park's regional recovery efforts.

"There's no question that the impacts of this oil spill could have been far worse, so in some ways we can breathe a little sigh of relief," says Adornato, "but it's only a little sigh, and it can't last very long. There are still some very serious negative effects that could come to pass, and we really don't know much about how those will play out. In learning from this disaster, the federal government needs to make sure it is appropriately locating off-shore oil rigs and developing adequate emergency-response plans. And the Park Service needs to have its own emergency-response plan or be a leading voice in the broader plan, because it's very clear that national park beaches, wildlife, wilderness, and marine areas require a higher standard of care."

The disaster has also rekindled interest in a nearly forgotten mechanism designed to fund conservation efforts all across the country: In 1965, Congress established the Land & Water Conservation Fund as a way to invest in conservation using revenues generated by the corporations drilling in our waters. Each year, the fund accumulated $900 million that was to be spent on state parks, city parks, and, yes, national parks, primarily to buy up land from willing sellers. But it didn't quite turn out that way.

"When Congress allowed companies to withdraw America's natural resources at a profit, legislators required those companies to give back to Americans in some way, by ensuring that other natural resources were protected in perpetuity," says Adornato. "So the Land and Water Conservation Fund was created 45 years ago to set aside a small percentage of those revenues to help pay for big land-acquisition strategies in national parks as well as smaller local projects like the park at the end of your street, that swing set in your local recreational area, and the lights for the football field in your subdivision. But other than a few exceptions, it was never funded at the levels Congress had intended. NPCA is working hard to ensure that promise is kept."

As a result of NPCA's efforts, in conjunction with several other conservation groups, the House of Representatives passed legislation that would guarantee the fund is authorized at its highest level. The Senate is expected to take up similar legislation this fall.

"The devastation brought about by this oil spill is overwhelming—it's the worst environmental disaster in our history and there's absolutely nothing we can do to reverse it, which is unbelievably frustrating," says Adornato. "It makes me sad, it makes me angry, it makes me want to stand up and scream that we've got to stop drilling right now, but that's obviously not a reasonable response, and it won't help the current problem. But what will really upset me is if we fail to take this opportunity to change things, to make sure this doesn't happen again. We're a really innovative country and we should be able to find a better way."

—Scott Kirkwood

ON THE WEB

To help NPCA ensure full funding of the Land & Water Conservation Fund, sign up for action alerts at www.npca.org/takeaction. For updates on the oil-spill cleanup, visit www.npca.org/oilspill or www.restorethegulf.gov.

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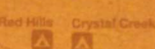

LOCKHOUSE 22 in Maryland is one of three historic homes offering overnight accommodations to park visitors.

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WATERFRONT VIEWS

Historic lockhouses on the C&O Canal are now hosting bikers and hikers on overnight trips. And you can stay there, too.

The Park Service manages dozens of historic homes whose former residents range from Abraham Lincoln to Clara Barton, Frederick Douglass, and Thomas Edison. If you were bold enough to hop into a bed and jump under the covers, you'd probably find yourself escorted out by security in a matter of seconds. But that's not the case for a series of historic homes along the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which winds its way through forested land just north of Washington, D.C. You can book a room online today and, with a little luck, you might slip between the sheets tomorrow and immerse yourself in the history of one of the nation's busiest commercial waterways.

On July 4, 1828, the Chesapeake & Ohio Company began construction of a 184.5-mile canal that would parallel the Potomac River and transport goods from Pennsylvania through Maryland and into Washington, D.C. The Potomac itself was too difficult to navigate, so its waters were diverted into the canal instead, which was an engineering marvel of sorts. Because the route begins in Cumberland, Maryland, with an elevation 605 feet higher than D.C., the canal required a series of locks, which basically acted as liquid steps—separate chambers that were filled or drained of water to raise or lower boats eight feet at a time along the canal's length. Boats plied the route delivering farmers' crops, local seafood, and other goods, including nearly a million tons of coal each year to fuel Washington throughout the 1870s, the canal's most prosperous era. Dozens of employees operated the locks day and night, and made sure they were maintained and repaired when needed. Most of the lock operators lived in one of the 57 homes that lined the canal—modest two-story homes with two bedrooms above humble living quarters, generally built of stone or brick. But all of those homes would eventually be empty, as the railroad overtook waterways as the most effective way to ship goods in the late 1800s. The C&O Canal ceased operations in 1924, a victim of several floods and competition from the growing Baltimore & Ohio Railway. Now the Park Service and the C&O Canal Trust are turning the homes into quaint, rustic reminders of a bygone era.

"All of the lockhouses were already on the National Register of Historic Buildings, but most of them were slowly falling apart, and the park didn't really have any use for them, but the agency still had the expense of maintaining the homes and protecting them from vandals," says Robert Mertz, a board member with the C&O Canal Trust. "The question was what could be done to protect these buildings and also help tell the story of the canal and the park? So the idea was to open them up to the public. We've furnished the homes in a way that's consistent with the way lock tenders and families would have lived in them at the time, and we've added historic materials like photographs, maps, and books that tell the story of the canal, turning a visit into an interpretive experience, rather than just a stay in a motel room."

"Occupied buildings generally do better than buildings that have been mothballed or those that lie vacant," says Sam Tamburro, the park's cultural resource program manager. "Now that we've partnered with the C&O Canal Trust, its cadre of volunteers are in buildings all the time, checking on them and reporting on their condition. This program has provided us with an opportunity for a really solid partnership with the Trust, and it provides visitors with an experience that we hadn't been able to offer them."

Given that 26 of the 57 original lockhouses still stand, the expedient move was to re-open the ones that required the least effort. So the park scraped up funds from its operating budget to make sure the buildings were structurally sound, took care of basic repairs, and removed

any lead paint, then slapped on a new coat of paint. Volunteers with the Trust researched each era and obtained all the furnishings, from rope beds and futons in Lockhouse 22 meant to mimic horse-hair mattresses from the 19th century to the Formica tables and Naugahyde beds that reflect the 1950s in Lockhouse 6.

Volunteers living in nearby communities make sure the buildings are kept in good working order and do basic cleaning and maintenance. Visitors can register online and get access to a code that opens a lockbox. The costs range from $70 to $100 per night; all the revenue goes to the Trust, which pours the funds back into the program.

The first three lockhouses are just the beginning. In June, the park began an environmental assessment to evaluate how many buildings might eventually be included in the project, with the idea of potentially opening as many as 19 to overnight visitors. The hope is to offer a linked experience along the canal's entire distance, with accommodations every 20 to 30 miles, so bikers and hikers can get from one end to the other and have a comfortable place to rest their weary legs every step of the way.

"The lockhouses have been booked for 300 visits and seen more than 600 guests since opening last fall," says Tamburro. "With word of mouth and some press in big media markets, those numbers will continue to grow. Since our park gets more than 3.8 million visitors a year, you could say that's a drop in the bucket. But the typical person walking into our visitor center spends fifteen minutes looking at exhibits, asks a few questions of a ranger, and goes on a short hike, whereas the people staying in the canal quarters are there for an entire night, surrounded by the park's history. Guests have told us it's almost impossible not to think about the canal and the resources being in that building, so they're getting a really high-quality interpretive experience."

To learn more or book a lockhouse, visit www.canalquarters.org.

—Scott Kirkwood

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NORTHERN ROCKIES' GRAY WOLVES have been returned to the endangered species list because of complications with Wyoming's management plan.

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CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Gray wolves return to the endangered species list—and not everyone is happy about it.

In the spring of 2008, when the Bush Administration delisted gray wolves in the Northern Rockies, emotions flared. Wyoming's state legislators drafted a management plan that defined *Canis lupus* as "vermin predators," giving residents the freedom to shoot wolves on sight, no questions asked, the moment the animals stepped beyond a narrow buffer zone just outside national park boundaries. In one extreme case, locals chased down wolves with snowmobiles for 15 miles before shooting them dead. Environmental groups were outraged, and sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to relist the species given the treacherous conditions.

Three months later, when the federal government determined that Wyoming's policies could bring the state's wolf populations dangerously low, the Fish and Wildlife Service relisted the entire population of wolves, but then approved delisting petitions from Montana and Idaho, which were considered well-prepared to manage the species under their own state laws. In those two states, wolves would be hunted during a specific season, just like other wildlife, ensuring a healthy wolf population for years to come.

But there was a problem with that arrangement. Never before in the history of the Endangered Species Act had the government delisted one population of an endangered species, as it did in Montana and Idaho, while listing another portion of that population, as it had done for Wyoming. Finally, this August, U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy decided that the ruling violated the Endangered Species Act, and ordered the entire wolf population in all three states to be relisted.

That decision didn't sit well with Montana and Idaho, whose wildlife agencies had worked to develop acceptable management plans and viewed this as a giant step backward. Shortly after, an editorial in the *Missoulian*, a western Montana newspaper, called on Wyoming to get its act together: "The Cowboy State's unchecked hatred of wolves and childish refusal to come up with a wolf-management plan that meets even the most minimal requirements is only working against [Wyoming]—and holding Montana and Idaho back as well."

Why such resistance in Wyoming? Part of that answer can be traced back thousands of years to an extreme cultural divide. "If you look at the history of wolves in both American and European cultures,

even before America was settled, people either demonized wolves or looked at them as some sort of gods—and I think that still exists here today," says Patricia Dowd, program manager in NPCA's Yellowstone field office. Such deeply rooted culture clashes are a hard thing to overcome—but Dowd believes that a balanced approach to wolf management could help break down the myths associated with wolves.

Montana, and to some extent Idaho, achieved that balance by designating a hunting season. But those hunts created additional controversy when people began aiming rifles at collared wolves from Yellowstone that had just stepped across park boundaries. Despite the loss of some beloved individuals, however, the number of wolves killed did not significantly impact the overall wolf population.

Still, NPCA and other conservation groups took issue with the idea of hunting a species that is still endangered in another state. "Wolves are biologically recovered, but they shouldn't have been delisted," says Tim Stevens, director of NPCA's Northern Rockies regional office. "But once Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming all have an approved plan in place, we believe a limited hunt based on science is an appropriate management tool."

That's a message that might resonate with some wolf opponents in Wyoming—but it's not the only message that environmental groups are hoping to get across. "We need to help people understand that wolves are a critical part of the natural landscape," says Sharon Mader, senior program manager in NPCA's Grand Teton field office. "Studies show that habitat, even within a park, is horribly degraded when you don't have a proper balance of prey and predators."

Take elk, for instance: Without wolves to keep their populations in check, ungulates could overgraze and degrade important stream corridors critical to migrating songbirds and other species. But in the presence of a top predator, elk behavior changes. Rather than lollygagging along waterways, elk keep moving across the region—which, in turn, means a healthier landscape.

Unfortunately, not everyone sees it that way. "There's a very culturally driven belief that wolves are competing against hunters and devastating elk herds," Mader says. And although there's no scientific evidence to back up that claim, seeing is believing. "Some families may recall seeing elk in a particular area for 100 years," Dowd says, "but now that wolves are back, elk aren't hanging out there anymore. And if you don't see elk where you always used to see elk, you might think wolves killed them all off. The truth is, elk are on the move, and they're affected by habitat changes outside the park, too—climate change, oil- and gas drilling, change in land use. It's easier to blame the wolf than look more holistically at what's going on across the landscape."

Environmentalists might be partly to blame for this mindset. "I think where we failed in the conservation movement was in forgetting to talk to people about what it was going to be like living with wolves once they were reintroduced," Dowd says. "So here we are, 15 years later, and there are wolf packs dispersed throughout the region, but we are just starting to address what it's like to live with wolves on the ground."

The good news? On a biological level, wolf recovery has been a success. Wolves' numbers not only meet, but exceed, the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. But if they're to be considered for delisting again, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming must each come up with management plans that guarantee a certain number of breeding pairs and a certain number of wolves, equally dispersed over the three states. And considering wolves can travel for hundreds of miles, the states also need to guarantee that packs aren't isolated, so that individuals can move about freely, reproduce, and raise offspring that contribute to the genetic pool.

Grand Teton National Park, which lies within Wyoming's boundaries, is the perfect example of why that movement is so critical. Here, only one of the seven wolf packs remain primarily within the park; the others have to venture beyond park boundaries to survive. "I think that's something that most people don't understand about large predators in parks," Mader says. "In winter, elk move out of the park because the habitat no longer fits their needs—and when elk move, wolves move. Park borders were drawn without consideration of these movements, but now we know that even in a place as big as Yellowstone, wildlife rely on an area that's much larger than the boundaries of the park."

It's hard to know if the political situation in Wyoming will change anytime soon. But with added pressure from Wyoming's neighbors, and increasing support for a smart wolf-management plan from residents growing tired of the anti-predator attitude, there's still hope for a cultural shift. The Park Service can help, too, by continuing to provide objective, scientific data to state wildlife managers.

In the meantime, it's business as usual for wolves inside Yellowstone National Park. "We will always uphold protection for the wolf, which we view as an essential component of America's ecosystems," says Dan Stahler, a park biologist with the Yellowstone Wolf Project. That unwavering dedication, he adds, highlights the valuable role the Park Service plays when the country is faced with such politically charged issues. No matter how turbulent things get outside park boundaries, there will always be a core, protected space where Americans can gaze across landscapes in hopes of spotting a wolf.

"This story of wolf recovery in the West reveals our greatest desire to save species that are imperiled and to restore the integrity of these ecosystems," Stahler says. "People are going to disagree on whether this current decision is a victory for wolf recovery or not, and we'll just have to wait and see if the ruling brings people back together to decide what's best for wolves and the integrity of the Endangered Species Act. Because it won't be successful without that collective voice, and that's the biggest challenge."

—Amy Leinbach Marquis

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CLEARING SKIES?

Conflicts over air tours have left the Park Service and the FAA at an impasse for 10 years, but Congress is close to settling the conflict once and for all.

If the National Park Service has authority over the parks, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has authority over the skies, who's responsible for sightseeing flights in the skies above our parks? It's a riddle that's gone unsolved for years, but Congress may be close to answering it once and for all.

When most of us return from a park trip, we're quick to share the photographs we've captured—images of mountain views, glacial lakes, and wild animals so close you can almost touch them. It's much harder to capture the quiet crackle of a campfire, the whisper of wind on ridge top, or the noise of crickets as you drift off to sleep, but those memories are as much a part of the park experience as anything that can be captured in pixels. At many parks, those natural sounds are interrupted by the buzzing propellers of a sightseeing plane or the whop-whop-whop of a helicopter's blades.

In 1987, Congress recognized this emerging problem by passing the first piece of legislation to address the impact of noise on park visitors. That law required the Park Service to study the effects of overflights, and to take specific actions to restore natural quiet to the Grand Canyon, where air tours had turned into a cottage industry; legislators cited problems in Yosemite and several of Hawaii's parks as well. In 2000, Congress cast an even wider net with passage of the National Parks Air Tour Management Act, which required detailed plans for every park where low-flying commercial air tour operations take place. (The Act doesn't apply to the Grand Canyon or park units in Alaska, which have a host of special circumstances, nor does it apply to general aviation and commercial airlines.) The aim was to address growing safety risks posed by unregulated air tours and to get park visitors a little more of the peace and quiet they'd been seeking. The law requires both the FAA and the Park Service to craft plans for every park where air tours take place, but the two agencies couldn't even agree on a range of options to be considered for a single park, never mind actually selecting one of those alternatives. Years later, for every handful of visitors enjoying the views from above, hundreds of visitors are suffering the consequences below.

"We live in an increasingly noisy world, and the national parks are a place where people can go to breathe a sigh of relief, to clear their minds and to listen to the world around them, and not experience the static that comes with from lawnmowers, car alarms, and ringing cell phones," says Bryan Faehner, NPCA's associate director for park uses, and a former park ranger. "You know the cliché about stopping to smell the roses once in a while? Well, the same is true about stopping and listening to a waterfall in Yosemite, elk bugling in the Smokies, or the howl of wolves in Yellowstone. Those moments are what keep people coming back, and what make our parks so special."

"We've gathered a lot of evidence of the impact of noise pollution on wildlife," says Karen Trevino, head of the Park Service's Natural Sounds and Night Skies programs. "We've conducted some particularly interesting research on great grey owls in Yosemite, and we can now show that they plunge under as much as a foot of snow to get a mouse that they can hear beneath the surface. So many species depend on their hearing for so many life-cycle activities, whether finding a mate—elk bugling or songbirds singing or crickets chirping—or for finding food or avoiding being someone else's food; artificial noise masks the ability of an animal to hear those sounds. We're concerned with noise impacts to cultural resources as well. Every park has a unique acoustic environment that the Park Service is mandated to protect. Whether it's the shot of a cannon at a Civil War park

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or native drumming in the southwest, or jazz playing in New Orleans, we're working to protect those cultural soundscapes, too."

To help the Park Service preserve those treasures, the 2000 law required the FAA and Park Service to identify specific routes for air tours to avoid a visitor center on a ridge top, a sensitive Native American or Native Hawaiian site, or other areas where low-flying air tour aircraft may be inappropriate, such as habitat for endangered wildlife species.

But things didn't quite turn out that way.

The FAA's experience in crafting flight-management plans is generally focused on residential communities, where the bar is much lower than it might be for a national park. The agency also lacks the expertise of wildlife biologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists who work in national parks, where the impacts of noise pollution are much more substantial.

"Right now there are more than a hundred park units with air tours, and none of them are being regulated," says Faehner. "The safety concerns that prompted Congress to act are unchanged, and concerns about protecting natural sounds in the parks are unchanged as well. It's a hollow law that's not being implemented due to the bureaucratic stalemate between two agencies with very different missions."

Meanwhile, the number commercial air tours in the U.S. continue to grow. According to the FAA, 180,000 air tours are conducted in national park units already, and the agency has estimated that number could grow to as high as 2.1 million flights in the next ten years—multiplying more than tenfold.

Which is one more reason why Congress has decided to step in. In March, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and a bipartisan group of his Senate colleagues introduced a provision to the Senate FAA Reauthorization Bill that would break the bureaucratic stalemate by clarifying the roles of the two agencies. In the House of Representatives, Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ), Mazie K. Hirono (D-HI), and nine of their colleagues have signed a letter encouraging leaders of the House Aviation committee to support a similar measure in that chamber.

"Just as the Federal Aviation Administration is the agency best suited to ensure air safety, the National Park Service is the agency best able to determine what makes an optimal national park experience," says Rep. Hirono. "This language will enable each agency to exercise its expertise and give park visitors what Congress intended: quieter parks and safer air tours."

"After 10 years of inaction, this provision will finally push the agencies toward ending their differences and developing air-tour plans for our national parks, as Congress always intended," says Rep. Grijalva, who chairs the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee.

None of this is to say the Park Service can or should ban air tours in every park.

"When people ask me if the Park Service has a policy regarding air tours in national parks, I like to tell them that *some* air tours may be appropriate in *some* parts of *some* parks at *some* times," says Trevino. "But other than that it's very difficult to say, because each park was established for a different purpose according to its enabling legislation and every decision flows from that mission. The National Parks Air Tour Management Act provides us with a tool to evaluate the impacts of proposed flights at each park unit, so we can move forward with plans based on sound science."

"At a number of different parks, air tours can be an appropriate way to experience the landscape, and they'll continue to be," says Faehner. "These things aren't mutually exclusive. At Grand Canyon and many of the Hawaiian parks, that's an expectation that the public has, and it's a reasonable one. By allowing the Park Service to evaluate the impacts and gather input through the public-comment process, the agency can develop air-tour plans that avoid well-traveled areas and critical wildlife habitat so that visitors on the ground can experience natural quiet just like their grandparents did years ago. And we hope the same can be said for their grandchildren, too."

If Sen. Wyden's provision is included in the final FAA reauthorization bill, which President Obama would likely sign into law, both agencies would have the clarity they need to finalize air-tour plans for Glacier, Hawai'i Volcanoes, Mount Rainier, Mount Rushmore, the Statue of Liberty, and Yosemite, among others. Meanwhile, at the Grand Canyon, the FAA and the Park Service hope to allow sightseeing flights that visitors have come to expect, while respecting natural quiet in certain areas; their recommendations will be open to public review soon. In both cases, NPCA will need its activists to weigh in. If you'd like to get involved, visit www.npca.org/takeaction and sign up for our electronic alerts.

—*Scott Kirkwood*

1,360

SOLAR PANELS adorning the main prison and laundry building on Alcatraz Island, part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in California. The new panels, scheduled to be installed within a year, would provide up to 60 percent of the island's energy needs and allow the park to remove two diesel generators that pollute the air and cost $740,000 a year to fuel and maintain. Still, the Park Service is charged with protecting the historical character of the island, and must ensure that the addition of high-tech solar panels don't alter that feel—but the 896 panels atop the main prison roof will not be visible from the ground. And while visitors will likely glimpse some of the 464 panels on the laundry building, most people agree that the benefits outweigh any downfalls. The panels were funded by President Obama's stimulus program in 2009, which included $754 million for National Park Service projects.

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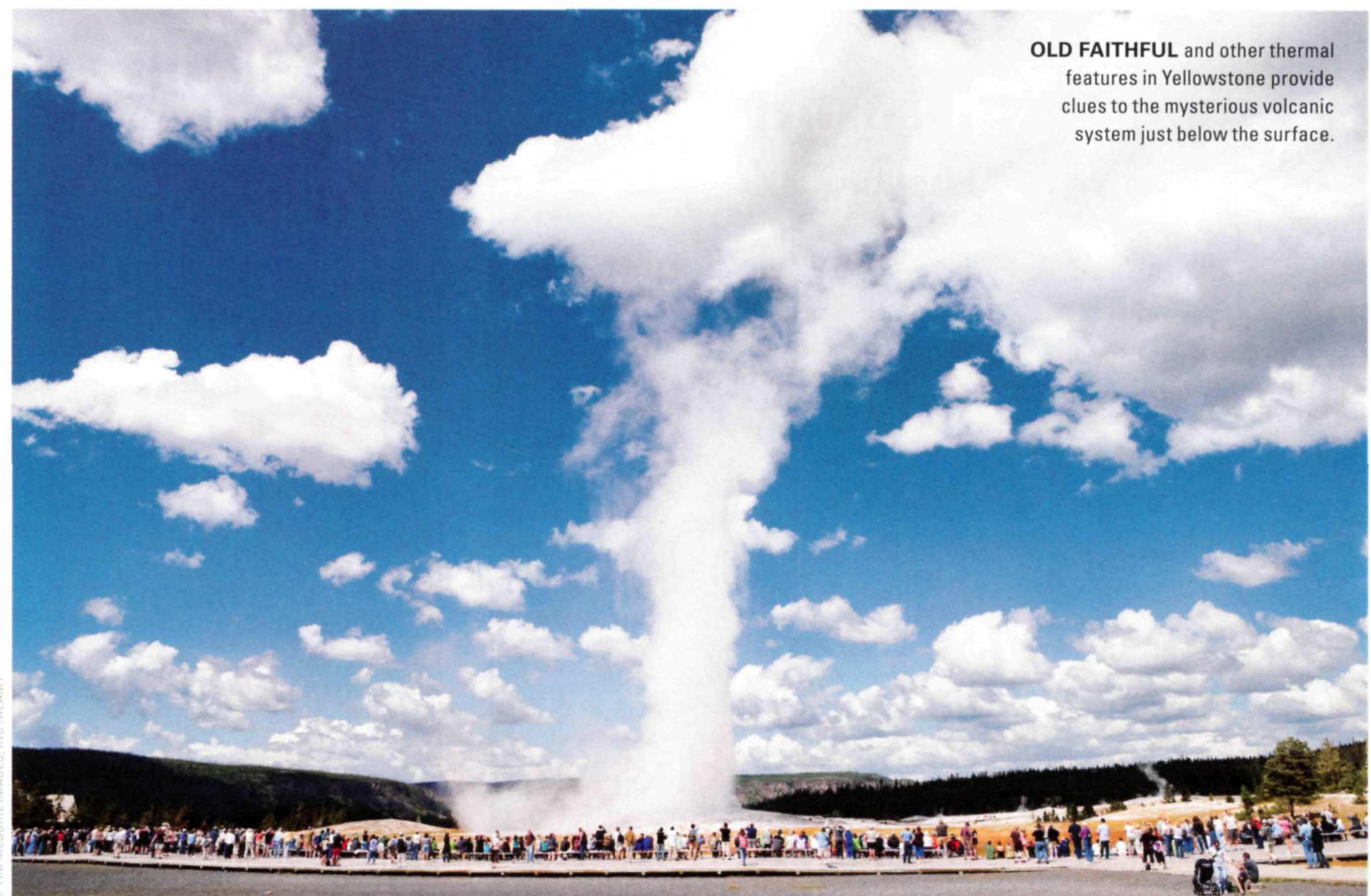
By John Dvorak


OLD FAITHFUL and other thermal features in Yellowstone provide clues to the mysterious volcanic system just below the surface.

© TIM MCGUIRE IMAGES, INC./ALAMY

Ring of Fire

Should scientists be concerned about what lurks beneath our first national park?

Standing at the edge of Old Faithful, you can feel the tension mount as the crowd anticipates the next explosion of boiling water and steam. People are checking their watches. A few are armed with notebooks and pencils, prepared to record whatever they see. Others steady their cameras.

And then it happens. It begins as a small spurt that grows rapidly into a tower of pulsating sprays, jetting more than a hundred feet into the air. No one is disappointed. Every display is different. A few people leave, but most stay and are joined by newcomers eager to see the next burst of the world's most famous geyser.

The eruption of Old Faithful is one of the iconic scenes from our national parks, and millions of visitors travel to Yellowstone National Park each year to witness it. But few are aware that each burst is only a subtle part of the immense volcanic system that lies beneath their feet. And only now are scientists beginning to unravel how this complex system works.

First, consider this phenomenon: Yellowstone's surface rises, then falls, then rises again in a cycle that takes years to complete. Although changes are measured in mere inches per year—imperceptible to visitors—there's no doubt that Yellowstone is in constant motion.

Scientists aren't sure what's causing the ups and downs, but Jake Lowenstern, head of the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory, has a hunch: magma. Several miles beneath Yellowstone's surface lies a chamber of molten rock, or magma, that powers the world's largest collection of geysers and hydrothermal features, including Old Faithful. As that magma cools and crystallizes, it releases gases and hot fluids that get trapped in pockets as they rise toward the surface. Lowenstern believes that the accumulation of fluids in these pockets could be pushing the surface upward.

Sinking grounds, on the other hand, could be triggered by one of the thousands of earthquakes that occur each year in Yellowstone (don't worry—few are strong enough to be felt by visitors). Earthquakes can rupture those

sulfur-rich pockets, releasing the fluids and causing the ground to drop.

But a shifting ground isn't the only mystery. Heat flows out of Yellowstone's surface 30 times faster than at any other place on the continent, thanks to the layer of magma just below. But does that mean the park is getting hotter or cooling off? That question is the main focus of the park's geology studies, according to Yellowstone geologist Hank Heasler. And rightfully so: If the park is getting hotter, the magma chamber might be expanding, and the volcano would likely become more active. If the magma chamber is cooling off, it could signal a period of relative calm.

Answers to that question could help explain an incident in July 2003, when the temperatures of normally cool soils within the Norris Geyser Basin rose to an alarming 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Hot-water pools boiled away, new mud pots formed, and the extreme jump in temperature killed several trees. Park Superintendent Suzanne Lewis closed the area to visitors for three months, until temperatures dropped to safe levels again.

Fast-forward to March 10, 2004, when park staff stumbled on five bison carcasses near Norris Geyser Basin. The three adults and two calves were lying on their sides, legs rigid and pointing away from their bodies—unusual positions that led park biologists to believe the bison had died quickly and as a group. Further investigation suggested that the animals had inhaled lethal concentrations of gases common in volcanic areas.

While extremely cold weather and still air might have been partly to blame (normally, wind disperses these gases before they can accumulate to deadly concentrations), what followed also raised eyebrows: Four months later, after nearly a decade of slow subsidence, the ground surface began to rise again. And in early 2010, when the rate of uplift slowed, Yellowstone experienced the largest swarm of earthquakes in 20 years.

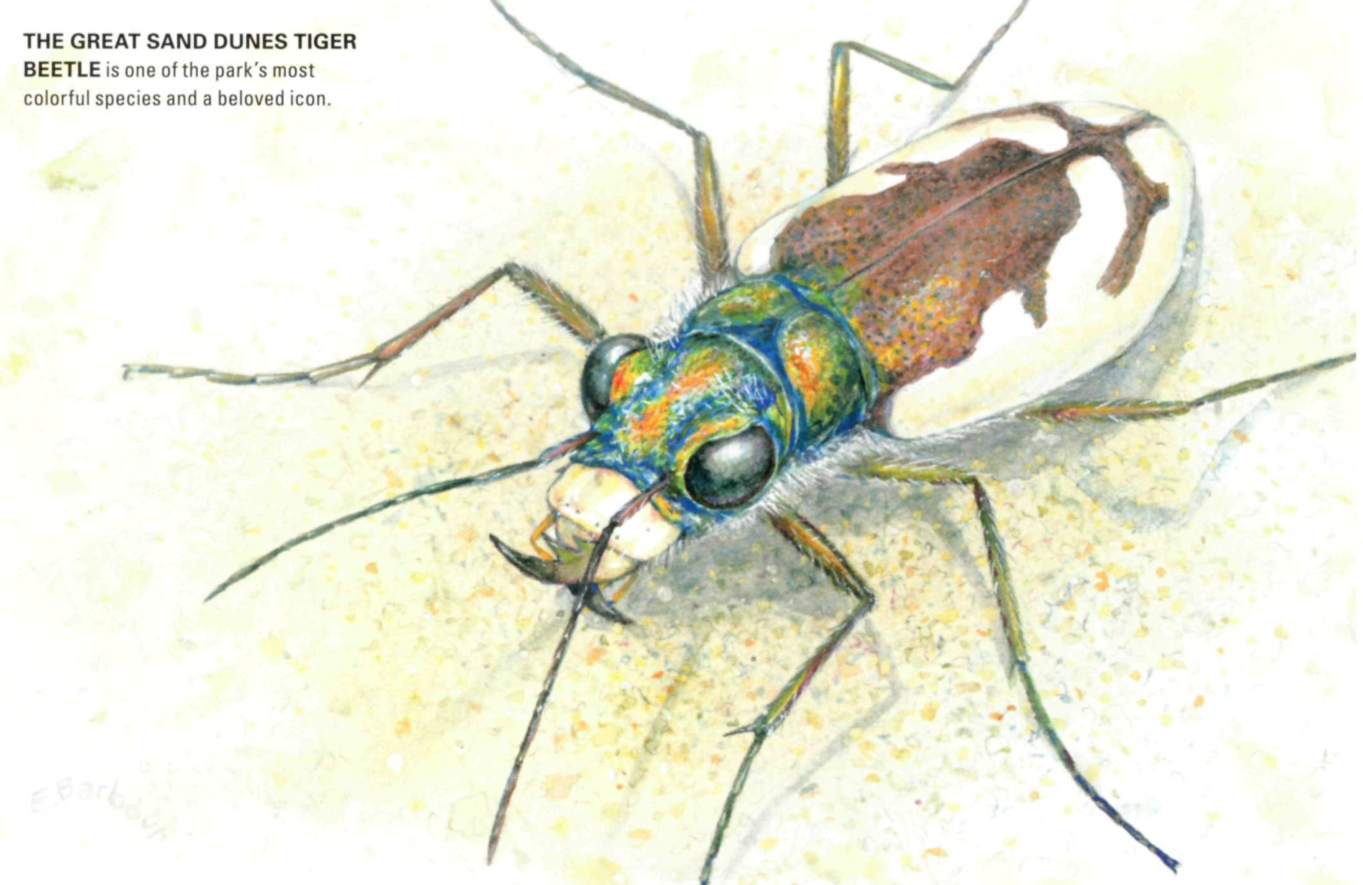
So how does all this ground movement relate to the death of bison and trees, if at all? Are all of these events simply unpredictable coincidences, or is there something bigger going on?

Such correlations are difficult to make because scientists haven't been studying these processes for long. What they do know is this: Although future eruptions are possible, there is little indication that one will happen anytime soon. Serious volcanic activity would follow "a considerable amount of [ground] deformation, intense earthquake swarms, and steam explosions," Lowenstern says. Yellowstone's recent activity pales in comparison.

We're a long way from knowing exactly what's going on beneath the surface of one of our most beloved national parks, but that's just part of its charm. "Before I started working here, I had no idea how special Yellowstone was," says Heasler. "It's hard to find the right superlative to describe this place." NP

John Dvorak is a volcanologist and science writer living near Hilo, Hawai'i.

By Susan J. Tweit



THE GREAT SAND DUNES TIGER BEETLE is one of the park's most colorful species and a beloved icon.

©EVAN BARBOUR

Beetle Mania

A rare tiger beetle has become the unlikely face of Colorado's Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve.

Baked by the sun in summer, snow-dusted and frozen in winter, and shaped by relentless wind year-round, the sea of sand at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in southern Colorado is inhospitable, to say the least. Yet North America's tallest active dunefield, with sandy waves rising higher than a 70-story building, hides a bounty of underground water—water that supports the flow of near-by creeks that help recycle the sand, maintaining the whole dune system.

With all that water comes a surprising diversity of life: creek-side cottonwood forests, herds of grazing elk, and more than a thousand species of insects and other arthropods, including seven found nowhere else on Earth. But none have risen to fame quite like the Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle, or *Cicindela theatina*—a flashy, half-inch-long predator that reminds visitors why this 234-square-mile park is so special.

"Tiger beetles are entomologist eye-candy," says Phyllis Pineda Bovin, a park biologist.

"They're so interesting and colorful that they're easy to interpret," adds Melanie Rawlins, the park's education specialist. "That's why we shine a spotlight on them as opposed to other insects."

Bovin began studying the park's tiger beetles in 1997, when she was conducting biological surveys in and around the dunes for the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. Those data—along with her 2002 thesis that included research on this species—have allowed park staff to designate the insect as a poster child for wildlife education.

What they've learned is this: The Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle lives in exposed areas of loose sand with a sprinkling of plants like blowout grass and scurf-pea—places where temperatures at the surface of the sand can range from 40 degrees on a chilly morning to 140 degrees during a hot afternoon. The larva—a segmented, bristly creature with an enlarged head—hatches in early summer when the dune surface can be searing

hot, then promptly digs a snug, vertical burrow in the cool sand and backs in, emerging from that thermal shelter only to ambush passing prey.

"Most insects are pretty short lived," says Bovin, meaning their adult lives are often measured in weeks or months. But Great Sand Dunes tiger beetles are different: It takes two-and-a-half years, including two winters in hibernation, for an egg to become an adult. Until then, these creatures inhabit a challenging environment where food is sparse, and spend months at a time underground, waiting out the extremes that unfold above the sand's surface. Once they reach adult form, beetles are free to run about, hunting food and seeking mates; they can even fly. But they must still adapt their activity to the temperature of their environment, basking in warm sand on chilly mornings or, when temperatures rise, "stilting" to raise their bodies above the hot sand.

Clearly, the Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle can be a fascinating little thing—which is why park staff have worked so hard to create awe and wonder around a species that might otherwise be overlooked. Walk into the park's visitor center, and you won't just see images of iconic wildlife hanging on the walls—you'll see an enormous photograph of the park's tiger beetle, too. And then there are the tiger beetle stickers, tiger beetle portraits on the cover of Junior Ranger booklets, and tiger beetle gear: blue, sparkly helmets with antennae and goggles that kids can wear to experience a beetle's-eye view.

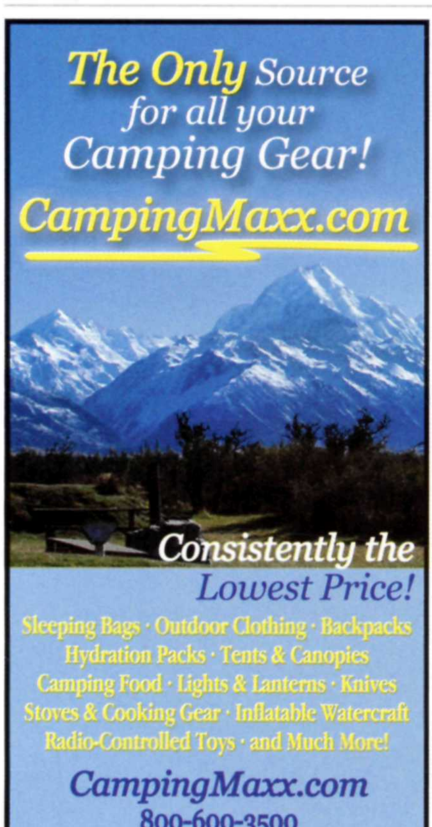
"I would be surprised if any kid leaves the park without knowing about the tiger beetle," Rawlins says.

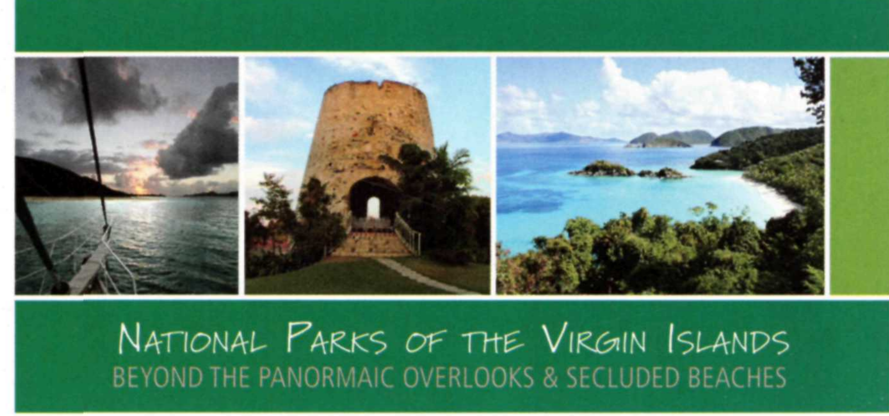
Although not all endemic tiger beetles are so revered, southern Utah's Coral Pink Sand Dunes boast their own species, as do two isolated dune systems in Idaho. These and other unique tiger beetle species face serious threats from off-road vehicles, reservoir flooding, and development.

In comparison, *Cicindela theatina's* entire range falls within protected landscapes: 75 percent in Great Sand Dunes, and 25 percent in the adjacent Medano-Zapata Ranch, owned by The Nature Conservancy. Still, some worry that water demands outside these protected areas could hurt the species. So in 2007, the environmental organization WildEarth Guardians filed a petition to list the Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle as federally endangered. (The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting a status review.)

"We are the caretakers of the entire population of the species," Rawlins says. "If we mess up, it's gone from Earth forever." And that's exactly why she and her colleagues work so hard to make this species stand out: Teaching visitors about the beetle, they believe, inspires respect for this sea of dunes and its unique community of lives. **NP**

A plant ecologist-turned-writer, **Susan J. Tweit** is the author of a dozen books, including her memoir *Walking Nature Home.*





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THE JEMEZ RIVER flows through Valles Caldera, in New Mexico.

A *Golden* OPPORTUNITY

A dormant super-volcano, **Valles Caldera** is one of the world's most intriguing geological formations, yet private ownership and restrictive access have kept this marvel off-limits to most. But if it becomes a national park, **all of that could change.**

By Kelly Bastone ◇ Photography by Blake Gordon

Standing on Rabbit Ridge, on the southern rim of the Valles Caldera, two worlds unfold below you. Gaze to the north and you see a stunning, 14-mile-wide volcanic crater: Ponderosa-covered mountains ring a grassy basin so vast, you have to turn your head to take in its immensity. No roads or buildings mar these meadows.

It's a profoundly calming landscape, yet occasional bits of glassy black obsidian embedded in the boulders at your feet hint at the volcano's cataclysmic past. Magma once exploded from this yawning mouth in eruptions that molded the New Mexico landscape for miles around—including 33,000-acre Bandelier National Monument to the south.

In fact, Bandelier's boundary sits just steps away from this hike-to viewpoint. A signed fence on Rabbit Ridge delineates Park Service land from Valles Caldera National Preserve, two separately managed parcels that have something in common: The ash spewed in one of Valles Caldera's eruptive fits created Bandelier's tuff, the chalky stone that ancestral Puebloans carved into dwellings. You can't discern Bandelier's ruins from here, but you can admire big swaths of tuff that give the whole panorama a rosy glow.

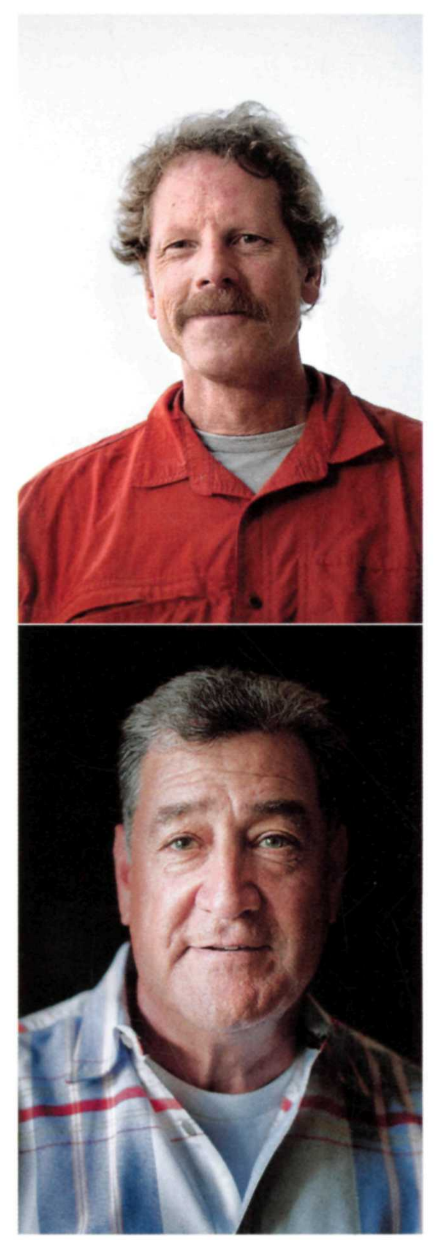
For now, barbed wire separates the two properties, but advocates seek to close that rift by bringing Valles Caldera under Park Service management. Not only would its inclusion recognize this corner of northern New Mexico as a geological treasure, it would expand access to it—something would-be visitors have long desired.

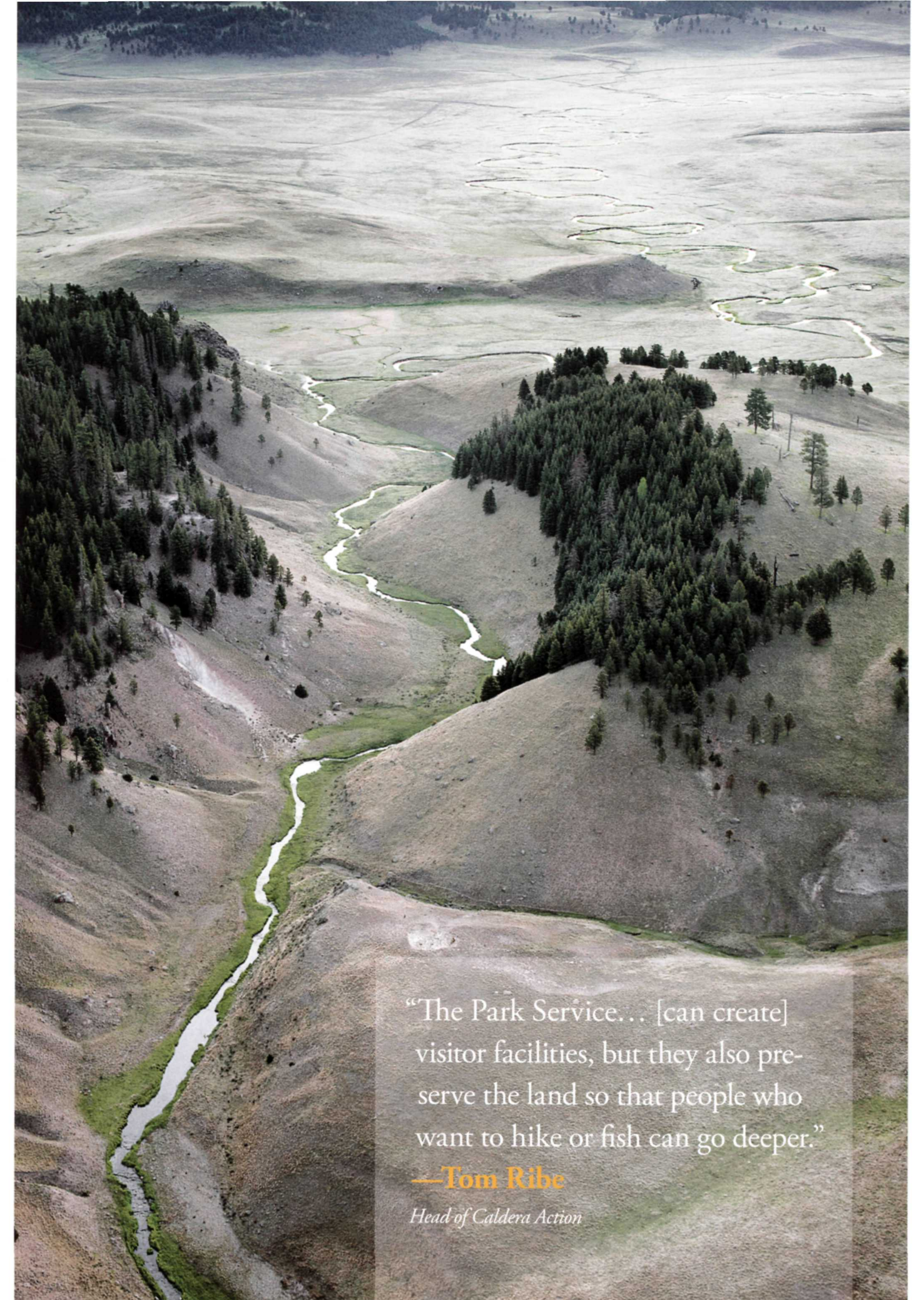
More than a century of private ownership and ranching kept Valles Caldera off-limits to all but a few. Even after 2000, when it was purchased by the federal government and became public land, access was limited. Valles Caldera sees just 17,000 visitors annually, compared with 212,500 at Bandelier.

But Valles Caldera's management structure is unique. An independent entity governed by a nine-person board of trustees (seven of the nine are presidential appointees), the Valles Caldera Trust is expected to generate its own operating expenses and become financially self-sufficient, like the private ranch it had once been (see sidebar, p. 31)—which has proven to be an unworkable mandate for public-lands management.

"The Trust has failed to provide adequate public access, and what access it does allow costs the public and the federal treasury 22 times more per visitor than nearby Bandelier National Monument," wrote Tom Ribe, head of the watchdog group Caldera Action, in a letter to Congress that advocated for Valles Caldera's designation as a national park unit. Ribe acknowledges the achievements the Trust has made over its ten years of management—namely, the management studies it has conducted to determine the land's capacity to support livestock and

TOM RIBE (TOP), PRESIDENT OF CALDERA ACTION, and Dennis Trujillo (bottom), Preserve Manager at Valles Caldera (right), are working hard to protect the land.





"The Park Service... [can create] visitor facilities, but they also preserve the land so that people who want to hike or fish can go deeper."

—Tom Ribe

Head of Caldera Action

visitor pressure. "But they've put recreation way down on the list," says Ribe. "And that's the beauty of the Park Service model. They create visitor facilities—restrooms, places to picnic—but they also preserve the land so that people who want to hike or fish can go deeper and do that."

Management issues aside, Valles Caldera clearly merits Park Service status. Between its sweeping scenery and notable geology, this land is indisputably special. "It's one of the most scenic areas in the state," explains Jason Lott, superintendent of Bandelier National Monument. "In the caldera, you find silence, with few manmade intrusions. It's almost like going back in time." To understand what Lott means, visitors need only sit at treeline and watch elk emerge, with tentative grace, from the forest into the grassland.

Valles Caldera is sometimes called the "Yellowstone of the Southwest." Both sites contain dormant super-volcanoes that once spewed massive amounts of magma over the surrounding landscapes (72 cubic miles at Valles Caldera, compared with 600 at Yellowstone). That was 1.25 million years ago, but, as in Wyoming, you can still see evidence of geothermal activity in the area's many hot springs and steam vents. Although Valles Caldera may be smaller, its compact scale makes it easier to read geologic history, since its 14-mile ring is more visually obvious than Yellowstone's sprawling, 44-mile-long crater.

The headwaters of the Jemez and San Antonio Rivers also converge here, so the caldera has immense value for area watersheds. And then there's its link to the ancestral Puebloan dwellings preserved at Bandelier: Ancestors of today's Jemez tribe built sacred sites on 11,254-foot Redondo Peak, the highest point on the crater's rim. Obsidian formed here is of such high quality that spear points made from these quarries have been found as far away as Mississippi—suggesting their value to Indians far and wide. "Valles Caldera is the natural story that our cultural elements feed into," says Lott.

But unlike Bandelier, Valles Caldera has no visitor center, no interpretive exhibits to help visitors appreciate its geologic and cultural history. There are no campgrounds, no picnic areas, and only sparse recreational information. The Rabbit Ridge trail guide is little more than a photocopied topographic map. No highway signs alert passersby to Valles Caldera's existence; only a folding placard at the preserve's entrance announces that it's open.

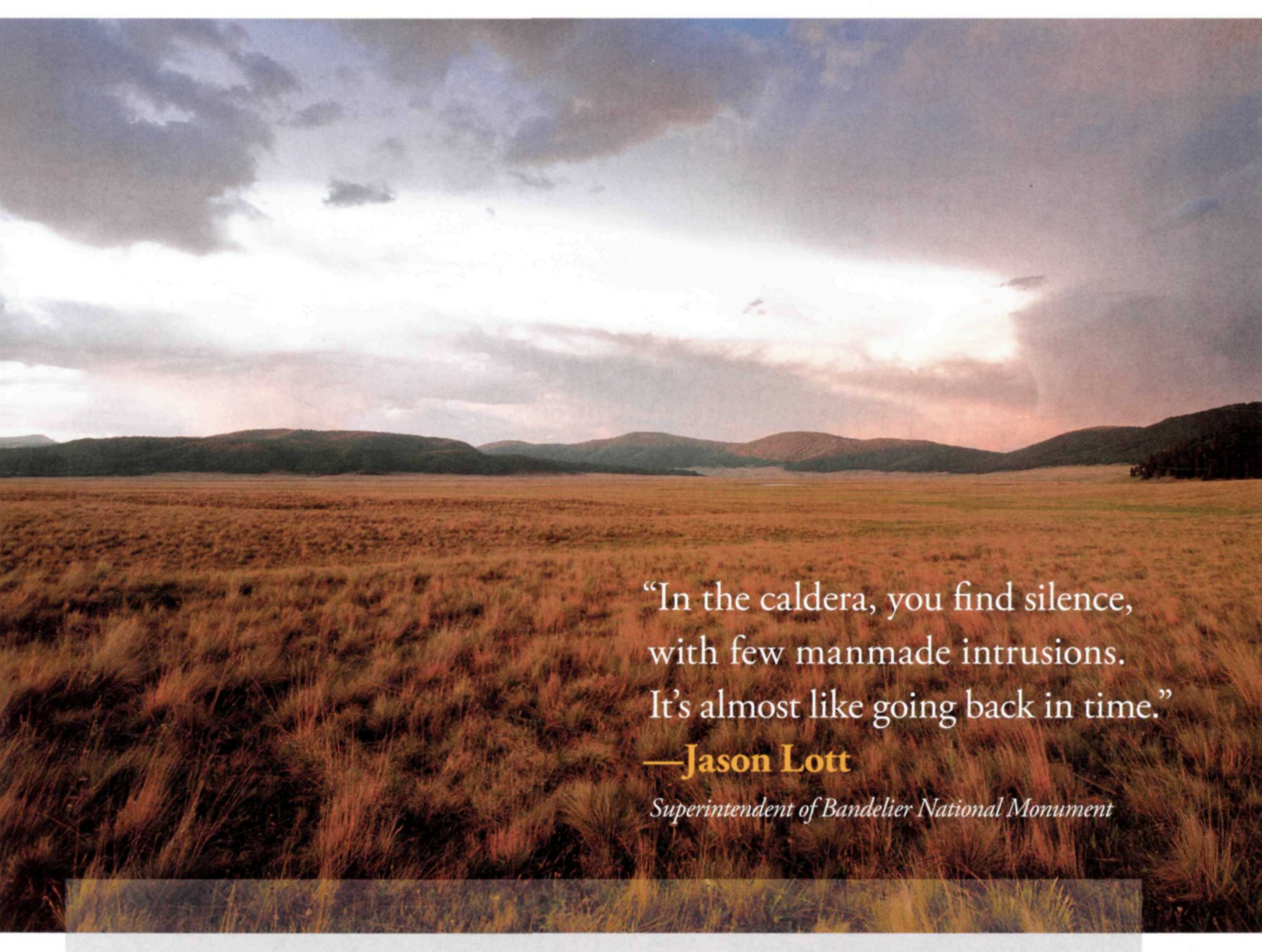
A VISITOR HOLDS a piece of obsidian (above), which was fabricated into spears and arrowheads by ancestors of today's Jemez Tribe. Below, a man leads his horse after a cattle roundup in nearby Valle San Antonio. Grazing fees currently help fund Valles Caldera National Preserve, but overgrazing can take a toll on the land.

That low profile suits some visitors just fine. Two sisters who had just completed La Garita, a six-mile round-trip hike to a broad panorama at Valles Caldera's north rim, gave an enthusiastic thumbs-up to the preserve's fee structure and regulations—especially after camping nearby at a crowded site in the Jemez National Recreation Area (which sees 98,780 visitors annually). "It keeps the riff-raff out," said one of the visitors from Boulder, Colorado. Her sister from Santa Fe agreed. "There was litter at our campsite [in Jemez], and you don't see that here at all."

The women hurried down the old double-track—they had to hustle to catch a 3:05 shuttle bus—but their comments emphasize Valles Caldera's unique relationship to its neighbors: Jemez National Recreation Area, Santa Fe National Forest, and Bandelier National Monument. Two-thirds of New Mexico's population lives within a two-hour drive of these lands, which often see a crush of visitors as a result. On Memorial Day weekend, campers jam the shoulder along Route 126, filling every level and near-level spot between the road and the Rio Cebolla, where the banks are eroded from the constant pressure of trucks and tents. Fishing along the Jemez River is just as crowded, with overflowing parking lots and anglers standing shoulder to shoulder in their quest to catch trout. Witnessing that, you begin to understand why some visitors might consider high fees and rigid schedules a fair exchange for solitude.

No one denies that Park Service status will increase visitation to Valles Caldera, but that traffic and related tourism would become an economic boon to local communities. And, explains David Nimkin, director of NPCA's Southwest regional office, solitude wouldn't disappear under new management. "The Park Service will be able to manage visitation in ways that will protect the place but also help people love it," he says.

(Continued on page 32)



Reverence and Exploitation: A Valles Caldera history

Native Americans were the first to cherish Valles Caldera. Following an oracle, ancient Puebloans traveled south from the Four Corners area, searching for the eagle that would reveal their new homeland. They spotted an eagle's outline near the top of Redondo Peak, the highest point on the caldera's rim, and settled in the Jemez Mountains. Today's Jemez tribe continues to regard the 11,254-foot summit as sacred.

But in 1860, Valles Caldera became off-limits to nearly everyone—Native Americans and white settlers alike—when Congress deeded its 89,000 acres to the Baca family, who managed it as a private ranch. Ownership changed hands several times over the years, but the property continued to be known as the Baca Ranch and operated like most Western ranches: Cattle and sheep grazed (and sometimes overgrazed) its meadows, hunters paid top dollar to stalk its elk, loggers felled its timber, and public hikers were considered trespassers.

James Dunigan, however, had a different vision. After purchasing the Baca Ranch in 1963, he gave the exploited land a much-needed rest by halting logging and other extractive operations. Dunigan countered proposals by his investors to develop the land (ideas included a ski resort, a racetrack, and a luxury home development) and in 2000, 20 years after his death, Dunigan's descendants honored his desire to preserve the property by selling it to the federal government, which established Valles Caldera National Preserve.

Thankfully, the land's allure has prompted admirers to seek Park Service status for Valles Caldera since the 1930s, and the latest push may succeed where others have failed. New legislation, introduced in June 2010, promises finally to make Park Service dreams a reality (see p. 33).

> "I can understand the frustration hikers feel. Sportsmen are used to paying fees, but hikers are used to going out and doing things for free. They want to hike unrestricted."
>
> **—Dennis Trujillo**
>
> *Preserve Manager*

LOS OJOS BAR offers a glimpse of local culture in nearby Jemez Springs.

Lott, who has seen the Park Service do just that at Bandelier, agrees. "Most visitors to the National Park System visit only the most populated areas," he says. "At Bandelier and elsewhere, if you visit the backcountry, the solitude is intense."

"I had jet-black hair when I started this job," jokes Preserve Manager Dennis Trujillo, implying that all the silver in his salt-and-pepper coif came from the strain of running Valles Caldera. Responsible for its day-to-day operations, Trujillo wears a rancher's work boots, a saucer-sized belt buckle depicting a bear's snarling head, and a perpetually creased forehead.

"I can understand the frustration hikers feel," he concedes. "Sportsmen are used to paying fees, but hikers are used to going out and doing things for free. They want to hike unrestricted."

While current management under the Trust has frustrated some, Trujillo maintains that it's also produced unique achievements. The preserve's restricted access has served as a model for administrators at Pecos National Monument, who studied Valles Caldera's crowd-management strategies and implemented them to disperse fishing pressure on its river. And the preserve has pursued extensive field research to understand factors that influence the ranch's stream ecology and elk population.

But New Mexico's senators are tired of chasing funding for Valles Caldera every year, and overall, local support for Park

Service management has been enthusiastic. So this June, Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Tom Udall (D-NM) introduced a bill requesting that it become part of that agency. "Transferring management of the Valles Caldera National Preserve to the National Park Service will be the best way to ensure the protection and enjoyment of the preserve over the long term," Bingaman said in a speech to the U.S. Senate.

"It's a great piece of legislation," says Nimkin. "Sen. Bingaman and his staff worked tirelessly to reach out to Native groups, multiple land users, and local residents to understand their specific needs. The resulting bill strikes a wonderful balance between protecting Valles Caldera, supporting opportunities for enhanced visitor use, and protecting select traditional uses."

Still, predicting the future of a pending law isn't easy. "Passing any legislation requires a lot of heavy lifting," explains Kristen Brengel, legislative director at NPCA. Even so, she says, its prospects look good. If the bill gets fast-tracked—and passes—it's possible that the transfer could happen this year. Several New Mexico contingents, including the Los Alamos County Council, the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce, and Jemez Pueblo, have endorsed the bill.

Instead of designation as a national park, Valles Caldera would remain a preserve under Park Service management, like Great Sand Dunes in Colorado, Mojave in California, Big Cypress in Florida, and many Alaska units. That means activities like hunting, fishing, and grazing would continue at Valles Caldera, but only in a way that's balanced with resource protection and the visitor experience. By preserving what worked under Trust management—yet blending it with Park Service experience in site interpretation—the legislation appears to satisfy all parties.

Lott predicts that the fee structure and access policies will change under Park Service management, to allow for more visitors at a reduced cost. But anglers will continue to savor solitude on the preserve's waterways. Hikers will still appreciate the power of grandiose landscapes, along with better signage and trail information. And elk will continue to migrate among the shadowy conifers and wind-blown grasslands. "Valles Caldera is worthy of national park status," says Brengel. "And hopefully, within the next year or so, Congress will feel the public's enthusiasm." **NP**

Kelly Bastone is a hiker, photographer, and freelance writer based in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

TO SEE STUNNING FOOTAGE of Valles Caldera and hear an interview with the preserve's director of science education, watch a short video online: www.npca.org/vallescaldera.

Different: inspires

Lighthouses were built to serve as guides but became beacons of hope. Turns out they're also good at leading people to new experiences.

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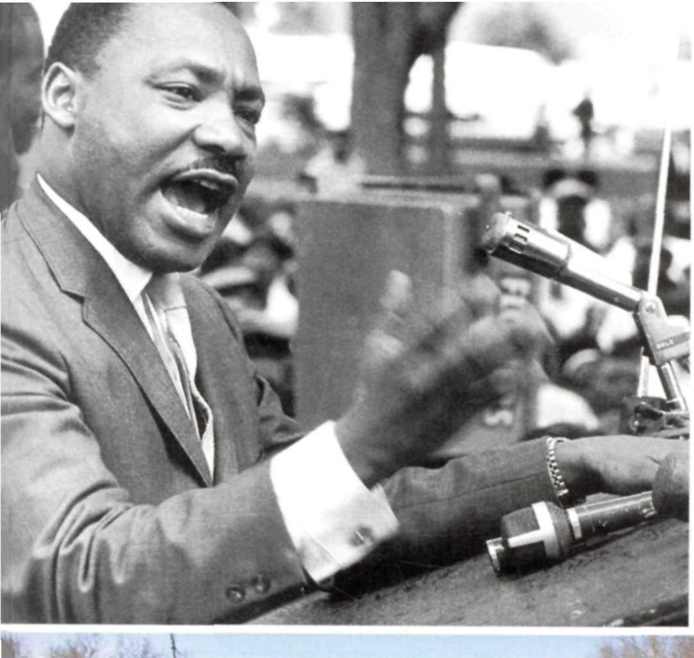
IN THE FOOTSTEPS *of a* DREAM

RELIVE THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN ALABAMA AND GEORGIA

When Barack Obama laid his hand on Lincoln's bible and took his oath of office to become the first African-American President of the United States, our nation broke with 200 years of history. For many, this moment made all things seem truly possible in a land that was founded on the tenet, "All men are created equal." Yet, it was not so long ago that this oft-quoted phrase from the Declaration of Independence excluded African Americans, who were relegated to the back of buses, denied access to whites-only eateries and restrooms, and, in essence, deemed second-class citizens with limited freedoms.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: © AP PHOTO; © JEFF HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO (2); © MEGGAN HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO; © AP PHOTO/GENE HERRICK; © JEFF HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO



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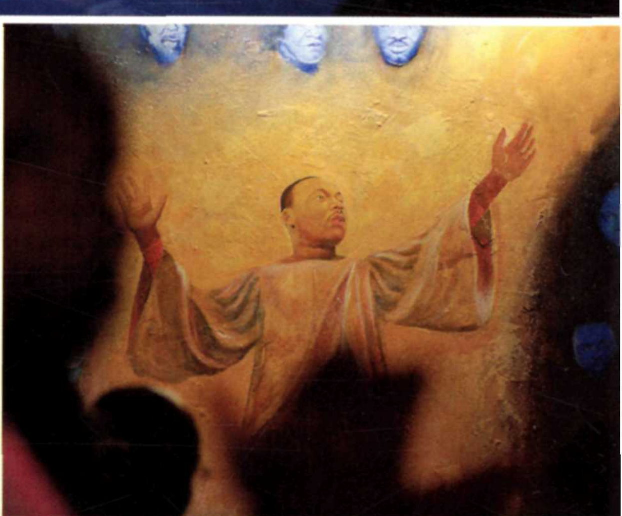

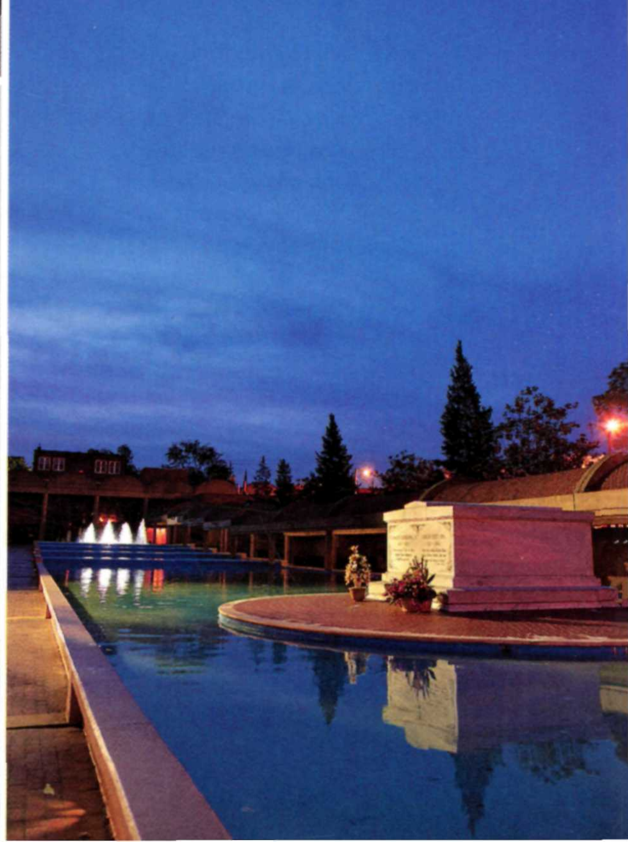

PREVIOUS SPREAD: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., and Rosa Parks ignited a Civil Rights movement that Americans continue to honor today.

President Obama's memorable inauguration took place because of the struggles, hopes, and courage of a bevy of civil rights pioneers, including the illustrious man who became the face of the effort to bring racial equality to this nation, Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK). Lest we forget, the National Park Service protects a number of these historical places that define the civil rights movement and, ultimately, who we are as a nation. Driving a multi-day route that courses through the cities of Atlanta, Tuskegee, Montgomery, and Selma will open your eyes emotionally and intellectually to the fears and failures, hopes and humiliations, and violence and victories of those crusading citizens.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Sitting at the heart of Sweet Auburn—a historic neighborhood in downtown Atlanta that was once populated by a vibrant citizenry made up of strong, successful African-American business people—the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site is a tribute to our most prominent 20th-century civil rights leader. The life of Atlanta's native son is remembered in three key sites: the King Birth Home, where he spent his first 12 years; Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he was baptized and became co-pastor (now in the final phase of a restoration process expected to be completed in late 2010); and the King Center, where the crypts of ML K and Coretta Scott King sit side by side, above a reflecting pool. Start your tour at the visitor center, where you can view a moving 28-minute video that features portions of his most famous speeches. In the surrounding preservation district, restored shotgun row houses where laborers once resided stand near refurbished two-story columned homes, including the Queen Anne-style residence of the King family. Tour the rooms that are preserved with their original decor (including the twin bed a young Martin shared with his brother, and the dinner table where the family gathered each night), and you'll understand where he developed his values.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Originally barred from becoming military pilots, the African-American men who flew the planes that saw plenty of World War II combat (and the men and women who maintained them) are honored at Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site. In fact, the all-black squadrons that escorted bombers across Europe were so skillful that it's said they never lost a plane to enemy fire. From a hilltop overlook beside the visitor center, where a memorial garden is planned, you can gaze out to Moton Field Municipal Airport, where the airmen once used grassy fields as their runway. Then explore the artifacts and audio displays in expansive Hangar 1, the only building that's open at this time. (The others, all original except for Hangar 2, will open for tours in early 2012.) Try your hand at folding an original silk parachute into its pack, or sit in a wooden model of a flight simulator that trained pilots in instrument navigation as you listen to the voice of an airman relaying how disorienting the closed cockpit was. Among the myriad rooms ringing the periphery is the War or Intelligence Room, featuring models of warships and images of German uniforms, vital information the cadets later used in combat.

© KAREN MINOT

VISITORS CAN TOUR Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth home (bottom), and even attend a service at Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church (left), where King used to preach. Next, head to Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site for a ranger-led tour (below).

© JEFF HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO (3)

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS The perfect seasons to visit these historic sites are spring and fall, when the temperatures are moderate. (January is usually crowded because of special events coinciding with MLK's birthday and the national holiday.) Start your road trip in Atlanta, a city with excellent airport connections and plenty of entertaining distractions, such as historic Inman Park and the Atlanta Botanical Garden. If you have the time, overnight at the Ellis Hotel, a charming downtown boutique property with a creative young chef presiding over Terrace, the hotel's locavore-oriented restaurant. Montgomery makes a logical second stopover for the rest of the civil rights sites. It's a two-hour drive from Atlanta to Tuskegee, and from there, 40 minutes to Montgomery; Selma is another hour away. (Most sites along the trail are closed on Sunday.) You can download a civil rights audio program at www.visitingmontgomery.com/audiotour.aspx and rent an MP3 player from the Montgomery Visitor Center to follow in town, either on foot or by car. The park websites provide planning information, including where reservations are needed (www.nps.gov/malu, www.nps.gov/semo, and www.nps.gov/tuai).

A STONE MARKER MEMORIALIZES Viola Liuzzo, a 39-year-old Detroit woman who was murdered in 1965 for giving rides to civil rights marchers. Activists in Harlem, New York, also took to the streets to honor Selma to Montgomery marchers.

"YOU HAVE TWO MINUTES TO TURN AROUND AND GO BACK TO YOUR CHURCH."

© MEGGAN HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO

SELMA TO MONTGOMERY NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

Though African Americans had been seeking equality for decades, one of the most emblematic events in the struggle for civil rights took place on March 7, 1965. The world watched what became known as Bloody Sunday when state troopers and sheriff's deputies fired tear-gas canisters and wielded nightsticks against the hundreds that marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge (named for a Confederate general) seeking the right to vote. Two days later, when MLK led protestors across the bridge, troopers blocked their path again, but the confrontation was nonviolent and the marchers simply returned to Selma. Their third attempt to walk the 54 miles from Selma to the state capitol was successful, with thousands streaming into Montgomery after sleeping in fields along their five-day journey. This route along US 80 is now a national historic trail that commemorates many significant venues and events in the civil rights movement, including this voters' rights march.

In Montgomery, the Rosa Parks Library and Museum honors the woman who is remembered for refusing to give up her seat to white passengers on a city bus. This incident on December 1, 1955, comes alive with an exhibit that relies on a cutaway yellow bus. The audio and projected video recreate the scene, from the driver telling Rosa Parks to get up, her famous response when told she would be arrested ("You may do so"), to the passengers' befuddled reactions, the wail of the police sirens, and, finally, the police boarding the bus to arrest Parks.

King organized the subsequent bus boycott while he was pastor of the red-brick Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church, which is nearby. His basement office, where the boycott planners met, remains largely unchanged from the six years when he served as senior pastor. Also in the basement is a vibrantly painted mural illustrating MLK's life and the civil rights movement. Upstairs in the sacristy, you can sit in one of the original hand-made pews and gaze at the wood pulpit where King preached.

Several blocks away is the Dexter Parsonage, King's white-washed home while he was a pastor. Here, tour leader Shirley Cherry provides an evocative narrative of key episodes that took place in every part of the house, starting with

© JEFF HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO

SIDE TRIP

DAHLONEGA, GEORGIA

Dahlonega, an ultra-laid-back town with a petite town square, earns its place in the history books as the site of the first major gold rush. Wander along the public square ringed with quaint shops selling everything from petrified wood and candles to fudge and ice cream and you'll notice historical plaques on select buildings. One of them, the 19th-century courthouse, is now the Gold Museum, where you can examine locally sourced gold

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

the damaged porch, where a bomb exploded in 1956 while Coretta King, their newborn baby, and a friend were inside. The most memorable room may be the kitchen, with its old Maytag washer, where Cherry movingly dramatizes an event that occurred a few days before the bombing. After receiving another harassing phone call and praying for courage, MLK heard God call him by name and urge him to stand up for justice, an epiphany that marked a turning point in his life.

A block from the Dexter Avenue church, the Civil Rights Memorial Center honors 40 people who lost their lives from 1954 to 1968. Outside a fountain designed by Maya Lin (known for her work on the Vietnam Memorial), water bubbles into a black granite table that's engraved with a timeline bearing the names of the dead and important historical events in the movement. Inside, a wall is lined with images and a short biography of each of the martyrs. Displays in an adjacent hall depict other social-justice movements. You can add your name to the more than 500,000 running down the Wall of Tolerance, indicating that you're committed to working toward human rights in your daily life.

Driving toward Selma on US 80, keep your eyes peeled for a small granite monument on the left, near a petite chapel. The memorial is a tribute to Viola Liuzzo, a white mother of five who was shot by the Ku Klux Klan near this spot after she'd shuttled African-American marchers back to Selma. Continuing on this historic route that rolls past verdant fields and farms, you'll arrive at the Lowndes County Interpretive Center, set on land that was once a tent city for the African-American tenant farmers who lost their homes and jobs when they registered to vote. Here, a wealth of artifacts tells the story of the 1965 march: a cattle prod similar to the one used to subdue the marchers, a U.S. flag that was passed around by the protestors, and worn marchers' shoes. In

nuggets. Once the office of a 19th-century physician and later a telegraph office, the Dahlonega Square Villa (www.dahlonegasquarevilla.com) is a two-room inn with period decor, providing the perfect atmosphere to lay your head for a while.

Dahlonega is also the gateway to Georgia's wine country, especially Wolf Mountain (www.wolfmountainvineyards.com), a European-style winery with scenic mountain views that will delight sophisticated oenophiles. (Its 2008 Chanteloup, a Chardonnay/Viognier blend, just won a gold medal from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, one of dozens the winery has received.) Visit on the weekend for a comprehensive one-hour vineyard tour ($20) and a Reserve tasting that includes something no other vintner in Georgia is making: sparkling wines. Gaze around the main tasting room and you'll see that it's replete with ornate hand-carved furnishings, wine accoutrements, and other antiques collected by proprietor and winemaker Karl Boegner.

IN 2008, BARACK OBAMA PAID A VISIT TO COMMEMORATE BLOODY SUNDAY.

LAST SPRING, HUNDREDS OF AMERICANS commemorated the Selma to Montgomery march by tracing the steps of their predecessors.

© JEFF HALLER/KEYHOLE PHOTO (2)

the Tent City exhibit, a replica of a bed reveals a shotgun under the mattress, used to protect the occupants from the routine drive-by shootings.

As you approach Selma, the Edmund Pettus Bridge looms large, spanning the Alabama River. There, on the southern approach, a phalanx of state troopers on foot and sheriff's deputies on horseback attacked the marchers on Bloody Sunday. Nearby is the National Voting Rights Museum & Institute. An unremarkable façade belies a stirring collection of memorabilia documenting the brutality and bravery that characterized the civil rights movement, including first-hand video and audio accounts as well as written notes from the Bloody Sunday foot soldiers. The museum's former director, Sam Walker, points to a wall covered with images taken on that day and says that a number of visitors who marched in 1965 are surprised to find themselves in the photos. The "Faces in the Crowd" exhibit identifies determined foot soldiers, such as one man who is blind and another man missing a leg, both of whom walked the entire 54 miles. Another wall is covered with emotionally charged quotes, including those uttered by a state trooper: "You have two minutes to turn around and go back to your church."

Drive over the bridge, make a right on Alabama and a left on Martin Luther King, Jr. Street, and you'll be on the route the protestors took when they left Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church on Bloody Sunday at the start of their five-day march in 1965. A focal point for the voters' rights mass meetings, the 144-year-old Brown Chapel attracted packed crowds that included international clergy and, of course, MLK, who regularly spoke from the pulpit. The year before he became president, Barack Obama paid a visit to commemorate Bloody Sunday, a violent event that focused the world's attention on America's racial inequality. By following this route, you'll walk away with genuine empathy for the people who lived through the tumultuous events of the civil rights movement. **NP**

Jeanine Baron has written for *National Geographic Traveler, Travel + Leisure,* and several other national publications. She lives in New York City.

WATCH BRIEF INTERVIEWS with dozens of civil rights pioneers who marched from Selma to Montgomery by visiting the Park Service's website at www.nps.gov/archive/semo/freedom/People/.

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COURTESY OF THE HAMPTON HISTORY MUSEUM, HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

*F*REEDOM'S **FORTRESS**

AT **VIRGINIA'S FORT MONROE**, PRESERVING THE PAST MAY MEAN STRIKING OUT IN A NEW DIRECTION.

BY JEFF RENNICKE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID AARON TROY

MAPS OF THE PAST, INC.

Hushed voices. The slow slap of waves. The creak of an oar lock. It is May 23, 1861. Three figures, half-hidden by a cloak of darkness, set off from Sewell's Point near Norfolk, Virginia, to row a small boat across the wind-stirred waters of Hampton Roads to Old Point Comfort at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. It is a simple act, yet one that will change the course of American history, spell the beginning of the end for slavery, and, 140 years later, sit squarely at the center of efforts to preserve an American landmark and create the newest unit of our National Park System. On this night, however, the three men simply take their bearings, lean hard into the oars, and row.

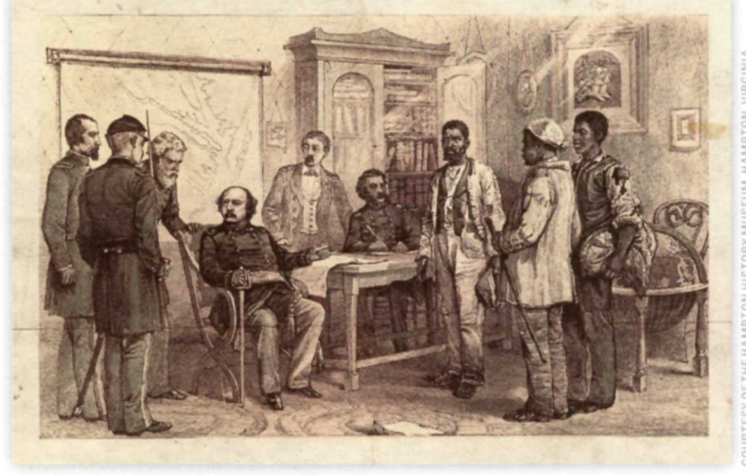
AS MANY AS 20,000 RUNAWAY SLAVES (opposite) took refuge in Fort Monroe during the Civil War.

JUTTING INTO THE DEEP waters of Chesapeake Bay off Virginia's eastern coast, Old Point Comfort is a natural lookout, a clenched fist protecting one of the largest natural harbors on the Eastern Seaboard. Archaeological evidence shows that humans used the point as a transportation route and hunted migrating waterfowl and sea life for more than 10,000 years before Europeans arrived. In 1608, Captain John Smith dubbed Old Point Comfort a place "fit for a castle." Yet forts, not castles, would play the leading role in the history of the Point.

As early as 1609, the British built Algernoune Fort—a wooden structure "10 hands high" and large enough to hold 40 soldiers and seven mounted cannons. Fire claimed the fort three years later. In 1619, the first African slaves to set foot on North American soil stopped here aboard Dutch ships bound for Jamestown. In 1727, the more formidable Fort George was built to guard against French invasion. Constructed of brick and shell lime, this was a fort "no ship could pass ... without running great risk," as Governor William Gooch would write in 1736. It was no match, however, for the hurricane that destroyed it in 1749.

During the War of 1812, the fledgling United States was dealt a stinging reminder of the point's strategic importance. The single lighthouse that guarded Old Point Comfort at the time was no deterrent to the British Navy, which moved uncontested up the waterways to strike deep into the heart of the new nation, sacking Baltimore and setting fire to Washington. The lesson was not lost on President James Madison. In 1819, he appointed French military engineer Simon Bernard to oversee construction of the largest moat-encircled stone fort ever built in America. And he ordered it built at Old Point Comfort.

Fifteen years in the making and sporting a price tag of nearly $2 million, Fort Monroe is a true fortress—63 acres encompassed by a mile-long moat and fortified with granite walls 10 feet thick. It holds 380 gun mounts and housed 2,600 men in times of war. Named for our fifth president, it was considered nearly impregnable by land or sea, secure enough to house Abraham Lincoln during the height of the Civil War. Its labyrinth of streets and buildings have seen a parade of famous figures and events—Robert E. Lee helped with construction of the moat; Edgar Allen Poe, who enlisted under the alias of "Edgar A. Perry," set his famous poem "Annabel Lee" at this "kingdom by the sea"; Chief Blackhawk and Jefferson Davis were both prisoners within its walls; Harriet Tubman acted as a matron of the fort's hospital; soldiers atop the walls of the fort witnessed the March 9, 1862, battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac (a.k.a. CSS Virginia), which would change naval history forever.



COURTESY OF THE HAMPTON HISTORY MUSEUM, HAMPTON, VIRGINIA

UNION GENERAL BENJAMIN BUTLER declares three runaway slaves as "contraband of war," and refuses to send them back to their owners.

Yet for all of that, perhaps the fort's greatest moment came that May night in 1861 when Frank Baker, Sheppard Mallory, and James Townsend—slaves belonging to Confederate General Charles Mallory—slipped a small, stolen boat into the waters of Hampton Roads and rowed for freedom.

"What these three men did was an act of exceptional courage," says Professor Robert Engs, author of *Freedom's First Generation*. "Under the Fugitive Slave Act, there were dire consequences for runaway slaves." Yet, if

AN EMPTY GUARD TOWER (above), used to guard the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay after the War of 1812. A community pier for fishing illustrates the island's popularity as a recreational site.

they did nothing, the men faced being ripped from their homes and families and taken south as part of the Confederate work force. And so they rowed for Fort Monroe hoping to find freedom, and according to Engs, became "the foot soldiers of a revolution that changed the course of U.S. history."

At Fort Monroe, Union General Benjamin Butler deemed the men "contraband of war" and refused to send them back to their owner. The next day, eight more slaves showed up at the fort; 47 the day after that. The three men had touched off the first mass freedom movement of the Civil War. Eventually some 20,000 men, women, and children flocked to the fort, an act that weakened the Confederate labor force, changed the focus of the war into a fight over slavery, and led directly to the Emancipation Proclamation and the disintegration of the institution. "Fort Monroe," says Professor Engs, "is where freedom for all Americans truly began."

VISITORS CAN STROLL AROUND THE ISLAND to see historic homes and the Fort Monroe Lighthouse (below).

ECHOES OF HISTORY

Still an active military installation, Fort Monroe has seen its role gradually change from one of coastal defense to headquarters for a series of Army commands including, most recently, the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command. But budget cuts and fort closures across the country had put the future of the fort in question. Finally, in 2005, the Department of Defense announced that on September 14, 2011, after 188 years of continual presence, the U.S. Army will vacate historic Fort Monroe. The move has touched off yet another battle in its long and storied history: the battle for the future of what has become known as "Freedom's Fortress."

The city of Hampton, where the fort resides, fired the first volley in that battle with its "draft reuse plan" released in 2006. Faced with an estimated 7-percent drop in tax revenue from the closure of the fort, the city sought to maximize development. Artists' renditions accompanying the plan depicted dense concentrations of three-story office buildings and up to 2,500 residential units that, according to one observer, would have ended up "submerging the historic properties in a sea of new privately owned residences."

A clause in the original 1838 deed makes it clear, however, that it is the Commonwealth of Virginia, not the city of Hampton, that will take over possession of Fort Monroe. In 2007, the state legislature created the Fort Monroe Federal Area Development Authority (FMFADA). Bill Armbruster, FMFADA's executive director, acknowledges that rumors of the fort's fate have run rampant. "A number of scenarios have been put out there, and some of the early ideas did call for new dense urban development," says the former Pentagon official. "I even heard a rumor of casinos. But the rumors are just not true."

In 2008, then-Governor Tim Kaine called on FMFADA to produce a reuse plan in which "revenue maximization" was not "goal one." The plan, signed by the governor in August 2008, calls for preservation of the core of the fort site as well as some new construction focusing on residential units, office space and "hospitality services," which would, according to Armbruster, be leased to help raise operating funds. The plan also calls for preservation of nearly 40 percent of the site as green space. "We believe we can maintain the historic fabric of this place and make Fort Monroe a vibrant, self-sustaining destination—the two are not incompatible."

"The FMFADA reuse plan is a step in the right direction," says Mark Perreault, president of Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park. But even that plan, he says, leaves several major questions unanswered. One of these is the fate of the Wherry Quarter, a 100-acre parcel of land where mid-20th century housing is likely to be removed. Many hope that it will be restored to open space, marshlands, and beach-front property, and once again become the heart of Old Point Comfort. The plan labels the future of this section as "undetermined." "That's better than having it slated for development," says Perreault, "but it also leaves a critical part of the future of the fort undefined and unprotected."

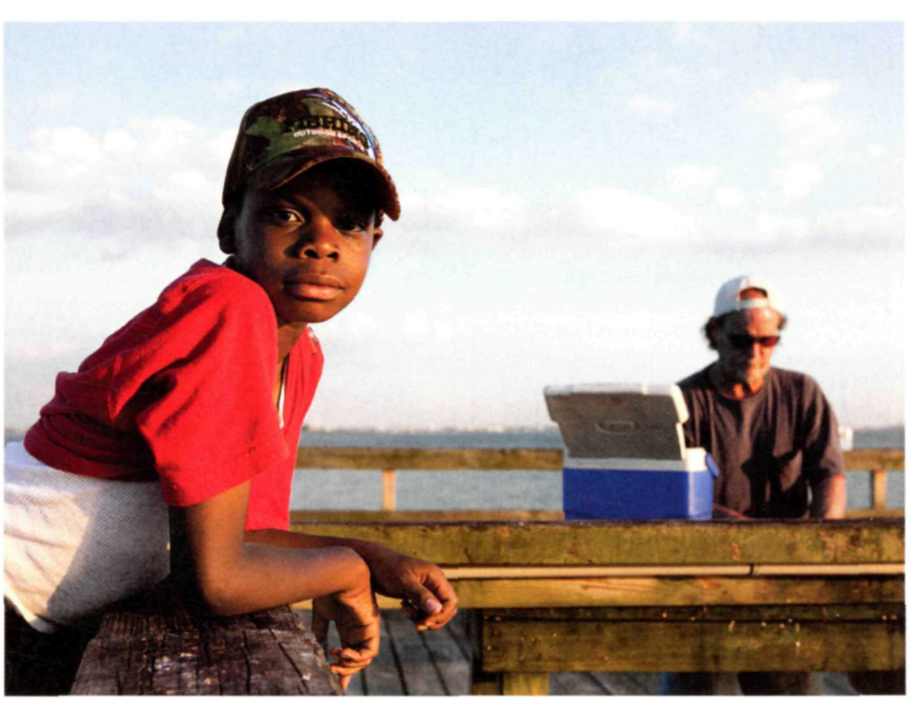
An even bigger question mark revolves around something the FMFADA plan did not address: What role should the National Park Service play in the future of Freedom's Fortress?

FORT MONROE NATIONAL PARK?

"Fort Monroe is a national treasure," says Stephen Corneliussen, a long-time resident and vice president of Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park. "It is grand public place that belongs to all of us, and the National Park Service is the only agency with the experience and expertise to take on the challenge of its protection and interpretation."

That challenge is a big one—570 acres with more than 250 buildings, a mile-long moat, a 322-slip marina, three miles of promenade, an 85-acre wetland, not to mention an estimated $4-million annual operating budget. A May 2008 Park Service Reconnaissance Study acknowledges that daunting challenge by stating that while "the resources of Fort Monroe are likely to meet the criteria for national significance and suitability as a potential unit of the National Park System," it is unlikely that the Park Service is in a position to take over management of the entire 570-acres or even the smaller 63-acre moated fort without "a strong and financially sustainable partner to contribute to the costs of managing, maintaining, and operating" the fort and grounds. *(Continued on page 50)*

> It is really about finding what will work best for this place rather than having preconceived notions about one model or another that may have been used elsewhere.
>
> – **KATHLEEN KILPATRICK**, HEAD OF VIRGINIA'S DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES.



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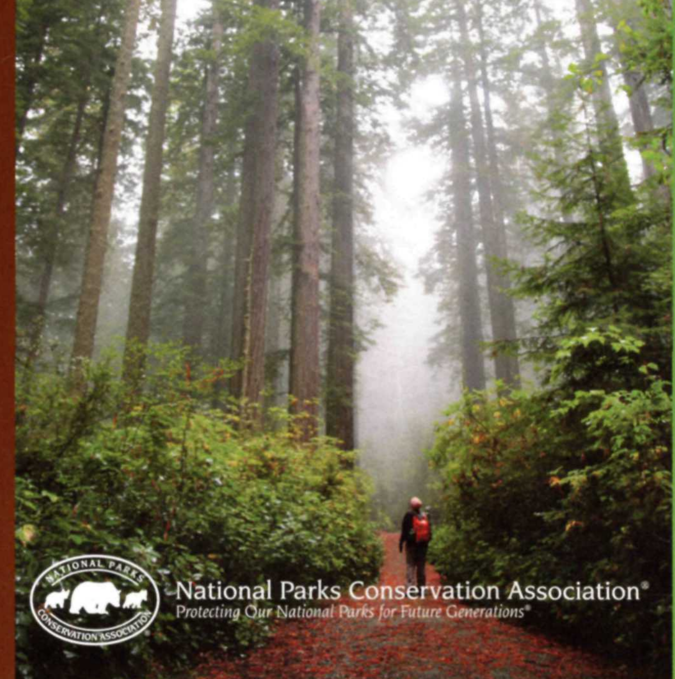

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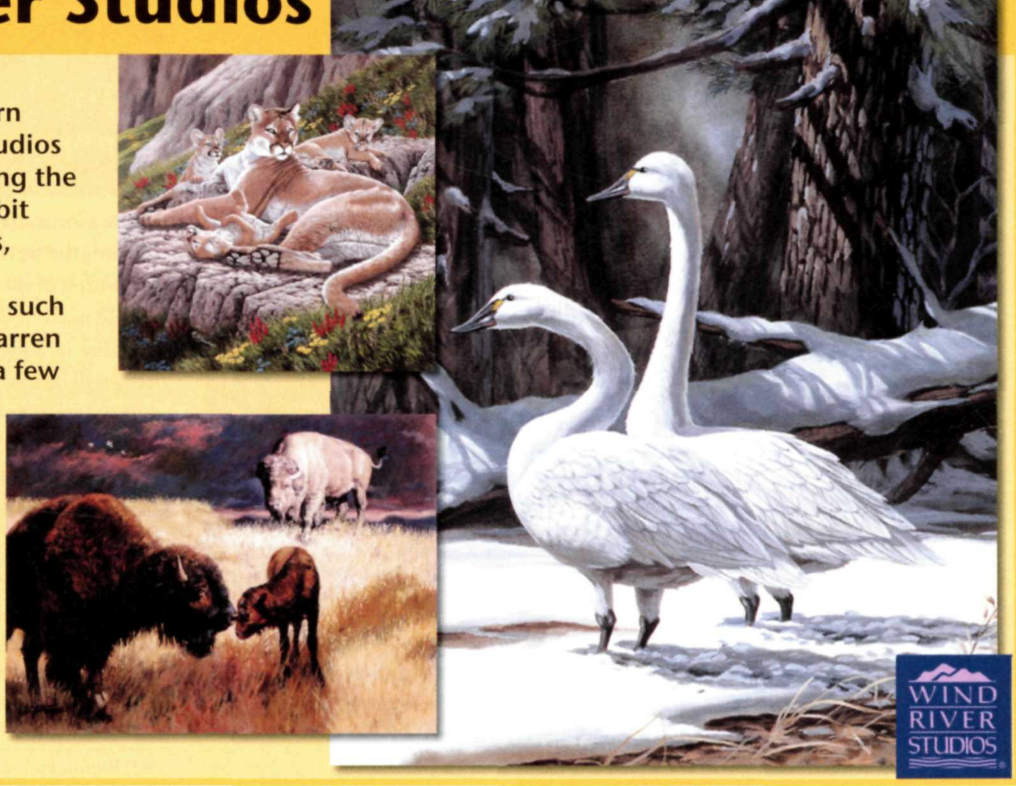
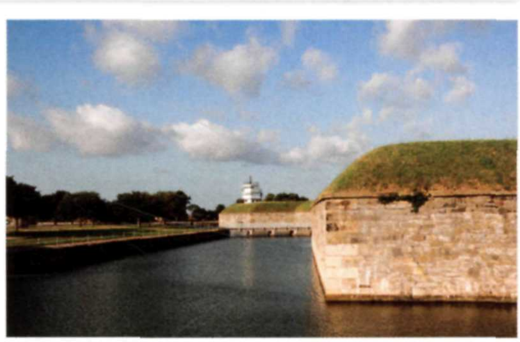


> It is a place that marks both the beginning of slavery and the beginning of the end of slavery in this country. More people need to understand what happened here and its value in American history.
>
> – **GERRI HOLLINS**, FOUNDER OF THE CONTRABAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE MOAT SURROUNG FORT MONROE, which a young engineer named Robert E. Lee helped construct before rising to fame in the Civil War.

With a potential for up to 2 million square feet of leasable commercial space, more than 300 residential units, and an annual visitation of up to 250,000, the site could be part of a "strong and financially sustainable" partnership, says Corneliussen. "The problem is that if you say 'national park,' some people take that to mean that nothing changes whatsoever, that a velvet rope is placed across the gateway and all you can do is gaze adoringly at what existed in the past. That's not what we have in mind at all."

Some people have pointed to California's Presidio as a potential model, but Perreault says the Presidio model is not simply an "overlay" for any potential new park unit at Fort Monroe, citing differences in real estate values, ownership, and the lack of a federal trust to act as seed money. "We have to think outside the moat here," he says. "A solid, strong presence of the National Park Service is critical. Uncle Sam, through the National Park Service, should be a principal player at Fort Monroe. It is something the nation built. It is a part of our history, and so its protection should be seen as a national obligation."

Whatever form it takes, engaging the Park Service in the future of Fort Monroe is an idea that is catching on. A recent poll in the *Virginian-Pilot*, the newspaper that serves the Hampton Roads area, revealed that 86 percent of local citizens like the idea of a new national park. FMFADA, under the direction of Bill Armbruster, recently voted unanimously to pursue a strong Park Service presence and will work closely with Congress to draft the necessary legislation. Even the city of Hampton, whose original plan led some to fear the fort would be lost, recently passed a resolution that envisions "the National Park Service playing a major, active role in the reuse of Fort Monroe and urges a specific emphasis on the unique history of African Americans at Fort Monroe including especially the Contraband Slave Story."

"This is our Ellis Island," says Gerri Hollins, a descendant of a "contraband" slave and a founder of the Contraband Historical Society. "It is a place that marks both the beginning of slavery and the beginning of the end of slavery in this country. More people need to understand what happened here and its value in American history." Just what form that story will be told in and who will be responsible for its telling are yet to be decided. "It is really about finding what will work best for this place rather than having preconceived notions about one model or another that may have been used elsewhere," says Kathleen Kilpatrick, head of Virginia's Department of Historic Resources. "It is a question of finding the right model even if it means striking out on your own." A fitting image for a place where three men changed the course of American history by striking out on their own in search of freedom. **NP**

Jeff Rennicke teaches environmental literature classes at Conserve School in Wisconsin's North Woods.

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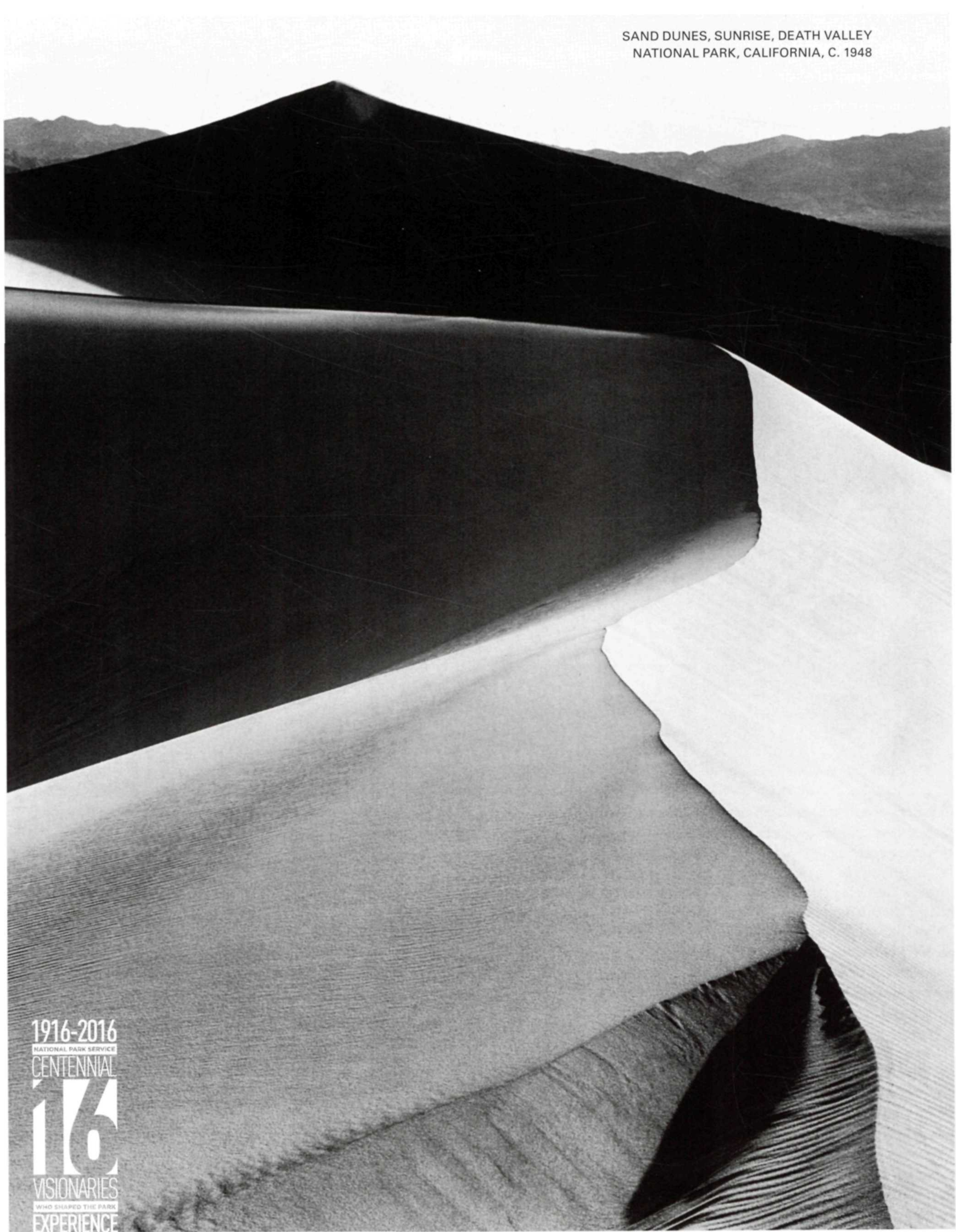


SAND DUNES, SUNRISE, DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, C. 1948

Ansel Adams
IN THE NATIONAL PARKS

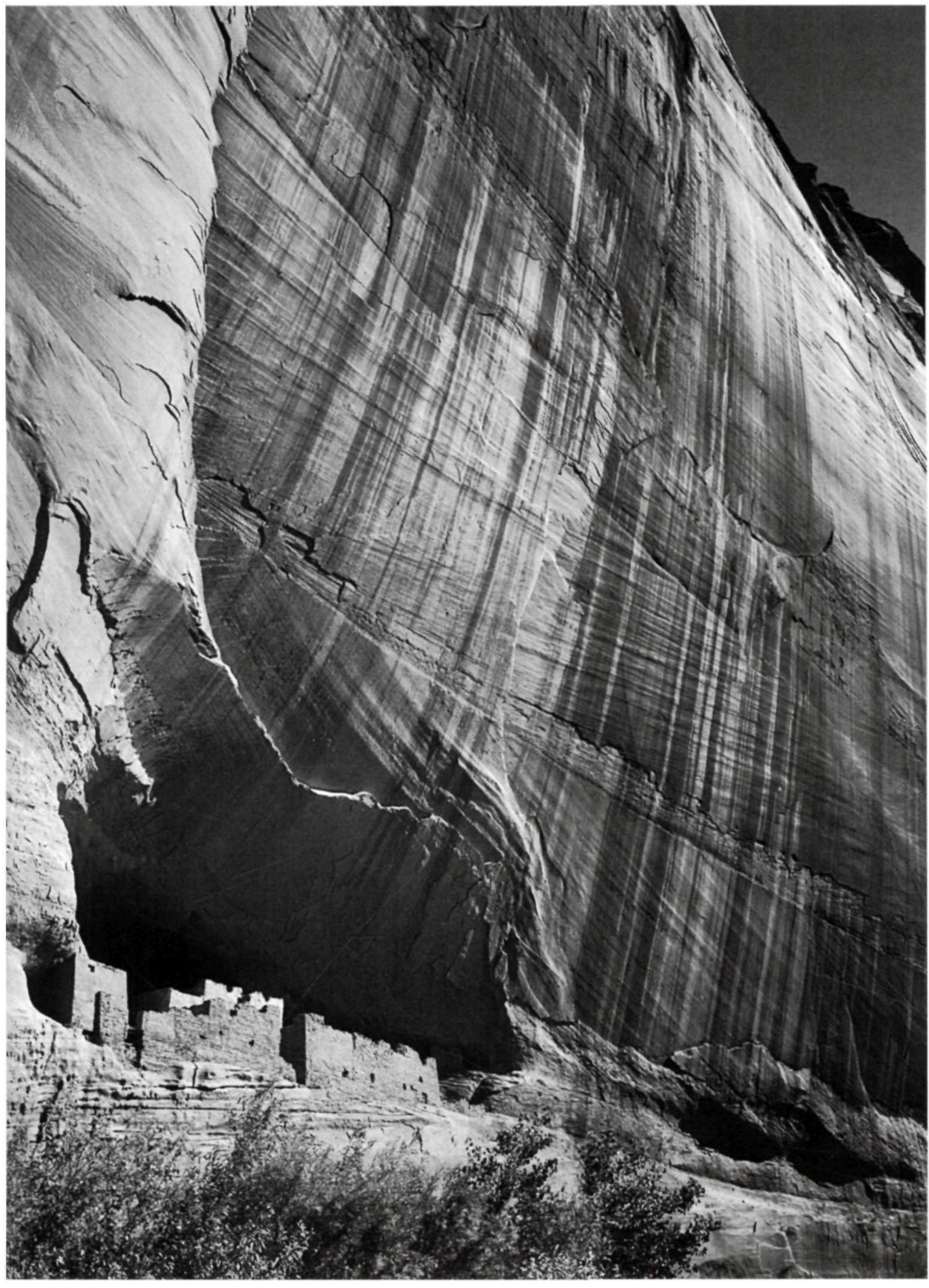
If Henry David Thoreau was the philosopher of the wilderness movement and John Muir its popularizer, Ansel Adams was its artist. Adams used his photographs as a proselytizing medium for nearly a half-century, and his concern for the protection of wilderness and the wilderness experience ranged from the profound to the practical; he wrote more than a thousand letters regarding basic park and wilderness management, on issues large and small. In 1936, the Sierra Club dispatched him to Washington, D.C., armed with his photographs, to lobby Congress for Kings Canyon. Two years later, Adams published a magnificent, limited-edition book, *Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail.* He sent a copy to Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, who with considerable enthusiasm showed it to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The President asked to keep the book for the White House and became an active supporter of the Kings Canyon cause. A year later, the President signed legislation establishing the park.

More than 50 years after his signature works were taken, and 25 years after his death, Adams' photographs of Canyon de Chelly, Glacier, Grand Tetons, and Yosemite continue to be among the most popular images of our national parks. Dozens of those photos have been captured in the new book *Ansel Adams in the National Parks*, to be printed by Little, Brown and Company in October—the most comprehensive authorized collection of Adam's national park photography to date. Here are just a few of the few images featured in the book, along with brief passages excerpted from its pages.

DETAILS: LEAVES, GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA, 1942 (LEFT), AND DOGWOOD IN BLOOM, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, C. 1938

DAWN, AUTUMN, GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS
NATIONAL PARK, TENNESSEE, 1948
DETAIL: FERN, GLACIER
NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA, 1942

On his arrival in October 1948 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and the western entrance to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Adams wrote his friend, Beaumont Newhall, "The Smokys [sic] are OK in their way, but they are going to be devilish hard to photograph. "After five days photographing in the area," he wrote Newhall's wife Nancy, "I think I have some good things of the Smokies." Of the photographs made in the Smokies, he was enthusiastic about two—this image and a view of Mount LeConte, also featured in the book.



WHITE HOUSE RUIN, CANYON DE CHELLY NATIONAL MONUMENT, ARIZONA, 1942

In 1941, the National Park Service commissioned Adams to create a photo mural for the Department of the Interior Building in Washington, D.C., with a focus on the national parks. The project was halted because of World War II and never resumed. But because of it, Americans own dozens of the images he captured at Carlsbad Caverns, Canyon de Chelly, Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Zion, all housed by the National Archives.

CLEARING WINTER STORM,
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA

El Capitan and Half Dome are two of the most imposing sites in Yosemite Valley. Adams approached the huge granite monoliths with reverence and photographed them repeatedly over more than 60 years. He wrote: "The great rocks of Yosemite, expressing qualities of timeless, yet intimate grandeur, are the most compelling formations of their kind. We should not casually pass them by, for they are the very heart of the earth speaking to us."

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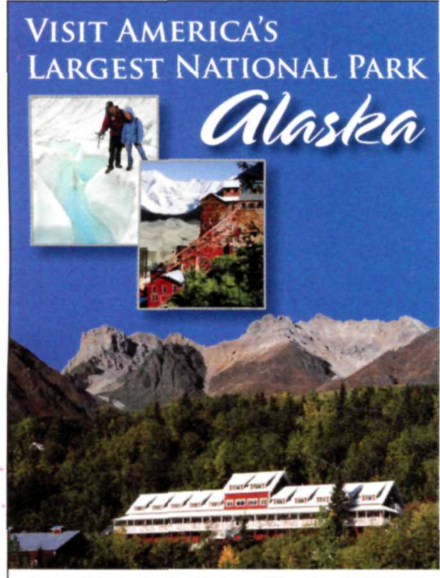

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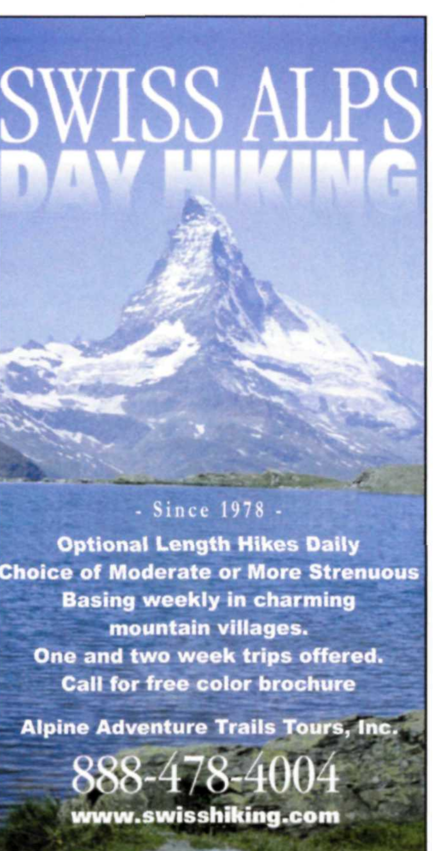

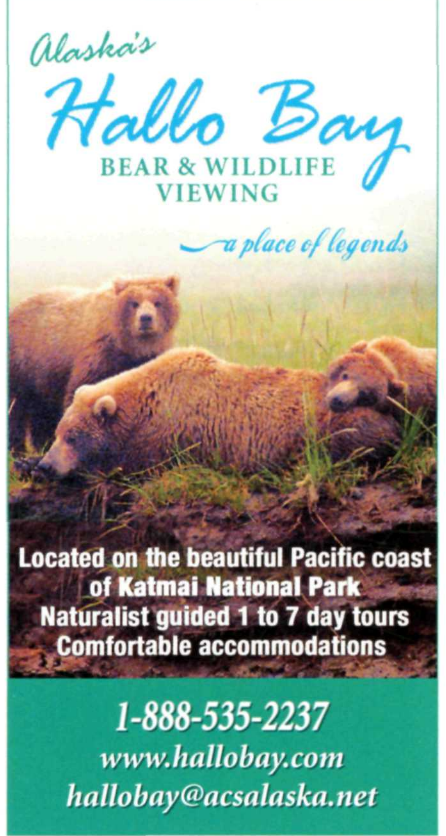

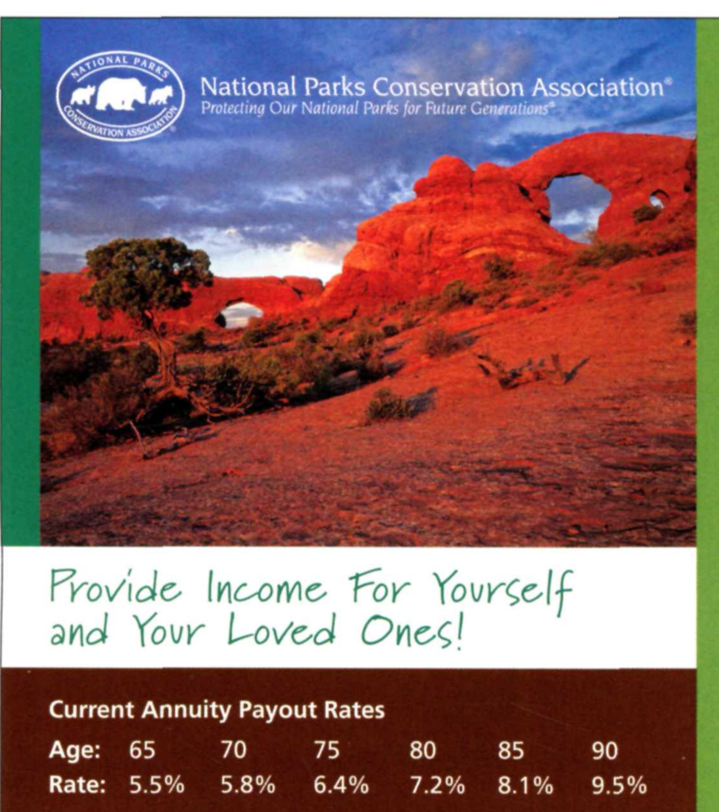

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By Carolyn Servid

TLINGIT CEREMONIAL GUESTS in Sitka for the dedication of the Kaagwaantaan Wolf House posts, December 1904.

Battling for Sitka

Two centuries ago, Russians and Tlingit Indians fought for an Alaskan outpost.

On a slope above the Sitka National Historical Park visitor center, Raven, the creator, giver of light and fire, sits high atop a red cedar totem pole. Joining him are Human, Salmon, Frog, Eagle, and Bear—figures depicting the first Tlingit clans to settle in Sitka. The 36-foot pole, created in 1996 by accomplished Tlingit carvers, is named Haa Léelk'u Ha's Kaasdahéeni Deiyi Kootéeyaa: "Our grandparents who were the very first people to use Indian River and the other people who were here too."

The Tlingit Kiks.ádi are among the clans represented on the pole. Their crest, a green frog, is a central figure. Tall spruce and hemlock trees behind the visitor's center grow on part of their ancestral homeland. In 1910, President William Taft set aside this land to commemorate events that marked a significant turn in Sitka's history.

Late 18th-century exploration of America's northwest coast brought explorers and traders from Boston, France, England, and Spain, but it was the Russians who came to stay. Hoping to dominate the trading of sea-otter pelts and other goods, the Russian-American Company under Alexander Baranov established an outpost in Sitka Sound in 1799. The Tlingit had long before settled the area, as illustrated by events in their oral histories dating back thousands of years.

The Russian colonization of Sitka provoked two significant battles with the Tlingit Kiks.ádi. The second, in 1804, saw Baranov waging war from ships offshore of what is now the park's forested beachfront. When Baranov's men tried to storm the Kiks.ádi fort above the tidelands, they were surprised by an attack led by the Tlingit warrior K'alyáan donning the Kiks.ádi Raven battle helmet and wielding a Russian blacksmith hammer. There was no decisive victory in this final Tlingit-Russian battle. After five days of fighting, with casualties on both sides, the Tlingit abandoned their fort, going overland to safer ground for several months before returning to their home village.

"Those grounds to me are just as hallowed as Gettysburg," says Clarence Wadkins, the park's lead interpreter. "The Native people lost their lives there, people who were defending and holding their territory, their lands, something that they believed

in, something that was important to them. That's something that we all can relate to."

Wadkins believes the emotional connections for visitors and locals alike are equally strong at the Russian Bishop's House, a second component of the park. One of four remaining Russian colonial-era buildings in the Western Hemisphere, the 1843 structure exemplifies unique features of Russian wooden architecture. Wadkins enjoys helping visitors imagine "the laborers who created it, the reason that they were even here, the ideas that come out of expansion, of wealth, of maybe even love, of caring or ambition."

Sitka National Historical Park is not just about history, however. One quarter of the residents of present-day Sitka are Tlingit. Many of them are of Russian Orthodox faith and are still allowed to use the restored Chapel of the Annunciation inside the Bishop's House. For Curator Sue Thorsen, this integration with the community is one of the park's assets. She looks after the site's many cultural objects, including its well-known collection of totem poles. Several long-term agreements with Sitka Tlingit clan leaders allow the park to house the clans' Panting Wolf House Posts and Sleeping Man Legend Pole, among other objects. "We exhibit them, and all the American public benefits," she says, "and the clans can continue its traditional way of caring for them."

The Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center, housed in the park's visitor center, is yet another opportunity for newcomers to learn that, as Thorsen says, Native culture isn't something that happened "once upon a time." It's something that still thrives to this day. Award-winning Tlingit weavers and carvers are sustaining northwest coast artistic traditions, and collaborating with the park to mark its centennial. A year-long celebration began in March 2010 with weaver Teri Rofkar's presentation of a commemorative Raven's Tail robe, and will include an international Russian-America conference and the raising of the Centennial Totem Pole being carved by Tommy Joseph, a ceremony certain to involve the community of Sitka.

Park Ranger Tom Gamble's Kiks.ádi ancestors fought and fell in the 1804 battle. "They were protecting their land for future generations," he says. "Now the park protects our ancestral lands and perpetuates our history indefinitely into the future, not just for our clan but for the public." Indeed, Sitkans of all ages relish walking among the totem poles along the rainforest trails or beachcombing; each fall they marvel at Indian River's crowded runs of salmon coming home. And they are reminded, by a clearing where the Kiks.ádi fort stood, of the park's human story. There, in the open, stands a pole commemorating Chief K'alyáan, whose blacksmith hammer is held in trust for his clan by Sitka National Historical Park. **NP**

Carolyn Servid is the author of *Sitka: A Home in the Wild*, featuring photography from Dan Evans.

By Trevor Clark

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In 2008, I was nearing the end of a six-month odyssey to capture as much whitewater action as possible. My journey had taken me from British Columbia to West Virginia, where New River local Steve O'Keefe was "squirtboating." Squirtboats are special kayaks that allow paddlers to go underwater, catching downward-moving currents to go as deep as possible for as long as possible. Once down, the squirtboater turns his world into a ballet of calculated spins and turns through the contours of the river bottom. A good ride can last up to 40 seconds.

This image of Steve is my favorite because it was a complete accident. After one of his dives, he lost the current and surfaced right under me. I snapped this photo right before we collided—and moments afterward I was lying spread eagle on the bow of his boat, both of us laughing hysterically. Sometimes the accidental image is better than anything you could have envisioned in the first place.

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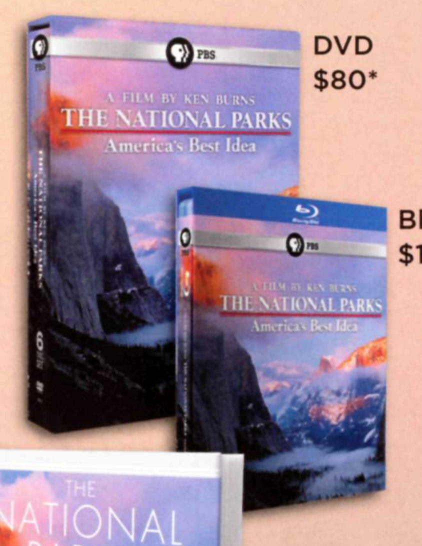

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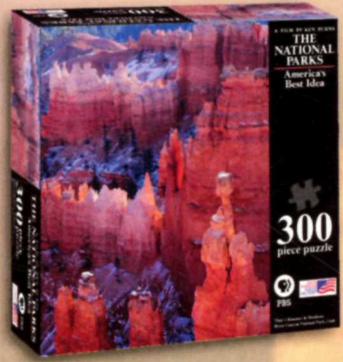

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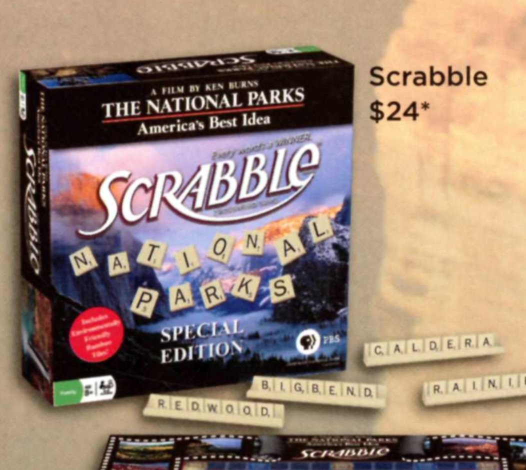

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