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The Conservation President

President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt (1858-1919), often referred to as the "conservation President", dedicated his Presidency to impact and grow the National Parks System well beyond his 1901-1909 term. Leaving a legacy of his passion for wildlife conservation and preserving our nations beautiful landscape. Now commemorated at six units of the National Park System there are more units dedicated to Roosevelt's life and memory than any other American. In addition to America's great outdoors Roosevelt also had a well documented interest in America's coinage helping redesign America's legal tender gold coins. If Roosevelt were alive today, he would most certainly be very proud of the U.S. Mint's collaboration of two of his passions.

Roosevelt's Legacy as President:

- ▶ **Established 5 National Parks** (doubling the existing number)
- ▶ **Created 18 National Monuments** (including the Grand Canyon)
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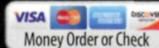
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FALL 2019 / Vol. 93 No. 4

COVER:

A BISON in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. The photographer watched the bison herd from a distance, guessed where the animals might graze next, set up a camera trap and “hoped for the best.”

©JAKE DAVIS/REVEALEDINNATURE.COM

FEATURES

28

A MOMENTOUS ARRIVAL

Four hundred years ago, a pirate ship carrying enslaved Africans pulled into Point Comfort in Virginia. Was it the beginning of slavery in this country?

By Nicolas Brulliard

38

CANDID CAMERAS

In national parks around the country, camera traps capture images that astonish, delight, inform, reveal — and have the power to change human behavior.

By Kristin Henderson

48

AFTER THE FIRE

Months after a devastating fire consumed 100,000 acres in and around Los Angeles’ Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a traveler finds new life and beauty among the ruins.

By Kate Siber

A RAVEN flies over a hillside blanketed in wildflowers in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California.

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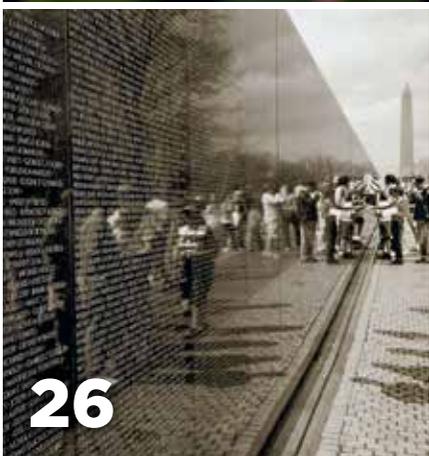


CONTENTS

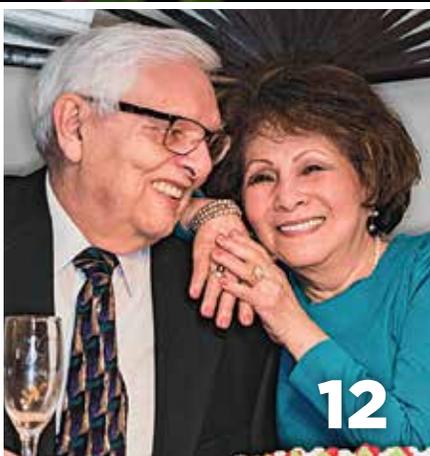
The Franciscan manzanita is one of the world's most endangered plants, but devoted biologists are working to make sure the evergreen shrub doesn't go extinct.



24



26



12



64

DEPARTMENTS

FALL 2019 / Vol. 93 No. 4

3 President's Outlook

4 Editor's Note

6 Letters

8 Echoes

10 Trail Mix

A Carlsbad Caverns comic, self-discovery at Minidoka, saving Klondike Gold Rush's outdoor museum, an ode to Yellowstone.

24 Denizens

After the chance discovery of a Franciscan manzanita, the rare plant was carefully relocated to a secret location in San Francisco's Presidio. Can it survive in the wild?
By Nicolas Brulliard

26 Findings

The Wall endeavors to list every U.S. service member killed in the Vietnam War. How much does it get wrong?
By Jacob Baynham

64 Backstory

Fifty years ago, Death Valley rangers helped apprehend a band of hippie outlaws hiding out in the desert. Weeks later, they learned how big of a catch it was.
By Julia Busiek

68 That Was Then



OUR BIRTHDAY

2019 is NPCA's centennial. Celebrate with us in National Parks magazine.



100 YEARS



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Centennial Reflections

2019 has been no ordinary year for NPCA. As we near the end of our centennial, I'm amazed by all we've achieved and the spirit of celebration we've felt, even during a time when our beloved public lands are threatened and bedrock environmental protections are under attack.

My colleagues and I have connected with many of you personally at events we've hosted around the country, from park volunteer days to stargazing parties. This year also marked the largest "Lobby Day" in NPCA's history. We helped bring hundreds of park lovers to meet with legislators in our nation's capital, and we inspired thousands more to make phone calls and send emails. Five million people saw our social media posts about the event. As a result, dozens of members of Congress added their support to legislation that will provide needed funding for national park maintenance projects.

We've also celebrated 100 years of NPCA's work on our website (npca.org/100) and through our special centennial edition of this magazine. These stories about park advocacy and our organization's history have been collected in "A Century of Impact," a beautiful book that is on sale now. (See the back cover.) We hope you'll be as inspired reading it as we were creating it.

What's perhaps most heartening to me is that we aren't just sharing past successes — we're continuing to secure important victories. We recently won a six-year battle to get a polluting industrial hog farm out of Arkansas' Buffalo National River watershed. We helped pass legislation in California that will require a destructive water-mining project to undergo a thorough environmental review, effectively stopping it in its tracks. And we helped pass a public lands package that protected more than 2 million acres of national parks and public lands, established six new national heritage areas, and created two new national park sites.

This year has had its challenges, but we have so much to celebrate — thanks to steadfast and passionate advocates like you.

With gratitude,
Theresa Pierno



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CALIFORNIA POPPIES and blue dick flowers in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

NationalParks

EDITOR IN CHIEF: Rona Marech
SENIOR EDITOR: Nicolas Brulliard
ART DIRECTOR AND PHOTO EDITOR: Nicole Yin
FEATURES DESIGN: Jessie Despard
DESIGN CONSULTANT: Selena Robleto
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Sarah Duensing

NATIONAL PARKS
777 6th Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-3723
202.223.6722; npmag@npca.org

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The Unexpected

Sometimes, stories don't work out quite as planned. Last August, we decided to send a writer to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to write a travel feature. Then in November, a wildfire tore through the area, devouring nearly 100,000 acres, including almost 90% of the National Park Service's land. The spring brought another unexpected turn: A so-called superbloom set the park ablaze in a different way. A profusion of wildflowers turned hillsides magnificent shades of yellow and purple.

We realized we had a different story on our hands than the one we'd envisioned. We threw out the original plan and instead asked writer Kate Siber to tell a story about wildfires and climate change, devastation and rebirth. Timing was on our side, and Kate and photographer David Zentz caught the height of the wildflower bloom when they visited the park in March. That piece, "After the Fire," begins on p. 48.

Stories can shift direction or emphasis for many reasons, but often it's simply because of dogged reporting. When Senior Editor Nicolas Brulliard set out to write about the country's first Africans, who arrived in what is now Fort Monroe National Monument in 1619, I thought it would be a piece about the beginning of slavery in America. In a way it is, but the story is complicated. Some historians (though they are in the minority) say slavery didn't start with the 1619 landing, but rather, evolved over time. Identifying descendants is also contentious, it turns out, and Nicolas unraveled that story too, tracking down, among others, people who believe the original Africans are their direct ancestors. You can find his article, "A Momentous Arrival," on p. 28.

I'm grateful to work with nimble and open-minded writers who know how to follow stories wherever they may lead. The path a piece takes from conception to the final product is inevitably a journey. We're so glad, as always, to have you along for the ride.

Rona Marech
NPMAG@NPCA.ORG



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 and enhances America's national parks for present and future generations by identifying problems and generating support to resolve them.

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. National Parks magazine is among a member's chief benefits. Of the \$25 membership dues, \$6 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

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. Sign up to receive Park Notes, our monthly email newsletter at npca.org/join.

HOW TO DONATE

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QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about your membership, call Member Services at 800.628.7275. On a selective basis, NPCA makes its membership list available to organizations that our members may find of interest. If you would like your name removed from this list, please call us at the number listed above.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC PROOF

Great article on the dedication of the scientist Tom Gable and his research on the wolves [“Hunt and Gather”]. Tracking animals as widely ranging as the wolves is a herculean task, and these are truly magnificent animals. You mentioned that “coastal wolves” are known to eat salmon. Here is proof that they do, from Katmai National Park in August 2017. The wolves came up to us as we stood still. Getting within a few feet of them was a life treat. Great magazine and articles that encourage my park exploration and photography.

MARK STRACKE
Burnet, Texas

THE GREAT NAME DEBATE

I found the article “Naming Matters” interesting and thought-provoking. I believe that natural landmarks in this country should be named by those who first discovered them, namely Native Americans, who were here for millennia before Europeans arrived. And rather than English terms like “Bear Lodge,” these places should be given their original tribal names, if they are known. Naming prominent landmarks after people who never even saw them is an example of white man’s hubris, and those names should have faded away long ago.

MICHAEL HERZOG
Naples, New York

The question on the cover of the Summer issue [“Should Devils Tower Be Renamed?”] does not honestly get to the heart of the problem. The names of thousands of geographic sites in America have already been renamed (many to very offensive names). Rather than more “renaming,” let’s restore the

original names. If there’s a conflict because a site has different historic names given by various tribes, I’m confident native people can come together to creatively agree on an appropriate name. Restoration of native place names needs to move more quickly, and the National Park Service can set the example.

CAROL JUNKERT
Missoula, Montana

I was absolutely amazed after reading this article — and not in a good way — at the audacity of wanting to rename our historic national parks to be politically correct. I’ve only got this to say: Our history should be cherished, not changed!

MARY LOU RIDDLEBARGER
Brea, CA

We received an unusually large number of emails and letters about Nicolas Brulliard’s story on controversial names of parks and natural landmarks. Many correspondents argued in favor of changing names; others strongly objected. We’re glad the story proved to be thought-provoking and appreciate the comments.

—Editors

IN THE MOMENT

I was right there with Todd Christopher and his son [“Open Roads and Endless Skies”] as they left Great Basin National Park, pulled off the road, reclined against the rear window of the rental car, gazed at the stars and savored the last of their getaway together. It was a goose-bumpy and ethereal scene. Great writing.

ELIZABETH FRYER
Franklin, Ohio

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Echoes

The cultural landscape in and around Chaco is one of the most threatened regions in the country from this rampant oil and gas development.

Matt Kirby, NPCA's director of energy and landscape conservation, as quoted in Native News Online after federal legislation aimed at limiting oil and gas development near Chaco Culture National Historical Park cleared a key congressional committee. A yearlong moratorium on drilling within 10 miles of the park has been in place since May, but NPCA, tribal leaders, public officials and other conservationists are pushing for a law that would permanently protect the park.

We're not doing right by these places we cherish the most.

Ulla Reeves, NPCA's Clean Air Program senior advocacy manager, speaking to Capital Public Radio after the release of NPCA's "Polluted Parks" report, which found that 96% of the country's national parks experience significant problems from air pollution. To see the full report, go to npca.org/pollutedparks.

This is a breach of trust with the public. The public pays parks fees to fix national parks and for educational programs, not the president's parade.

NPCA President and CEO Theresa Pierno to The Washington Post. The paper reported that the Park Service had been directed to divert nearly \$2.5 million in entrance and recreation fees intended to improve parks across the country to cover costs associated with President Trump's Fourth of July celebration on the National Mall.



SUBTERRANEAN
SECRETS OF

CARLSBAD CAVERNS

A COMIC BY
AMY BERENBEIM

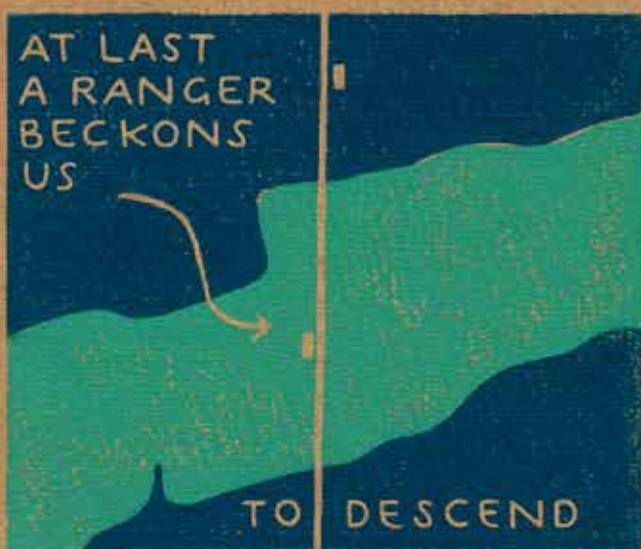
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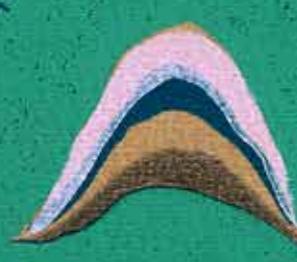
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I CASP AT
OF CAVERS
KERBO

THE TALE
GOODBAR,
& QUEEN.

IN '85, THEY
CLEVERLY
DISCOVERED

THE SPIRIT
WORLD

An illustration on a dark green background showing three hands of different colors (blue, purple, and red) holding up three glowing, sun-like symbols with rays. The words "THE SPIRIT" are written above the left two hands, and "WORLD" is written to the right of the rightmost hand.

BY
FLOATING
BALLOONS
AND ROPE
TO THE TOP
OF THE BIG
ROOM. FOR
250 EERIE
FEET, THEY
CLIMBED.

I SHINE MY HEADLAMP IN
JAKE'S FACE IN EXCITEMENT,



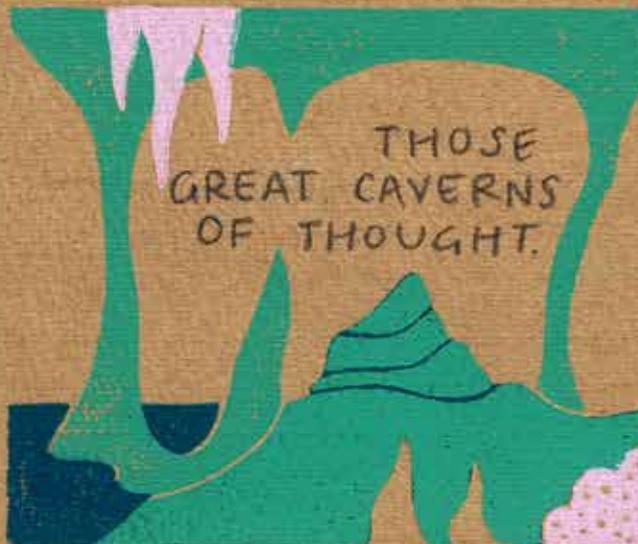
BASKING IN THE SPLENDOR
OF ADVENTURE AND LIME.

OUR CELL PHONE PHOTOS
WILL BE GRAINY AND DIM



SO WE'LL HAVE TO HANG
ON TO OUR MEMORIES-

THOSE
GREAT CAVERNS
OF THOUGHT.

An illustration of a cave interior. The cave walls are dark green and brown. There are stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The floor is dark green. The text "THOSE GREAT CAVERNS OF THOUGHT." is written in the center of the cave.

Amy H. Burdick '19



An American Journey

Was the story of Minidoka his story, too?

For as long as I can remember,

I have struggled with fitting my identity into the complex puzzle of race and ethnicity in this country. My mother is from Japan, and I was also born there, though my family moved to the U.S. when I was a baby. In Seattle, where we lived, my white father worked at Boeing, and my mother stayed home to raise my brother, sister and me. Because of her, Japanese culture subsumed our household. We flew carp windsocks on Boy's Day and Girl's Day. We danced at the Obon festival, which lights the way home for our ancestors. We sometimes ate fish for breakfast. I knew and saw and tasted things that Americans twice my half-Japaneseness seldom experienced.

I felt Japanese, so very Japanese, but not necessarily *Japanese American*. My mother had been in Japan during the war, so in contrast to other families like ours, we didn't have a direct connection to the World War II mass incarceration of Japanese Americans. Our distance from those forced removals imbued in me a certain detachment, not just from the event, but from the community that endured it. It felt like a cultural litmus test that I could never pass.

Like many Americans who are even aware of Japanese incarceration, for much of my life, I was brainwashed into thinking of the shameful episode as some kind of benign act. I pictured an acquiescent people reporting passively to their own imprisonment. This is the way it had been portrayed



THE AUTHOR (at right, in the striped shirt) at home in Seattle with his mother and siblings.

© SCOTT NELSON

in U.S. history books, and a culture of silent endurance — very familiar to me — stopped camp survivors from contradicting that whitewashed version.

In 2017, 75 years after Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 to authorize the forced removals, I decided to try resolving my sense of dissonance and incomprehension. I rummaged through the remnants of confinement at once-desolate landscapes to learn about this grim and underrepresented period of American

history. I sought out otherwise ordinary people who had suffered in extraordinary ways at the hands of their own government. And I listened to stories about the dignity with which survivors had endured these indignities.

My yearlong journey visiting incarceration camps began at Minidoka National Historic Site in Idaho. Japanese Americans have been making annual pilgrimages there since 2003, and it seemed like a logical place to go first since it was the place where most

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Trail Mix

Seattleites were taken.

When I arrived, I found myself among more people of Japanese descent than I'd ever seen outside of Japan. It was disconcerting. Though I shared a hometown and some cultural reference points with many other attendees, I recognized few of them. I felt as if I were attending someone else's class reunion.

Their common connection to the place didn't feel familiar to me either, but I took a deep breath and joined a tour of Minidoka's crude barracks, falling in next to several Japanese Americans who had once stayed in them. I hadn't realized how thin the tarpaper-covered walls were, how many families were crammed into each structure, or how muddy, dusty and snowy the remote desert was. It's difficult to understand the unsettling nature of a guard tower until you are peering up at one.

I also hadn't fully appreciated before my visit how the U.S. government had

used its captives to help push the West into agriculture. In one of the great, untold stories of our country's environmental history, imprisoned workers converted huge swaths of barren landscape into arable real estate. The acres surrounding Minidoka are now lush and productive, though none of the Japanese Americans who made that possible ever profited from the transformation.

One of the things the camp survivors mention most frequently is having to go to the bathroom in front of each other in crowded, open latrines. For such a modest people, it must have been horrifying in a way that non-Japanese folks cannot imagine. I could relate, of course, which said something about me that I was just beginning to understand.

As we continued our tour, I thought about a story told to me by Clarence Moriwaki, a third-generation Japanese American who spearheaded the creation of the Bainbridge Island Japanese

American Exclusion Memorial in Washington. Near the end of his life, Nobuo Moriwaki, Clarence's father, broke his long silence about his World War II experiences. The elder Moriwaki lived far enough inland to have been spared the camps, but later was drafted into military intelligence. He once took a leave to visit his ailing uncle in Minidoka. Along the way, he stepped off his bus to stretch his legs. Although dressed in U.S. Army khakis, he was spotted by police, arrested and tossed in jail for looking like the enemy. By the time he finally caught the next bus to Minidoka, he was in danger of being AWOL.

The uncle had gone every day to the front, barbed wired fence at Minidoka to wait for his nephew. And when Nobuo Moriwaki finally did arrive, he barely stayed. The uncle lashed out: "You good-for-nothing, you go away." Weeks later, the young man received a letter

TWO CHILDREN in the Minidoka incarceration camp in Idaho in 1943.



COURTESY OF THE WING LUKE MUSEUM



THE AUTHOR'S parents, Scott and Chiyoko Nelson, celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary in 2016.

© GLENN NELSON

informing him of his uncle's death. The letter was postmarked the day after he'd left Minidoka.

"My father kept that inside for 60 years. He was living gaman to the hilt," Clarence Moriwaki said, referring to the Japanese notion of enduring and shielding the next generation from the negatives of the past.

Clarence Moriwaki, I realized at Minidoka, had received the fruits of gaman. For him, the dark secrets, when finally unleashed, flowered into something wonderfully meaningful — a deeper understanding of his family's past and his relationship to it. I was in the process of receiving a similar gift.

My self-discovery continued at an educational session in a big auditorium full of other mixed-race Japanese participants. Mia Russell, the director of the affinity group Friends of Minidoka, was among those who urged me to embrace my stake in the history of Japanese incarceration. "It's part of being American," she said. Russell grew up in Boise, but she didn't learn of the prison camp only two hours down Interstate 84 until she went to college in Southern California. If she could believe in her

connection, I thought, I certainly could.

Later that day, I attended an "inter-generational session." After dividing into groups composed of young, middle-aged and older participants and at least one Minidoka survivor, we were instructed to share our experiences around the incarceration. As people went around the circle, no one held back, and their narratives about the humiliation and anger they still felt about the incarceration or the disappearance of community and history gave release to torrents of tears.

At first, I thought about passing out of respect. I feared my past didn't reside on the same emotional plane. But the weekend had taught me that I had a place there, too. Sobbing quietly with the rest of them, I realized that it was the horror and heartbreak of war, and the love and heroism required to overcome that horror, that aligned all of us, including me.

Also, you cannot listen to the most intimate details of people's lives and offer nothing in return. Some of those details had been repressed for 75 years, after all. So I told the group a story about a white guy from a part of Washington

state known for its wheat who fell in love with a young beauty from a part of Japan renowned for its rice. My father had written to his mother about his engagement to this Japanese woman. Instead of writing back, she telegraphed my father's commanding officer. My father was relocated to a place called Sado Island and ordered to "think things over." I later learned that Sado Island is so isolated that throughout Japanese history it is where the vanquished were exiled. He was there for seven months, but in the end, love prevailed.

When I finished my story, the survivor in our group looked up, touched my hand, and softly said, "You are like the rest of us."

GLENN NELSON founded The Trail Posse (trailposse.com), a nonprofit media project covering the intersection of race and the outdoors, and writes a column about race and equity for Crosscut.com. He is based in Seattle.



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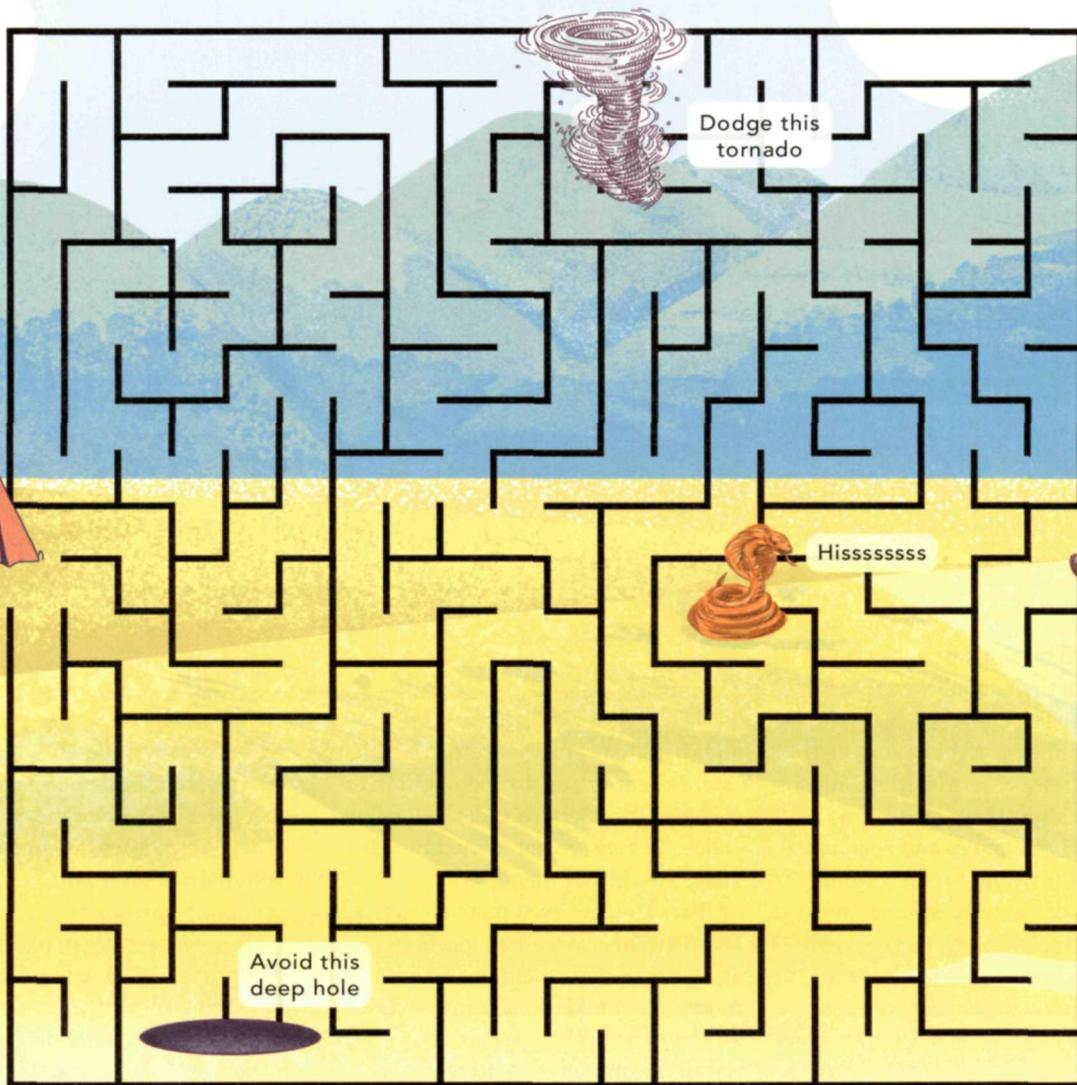
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Exposed

Climate change reveals — and threatens — artifacts along Alaska's famed Chilkoot Trail.

The icy, steep Chilkoot Trail runs for 33 miles from the Alaskan coast to the Yukon interior. For centuries, indigenous Chilkoot and Chilkat Tlingit traders controlled the harrowing pass, one of only three overland routes into the interior. Then the Klondike Gold Rush overwhelmed this landscape. In 1897 and 1898, 20,000 prospectors scaled the trail with their supplies to reach the Yukon goldfields.

After a railway was built and the gold dwindled, these seekers left the Chilkoot Trail as quickly as they came. They deserted their tent cities and abandoned what they didn't want to carry, from large pieces of tramway equipment to clothes and tools. Today, these ghostly remnants along the trail fascinate the 3,000 backpackers per year who scale the pass in Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park.

"We call it an outdoor museum," said Caitlin Rankin, a Washington University archaeology graduate student who has scrutinized these artifacts. "You're walking through the footsteps of time."

Climate change is creating a paradox for archaeologists working on the Chilkoot Trail. As high-altitude patches of ice melt, intriguing objects frozen inside them can emerge and reveal new details about the trail's long history. At the same time, warming temperatures are threatening to destroy these and other artifacts across the park. Once organic materials such as fragile leather



GOLD RUSH prospectors, loaded with gear, waiting to head up Chilkoot Pass.

and wood thaw, they start to decay, said Dael Devenport, an archaeologist in the National Park Service's Alaska Regional Office. "If they are not found immediately, we will lose them."

Park staff are even more concerned about artifacts at ice-free locations along the trail. As melting glaciers send more water and sediment into rivers and lakes, some historical sites are at risk of serious flooding. Researchers are urgently trying to find and document cultural items before they disappear.

Ice patches are areas that remain frozen year-round. But when temperatures are too warm, patches soften and their edges recede. Since 2001, archaeologists surveying melting ice patches in other Alaskan national parks have found incredibly well-preserved ancient objects. At Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, for example, antler projectile points, wooden dart shafts, cut hide and even part of a 650-year-old birch bark basket have emerged. The items are largely hunting and camping

gear because the patches were key summertime hunting spots, as caribou and sheep were drawn to the cool grounds. "These objects are the rarest of the rare," said Andrew Tremayne, a former Park Service archaeologist.

Researchers began to officially survey a few of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park's 277 ice patches in 2016, after observing them by helicopter for years. Since archaeologists have uncovered very few pre-gold rush sites along the trail, they hoped to find ancient materials in the patches. The research was part of a larger project to evaluate cultural resources across the park that could be damaged or destroyed as the climate changes. The project, which is now completed, is helping staff prioritize which sites to monitor and study further.

The research team, comprising the park's former archaeologist Shawn Jones, Rankin and others, hiked the trail repeatedly to acquire data. "The scariest part is called the Golden Staircase, right



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100 YEARS





Trail Mix

near the summit,” said Rankin. “You’re climbing *big* rocks. It’s almost always raining and misty, and you can’t really see.” At the top, the U.S. and Canada borders meet near a site called Chilkoot Pass. Here, at about 3,500 feet, the team paused to check the condition of artifacts that usually melt out of the snow in summer but have been staying wet and warm for longer intervals due to rising temperatures.

Among the artifacts at the summit are more than 50 bundles of wood wrapped with canvas. These are “knock-down boats” likely brought by a company to sell to prospectors to assemble and float down the Yukon River to the goldfields near Dawson City. Researchers aren’t certain why the company abandoned the materials. To help with preservation, staff have sent some of the bundles and other artifacts

to museums, but it is easier and cheaper to leave items in place and monitor them. (Also, if the boats are placed in storage, they are no longer accessible to the public.)

In 12 ice patches close to the summit, the team discovered a number of items related to the gold rush period, such as a leather pouch, a grapefruit juice can and a pile of bones from an ox. In addition, near one ice patch, lodged in a crack on a rock ledge, they spotted a wooden tool with one pointed end and one splintered end. Radiocarbon dating suggests it is around 140 years old — from the decades before the Klondike Gold Rush. Researchers have speculated that this stick is an ice probe for navigating the trail, but they can’t confidently identify who used it. Perhaps a Native trader or packer owned it, or a miner could have made it using older wood. Despite the

uncertainty, the find is tantalizing. “What else is up there that we don’t know about that could be preserved in the ice?” Tremayne asked.

The team also checked large gold-rush sites such as Sheep Camp, which in 1898 was a mile-long stretch of tents and 50 businesses. Sheep Camp was on the opposite side of the river from the trail and only accessible by log bridges. The bridges are long gone, and so the isolated site has been little studied. Today investigators must use a zip line to get there. Sheep Camp’s remains are threatened by increased glacial melt, which is making the already flood-prone area even more unstable. “The entire site will be washed away by migrating rivers,” Rankin said. “We are very certain that this will happen, and it’s a problem because the site hasn’t been fully inventoried.”

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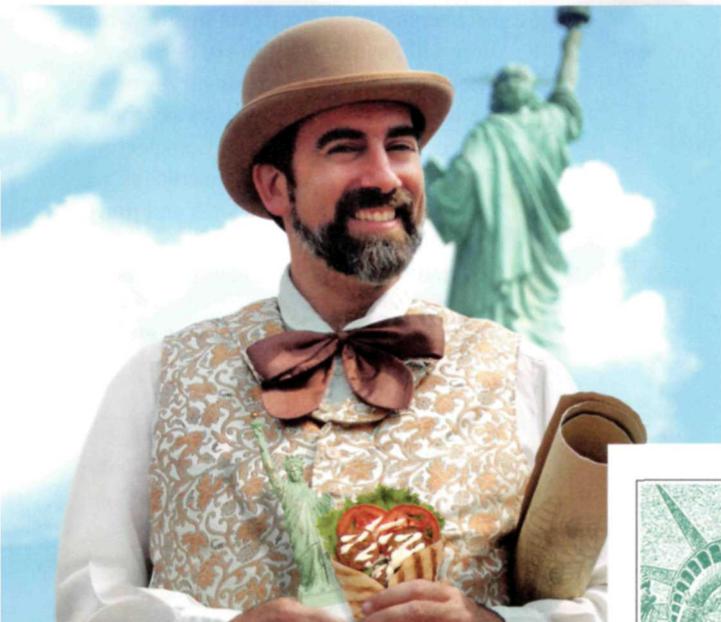
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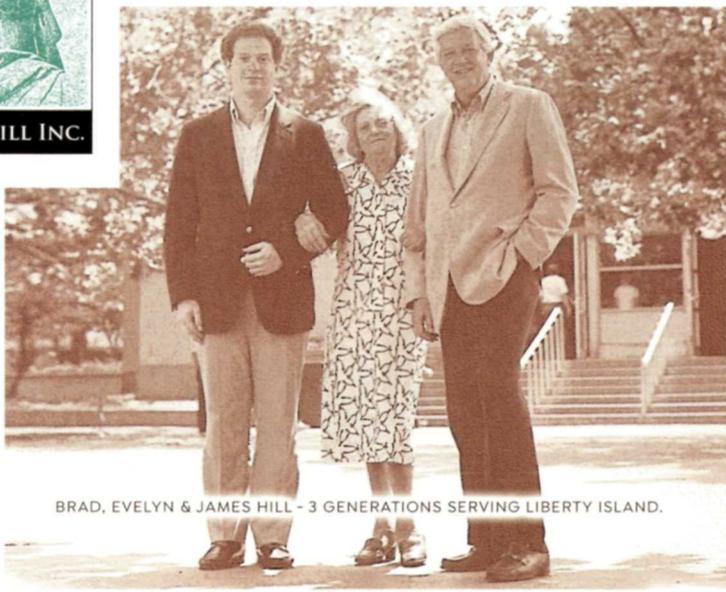
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ABANDONED “knock-down boats” near the highest point of the Chilkoot Trail.



NPS/SHAWN JONES

Despite the need to act quickly, the park is currently without a full-time archaeologist, and staff are unsure when they will have the funding to document Sheep Camp thoroughly or survey new ice patches. Some researchers say that the current administration is neglecting federal climate-related archaeology projects in national park sites and that to get support for proposals, they have omitted or edited references to climate change.

It’s upsetting, Tremayne said. “But we do what we can.”

LAURA ALLEN’S writing for science and cultural museums and for magazines has taken her to Alaska and the Everglades and beyond. She is based in New York.

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“The Nation’s Parks,” published in the summer of 1920 by what was then the National Parks Association, was full of gems, including this poem, which was dedicated to the organization. The 16-page newsletter was a precursor of what eventually became National Parks magazine in 1942. Here is the poem as it originally appeared, reprinted in honor of NPCA’s centennial.

—Editors

Yellowstone Park

By John Finley

Yonder, behind those peaks of white,

The Maker’s mighty workshop stood,
Whence just before His sixth-day’s night
He viewed His work with loving sight
And saw that all was good.

His giant engine’s room was there,
Where spouts the geyser from the ground,
The ‘scaping steam that else might tear
The world He’d made, whose constant care
Still keeps it going ‘round.

And thunders still the rushing stream
That sped His wheel to turn for Him.
To grind and polish, cut and ream,
Till He had set the emerald’s gleam
Deep in the cañon’s rim.

There, too, as architect He willed
Beauty of line and made design
Of fount with water to be filled,
Of dome and battlement He’d build
In Alp and Apennine.

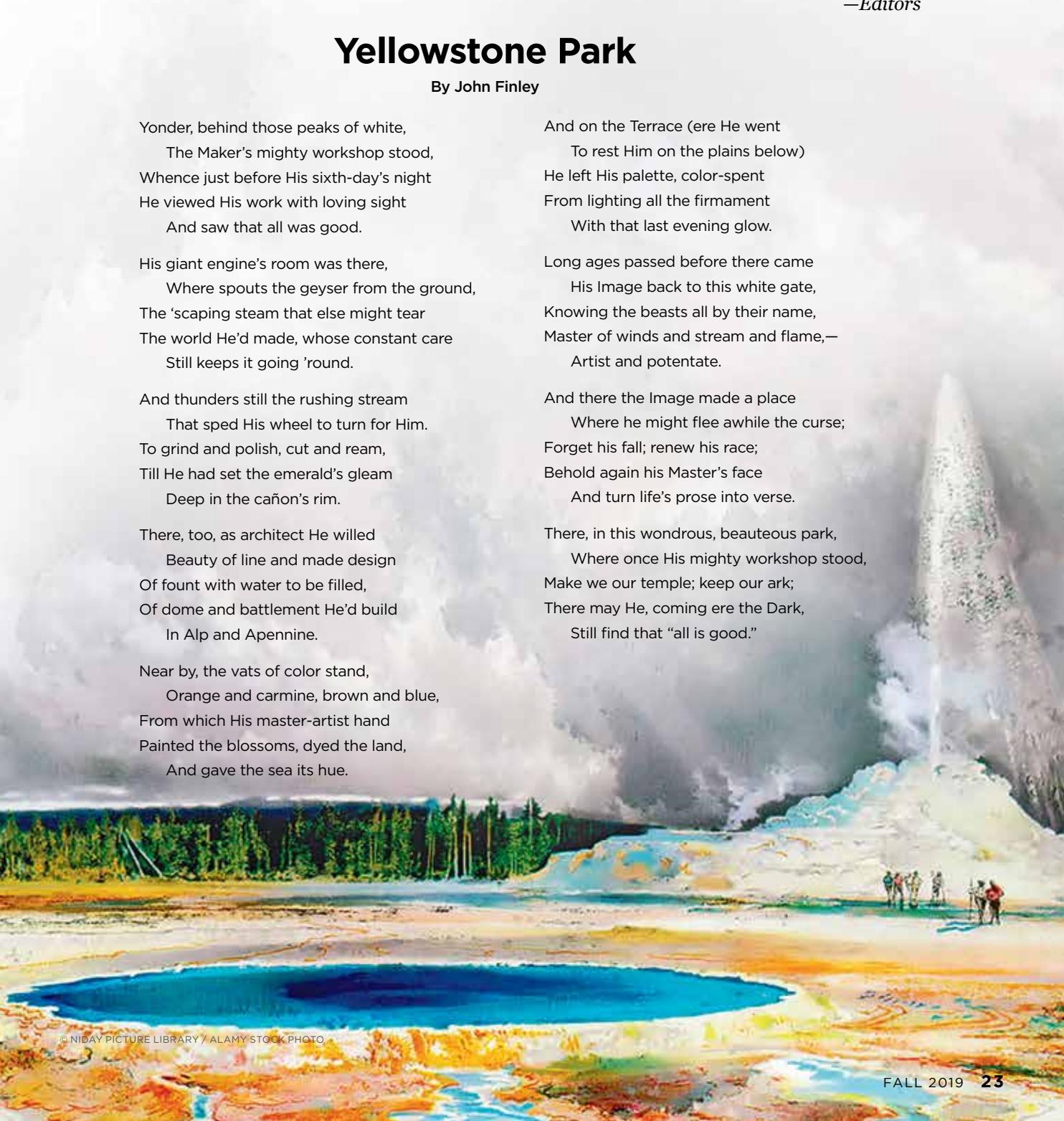
Near by, the vats of color stand,
Orange and carmine, brown and blue,
From which His master-artist hand
Painted the blossoms, dyed the land,
And gave the sea its hue.

And on the Terrace (ere He went
To rest Him on the plains below)
He left His palette, color-spent
From lighting all the firmament
With that last evening glow.

Long ages passed before there came
His Image back to this white gate,
Knowing the beasts all by their name,
Master of winds and stream and flame,—
Artist and potentate.

And there the Image made a place
Where he might flee awhile the curse;
Forget his fall; renew his race;
Behold again his Master’s face
And turn life’s prose into verse.

There, in this wondrous, beauteous park,
Where once His mighty workshop stood,
Make we our temple; keep our ark;
There may He, coming ere the Dark,
Still find that “all is good.”





THE FRANCISCAN MANZANITA'S distribution likely never extended much beyond the limits of present-day San Francisco. The plant had not been seen in the wild since the 1940s until one was spotted a decade ago.



© KARL NIELSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

The Last Wild One

After the chance discovery of a Franciscan manzanita, the rare plant was carefully relocated to a secret location in San Francisco's Presidio. Can it survive in the wild?

ONE OCTOBER EVENING 10 YEARS AGO, Dan Gluesenkamp was driving on the busy stretch of freeway between downtown San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge when something on the shoulder caught his eye. It wasn't much to look at — a waist-high bush growing amid litter and rusted car parts. "That plant was fairly ugly," he said. "It was not photogenic."

At least that's how it must have appeared to other commuters, but Gluesenkamp is a botanist who has dedicated his life to protecting California's flora, and he had a hunch the ordinary-looking plant was by no means ordinary. It was impossible to park safely and walk over, so Gluesenkamp looped around to get another look. By the third pass, he was pretty sure he'd found a rare kind of manzanita, an evergreen shrub named for its berries, which resemble small apples. ("Manzanita" is the diminutive form of the word "apple" in Spanish.) He didn't know exactly which manzanita he had discovered, but he immediately left an excited voicemail message for Lew Stringer, a biologist at the Presidio Trust.

Before long, Stringer and two colleagues found themselves sprinting across six lanes of traffic. Michael Chassé, an ecologist with the National Park Service, took out his plant guide. At the time, Chassé was working on a master's thesis about San Francisco's manzanitas, but when his guide pointed to the Franciscan manzanita, he still had doubts. "I thought it was impossible because it was extinct in the wild," he said. They recruited two additional experts to weigh in, and within a few days, the biologists from San Francisco State University confirmed that the plant was indeed the first wild specimen of the Franciscan manzanita identified in more than six decades.

The discovery was a stroke of good luck in more ways than one. That section of Highway 101, which cuts through the Presidio of San Francisco, was undergoing a major renovation project. Shortly before the manzanita finding, Chassé had looked at that very island in his effort to identify plants worth saving from bulldozers, but all he had seen was an overgrowth of ornamental shrubs. Highway workers later chopped down those bushes but somehow spared the

manzanita. It was only after the plant was exposed that Gluesenkamp was able to spot it.

The project managers for the California Department of Transportation and representatives of several agencies including the Park Service and the Presidio Trust looked at alternatives for saving the plant. It was not feasible to build the new highway around the bush, which was already suffering after having lost its cover, and moving it to a botanical garden would have meant that the plant would again be extinct in the wild. So they decided to relocate the manzanita to a natural location in the Presidio, away from roadside trash and exhaust gases.

Before the move, biologists collected soil from around the plant, stem cuttings and seeds. Workers placed a tent over the plant in the days ahead of the transplantation to keep the dirt dry, and one dedicated fellow stayed overnight in the tent during a rainstorm to make sure it didn't blow away. Finally, one early morning in January 2010, more than three months after the manzanita's discovery, the team used a crane to lift a 10-ton ball of plant and soil and deposit it onto a flat-bed truck. The manzanita was taken on a short drive to a secret location in the Presidio, a vast park that has undergone major habitat restoration since the military transferred the land to the Park Service in 1994. Operators used another crane to lower the manzanita carefully in a pre-dug hole. CalTrans workers, contractors and biologists cheered.

The plant's fame increased

“These biologists saved them in the middle of the night, threw them in a gunnysack and took them to a local botanical garden.”

significantly when a conservative media outlet highlighted the relocation as a waste of taxpayer money. Right-wing talk show hosts picked up the story and ran with it. Gluesenkamp said he was dismayed to see the rescue of the manzanita turned into a divisive issue, especially because it had been the result of a collective effort. Gluesenkamp said the construction workers, who told their kids how they helped relocate the manzanita at the end of their workday, understood the value of the plant. “We do things because of how we feel,” he said, “and that’s the strongest argument for saving biodiversity: We feel it’s important.”

The Franciscan manzanita's distribution likely never extended much beyond the limits of present-day San Francisco, but urbanization drastically reduced the plant's range. By the late 1930s it was known to exist only in a city cemetery slated for destruction. Some local botanists would not let the Franciscan manzanita plants blink out without a last-ditch effort, though. “These biologists saved them in the middle of the night, threw them in a gunnysack and took them to a local botanical garden,” said Stringer, now the Presidio Trust's associate director of natural resources.

Those pilfered plants are now crucial to the manzanita's recovery efforts. Biologists believe the plants held in

botanical gardens come from at least three genetically distinct shrubs. Last year, they started planting cuttings from those plants near the rescued manzanita, and they hope pollinators will play their role as matchmakers to produce a crop of viable seeds.

They're hopeful the manzanita will thrive, but plenty of threats remain, and Chassé, Stringer and their colleagues are not taking any chances. When handling cuttings, they disinfect their tools to avoid contaminating the manzanitas with phytophthora, a potentially devastating plant pathogen. They remove invasive plants by hand and refrain from using herbicide within 100 feet of a Franciscan manzanita. They monitor manzanita predators such as voles, which eat the plant but also could help it by dispersing the seeds, and they water cuttings, especially in periods of drought.

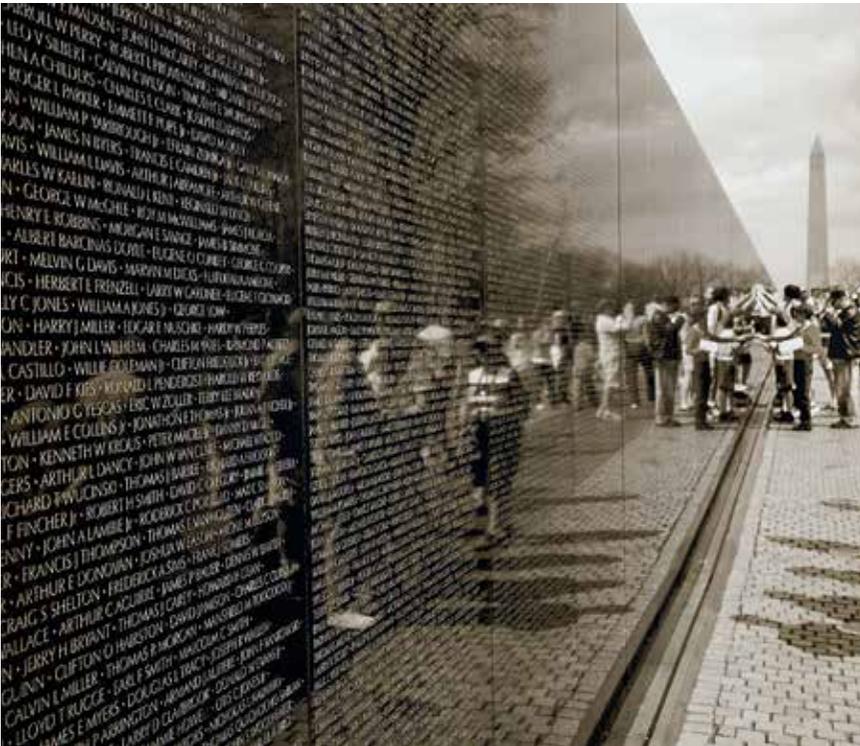
The last wild manzanita — “Francie,” as Stringer affectionately refers to it — gets even more attention. Biologists are studying the plant's pollinators and are researching a fungus that might help the plant grow. They are also collecting the manzanita's pollen and storing it as a long-term insurance policy. By all accounts, Francie is doing well. Gluesenkamp, who is now the executive director of the California Native Plant Society, focuses his energy on trying to make California a zero-extinction state, but recently he found the time to pay a visit to the “ugly” bush he spotted all those years ago.

“It had all these little pink flowers,” Gluesenkamp said. “It was beautiful.” **NP**

ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER

The Presidio is also home to the only wild specimen of the Raven's manzanita, a species rediscovered in 1952 by biologist Peter Raven. Biologists have planted cuttings from the original bush, but they all share the same DNA. “Currently, the Raven's manzanita is incapable of producing offspring,” Stringer said. “It's virtually an extinct species.”

NICOLAS BRULLIARD is senior editor of National Parks magazine.



LAST YEAR, 4.7 million people visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The memorial lists each U.S. casualty of the Vietnam War, but because of errors, it's been difficult to definitively answer visitors' questions about how many names are on the Wall.

He knew it would be there. In the late '80s, someone at work left a note on his desk saying that they'd seen his name on the memorial. When a traveling replica of the Wall came to Madison, Wisconsin, Kies visited it with a friend and a flashlight in the dead of night — he didn't want anyone to watch him fall apart.

"It's kind of eerie seeing your name on something with a bunch of deceased people," he said. "I guess someday it will be true."

Kies' name isn't the only mistake on the Wall, which lists each U.S. casualty of the Vietnam War chronologically, by date of death. Since the memorial's dedication, family members have identified dozens of misspelled names. Others are duplicates. Some are out of order. Some, like Kies', belong to survivors. Last year, 4.7 million people visited the memorial and with all the errors, it's been difficult to definitively answer their most common question: "How many names are on the Wall?"

"This is an affair of the heart, it's not an exact science," said Bob Herendeen, a National Park Service ranger on the National Mall. "The Wall is part of a living memory, and memory can be faulty."

Now, after a comprehensive audit, the nonprofit that built the Wall finally has the most complete record of the memorial's mistakes. In May, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund released the results of its four-year review, which found that 58,390 names are inscribed on the Wall to honor a total of 58,276 killed or missing U.S. service members.

Etched in Stone

The Wall endeavors to list every U.S. service member killed in the Vietnam War. How much does it get wrong?

I T WAS A FOGGY SUMMER MORNING about a decade ago when David Kies first visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and saw his own name listed among the dead. Kies' wife pushed his wheelchair along the 500-foot wall where more than 58,000 names are engraved on black granite polished so smooth it reflects like a mirror. He found the inscription on panel 14E: David F. Kies.

The distance between those two figures speaks to how this country has imperfectly remembered the casualties of the controversial Vietnam War, which deployed a generation of young conscripts from 1955 to 1975 in a bloody and ultimately futile effort to prevent the spread of communism in Asia.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was built in 1982 to honor each fallen service member from that war — so many people that it takes volunteers more than four 18-hour days to read each name aloud. When the memorial was built, desktop computers were rare, and record-keeping was an arduous process. The names on the Wall initially came from casualty lists stored on magnetic tape, which VVMF staff checked eight times before inscriptions began.

Still, mistakes slipped through then and later, in the 379 names added to the memorial after its dedication. Those additions honor service members not included on the original casualty lists and were inscribed on lines with available space, as close to the member's date of death as possible.

Even by 2015, however, an accurate digital file with the precise location of each name didn't exist. By then, VVMF was updating a traveling replica of the memorial and had to learn exactly what was on the Wall, flaws and all. So Tim Tetz, director of outreach at VVMF, recruited 16 volunteers who spent months poring over an online photograph of the memorial and recording each name's location and spelling. Later, volunteers repeated this process at the Wall, and the digital file of 58,390 names was complete. The next step was to cross-reference that list with a casualty list maintained by the Department of Defense and conduct research to reconcile the inconsistencies.

“You can't use white-out on black granite. You can't spackle over it and re-engrave the name.”

In this four-year process, VVMF discovered that 32 names on the Wall belong to people who survived the war. Thirteen names are duplicates, and 69 were reinscribed to correct an initial mistake. Those corrections weren't always successful. The second name on the wall was initially misspelled, then was reinscribed on a different panel with the wrong middle initial. (It should be Chester M. Ovnand.)

Rodney G. Helsel's name appears on the Wall three times — twice correctly and once misspelled. William F. Joyce enlisted under the name of a neighbor, Richard J. Preskenis. Joyce died in 1966, and Preskenis didn't serve. Both names are on the Wall.

The errors are impossible to erase. “You can't use white-out on black granite,” Tetz said. “You can't spackle over it and re-engrave the name.”

Tetz still receives about an email a month from someone whose loved one's name is inaccurate. He admits he'll never know every mistake, but VVMF will continue to make corrections the Department of Defense requests as space allows and will track exactly what is on the Wall and where the errors lie. That knowledge helps preserve the legacy of service members who died, Tetz said. And for him, the errors don't undermine the sheer power of 58,000 names etched in granite.

“They're not just names,” he said, “they're stories. There's a tale behind each of them.”

When David Kies touched the memorial that foggy day on the National Mall, he recalled the day in Vietnam that

changed his life.

It was a Sunday morning in 1967, and Kies and two other soldiers from the 173rd Airborne were on a trail, gathering munitions after a night ambush. Kies stopped to light a cigarette when a claymore mine exploded in front of him. The blast cut Kies down at the knees, but his friend, Eric W. Zoller, took most of the shrapnel. Kies remembers he and Zoller were thrown onto a helicopter “like a couple pieces of wood.” Zoller died en route to a field hospital, and a coding error listed Kies as killed in action, too. His name was among the first to be carved into the Wall. Zoller is one line down. A high school friend, William A. Beyer, is on the same panel. Kies feels honored to be alongside them, even mistakenly.

“I can keep them company, I guess,” he said.

After his injury, Kies returned to Wisconsin and was fitted with artificial legs, which he used to march in anti-war protests. He had a career as an artist for the Lands' End catalogs. For 33 years, no one invited him to a veterans reunion because his fellow service members thought he was dead.

Knowing that he's just one of many mistakes in the memorial only makes the Wall more like the war Kies remembers — inescapably human.

“A few errors out of 58,000 is pretty good for government work,” he said. “Humans aren't perfect. Humans make mistakes, in more ways than one.”

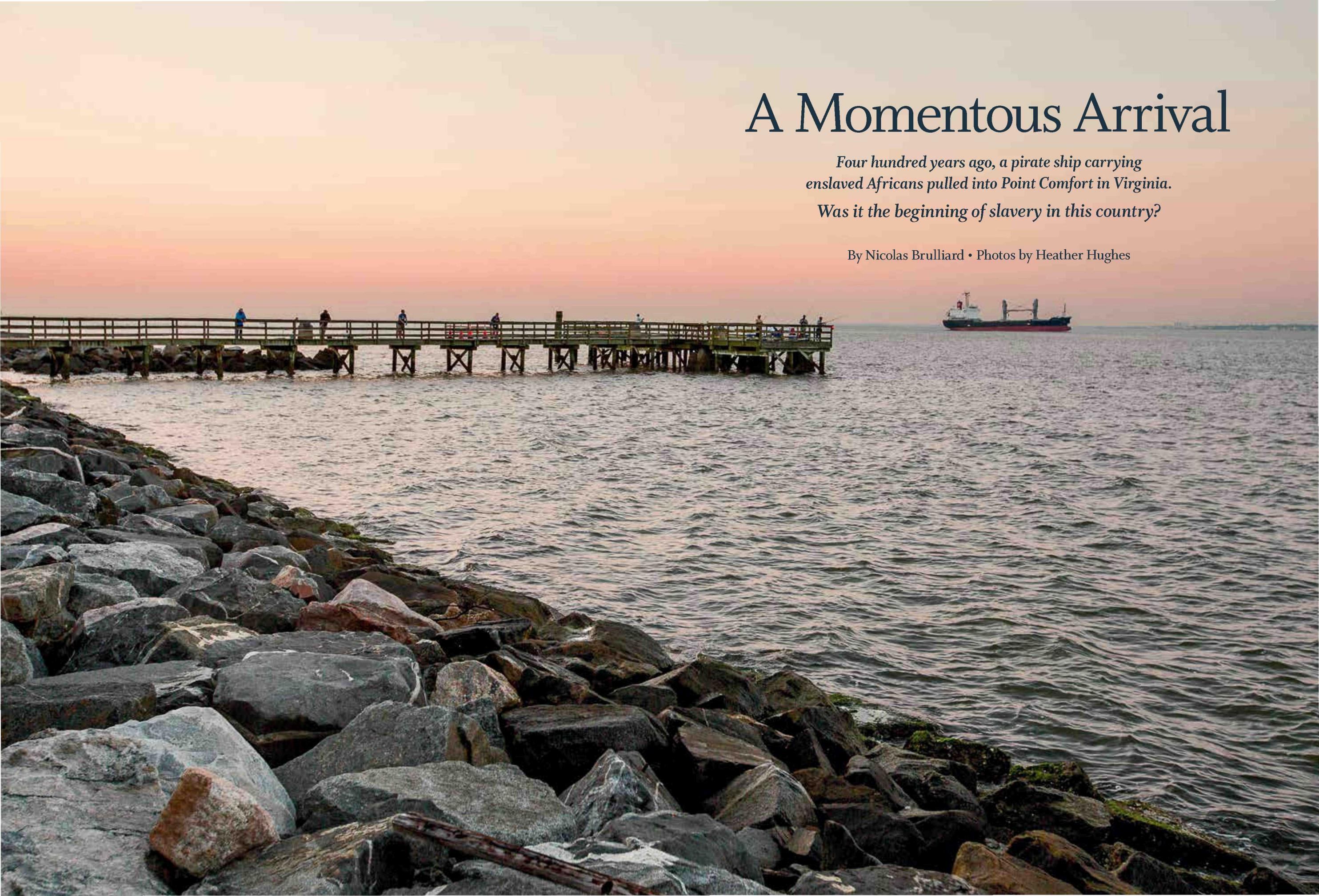
JACOB BAYNHAM is a freelance writer based in Montana.

A Momentous Arrival

*Four hundred years ago, a pirate ship carrying
enslaved Africans pulled into Point Comfort in Virginia.*

Was it the beginning of slavery in this country?

By Nicolas Brulliard • Photos by Heather Hughes



These days, not much happens on the T-shaped wooden fishing pier that juts out of the seawall south of Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia. Seagulls ride the breeze overhead, and the occasional motorboat glides by as anglers cast their lines for striped bass, white perch and rockfish.

But the tranquility of this spot belies its dramatic history: 400 years ago, the arrival of a ship here, where the James River meets the Chesapeake Bay, profoundly altered the course of what would become the United States of America. In late August 1619, a battered English ship called the White Lion docked at what was then known as Point Comfort with some unexpected passengers.

A few weeks earlier, the White Lion and the Treasurer, another privateer (a state-sanctioned pirate ship), had teamed up to attack a Spanish vessel known as the San Juan Bautista. The English mariners hoped the Spanish ship carried gold in its hold, but instead they found hundreds of enslaved Africans aboard. The pirates seized about 60 of them and eventually found their way to the Colony of Virginia. The White Lion got there first, its crew famished after months at sea. They sold a couple dozen of their captives to two of Virginia's wealthiest settlers so they could buy food.

Historians still debate whether slavery in this country started right then and there. Decades before slavery was institutionalized, were these Africans considered slaves or were they treated more like the colony's labor force of white indentured servants who were able to gain their freedom after years of servitude? Scholars disagree over the answer to that question, but they concur that the unplanned capture of the Africans and their arrival at Point Comfort paved the way for the subjugation of one race to another, the consequences of which the nation wrestles with to this day.

How to commemorate an event that led to two centuries of slavery is a delicate affair. Every August, a few hundred people congregate at the landing site for a day of prayers, speeches, and

traditional African music and dance. Participants throw flower petals in the water to honor the memory of Virginia's first Africans. It's an emotional day, and people often cry as they contemplate the ordeal of those who were taken by force from their homeland and transported in brutal conditions to a strange land, said Calvin Pearson,

a Hampton native and one of the annual event's main organizers. Pearson sees the first Africans as the ancestors of today's African American population, and he hopes that the 400th anniversary of



FOR YEARS, Calvin Pearson has campaigned for Point Comfort in Hampton to be broadly acknowledged as the site where Africans first landed in colonial Virginia 400 years ago. Previous pages: Engineer Wharf Fishing Pier. The pier was built around 1818, but historians believe between 20 and 30 enslaved Africans arrived at this location two centuries earlier.

their landing in Virginia will help turn Fort Monroe into a place of pilgrimage for African Americans interested in connecting with their roots.

"This is the true beginning of Africans in English North America," he said recently from the landing point, gazing in the direction the White Lion might have come from four centuries ago. "We call Point Comfort a sacred land."

*“My family goes all the way back to Cameroon. Sometimes I’m thinking:
‘Did some of my ancestors come through here?’”*

This is a big moment for Hampton, a city with a large African American population. Unlike Jamestown, the colony’s first permanent settlement, Hampton attracts only a small number of colonial history enthusiasts, but locals hope the anniversary will begin to change that. Their task has been complicated by the widespread perception that Jamestown, where several of the first Africans eventually lived, was the site of the Africans’ arrival. (As recently as February, film director Spike Lee made that erroneous claim during his Academy Awards acceptance speech.)

Pearson and others have worked hard to correct the record. They successfully pushed Jamestown staff to amend their exhibits, oversaw the installation of an updated historical marker at Fort Monroe in 2015 and are raising funds for the construction of a memorial. “We must remind people that this is the landing point and not Jamestown,” said William Wiggins, a local historian.

Fort Monroe National Monument, a national park site established just eight years ago by President Barack Obama, also has a lot riding on the anniversary. A 2014 study showed that most of the visitors to the site — a 328-acre park comprising a fort, historic buildings and beaches — are Virginians. Terry Brown, a 28-year National Park Service veteran who became Fort Monroe’s superintendent in 2016, has some ideas about how to draw tourists from farther afield and promote the fledgling park. He is overseeing the construction of a new visitor center, planning new tours and partnering with local organizations to fill the park calendar with events. “I want to create my own traditions,” he said.

The current fort, which was built in part by enslaved laborers, was completed in 1834 on the location of Fort Algernourne, a simple earthwork dating back to 1609. The fortification was never the site of a major battle, but a remarkable cast of historical figures passed through, from writer Edgar Allan Poe, who was stationed here as a soldier, to Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, who oversaw the end of the fort’s construction as a young West Point-trained engineer, to Confederate President Jef-

erson Davis, who was held in one of the fort’s prison cells at the end of the Civil War.

The site’s rich African American history extends well beyond the arrival of the first Africans. According to an account by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler of the Union Army, in 1861, just a month after the beginning of the Civil War, three enslaved men escaped to Fort Monroe from a nearby artillery position where

they had been put to work by their owner, a Confederate officer. In a momentous decision, Butler declared the men “contraband of war” and refused to return them. Thousands of enslaved people followed, heading for the fort — nicknamed “Freedom’s Fortress” — and other Union strongholds. By the end of the war, tens of thousands of freedom seekers had found safety behind Union lines. The contraband decision paved the way for President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the 1865 passage of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery.

“The African American history here overshadows in many respects the military history,” said Pearson, who calls Fort Monroe “one of America’s greatest African American national parks.”

Brown, the superintendent, has made a point of reaching out to Hampton’s African American residents, participating in community

events and helping fund school trips to the park. This year, he launched a black history tour that stops at sites in and around the monument. Brown, who is African American, wants visitors to make a personal connection to the park, as he has. “My family goes all the way back to Cameroon,” he said in his office, located in Lee’s former quarters. “Sometimes I’m thinking: ‘Did some of my ancestors come through here?’”



© LEBRECHT MUSIC & ARTS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THIS ILLUSTRATION, made by Howard Pyle more than a century ago, depicts the arrival of the first Africans at Jamestown. Until recently, historians thought the Africans landed there, a misperception that remains widespread.



NPS

Historians say the 1619 landing was a pivotal moment with a complex legacy. The discrimination, racial prejudice and race-based inequalities that remain pervasive today can be traced back to the first Africans' arrival, said Cassandra Newby-Alexander, a history professor at Norfolk State University. Just a few years after the pirates sold them, the Africans were listed as "others" in the colony's census and treated accordingly by Virginia's colonists. "America became a black and white society at that point. It got incorporated in the law, and it got incorporated in the psyche of Americans," she said.

In addition, the Africans came with skills that helped Virginia's plantations thrive at a time when the colony was floundering. This eventually led to the arrival of more African slaves in Virginia and other North American colonies who contributed greatly to the economy of the region before and after U.S. independence.

The San Juan Bautista, which left the coast of present-day Angola in early 1619, was one of dozens of slave ships that carried captives to Spanish and Portuguese colonies that year. The Portuguese and their local allies had waged a campaign in the Kingdom of Ndongo, in Angola's interior, that led to the capture of thousands of people. The war destroyed the kingdom's capital

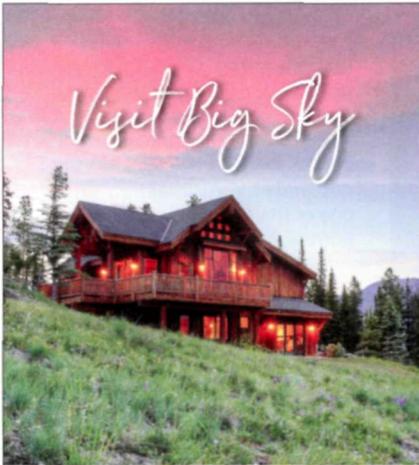
FORT MONROE

National Monument was established in 2011 by former President Barack Obama. The T-shaped pier marking the first Africans' landing site juts out from the seawall south of the fort (above). Right: A revised historical marker was installed at the site in 2015.



and decimated the population, said John Thornton, a professor of African American studies at Boston University.

Most of the details about the Africans' arrival in Virginia come from a single paragraph in a January 1620 news update that John Rolfe, an early English settler and by then the widower of Pocahontas, wrote to the Virginia Company's treasurer. In his letter, Rolfe mentioned that at the end of August 1619, the White Lion brought "20 and odd negroes," whom the colony's governor and its trade agent bought "at the best and easiest rates they could." The second ship, the Treasurer, arrived three or four days later, and according to the recent work of historian Martha McCartney,



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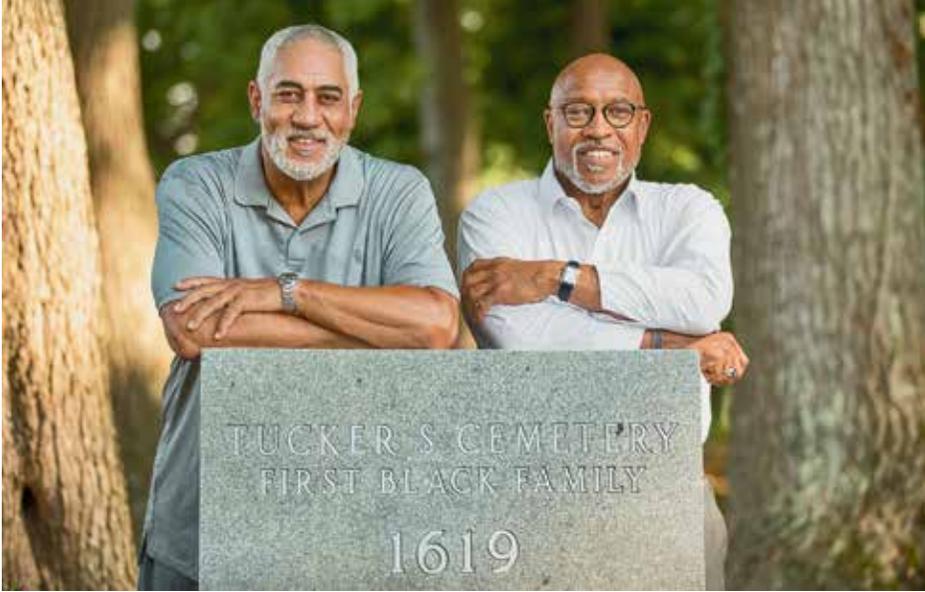
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WALTER JONES (left) and Verrandall Tucker (right) at the family's cemetery in Hampton, Virginia. Jones and Tucker believe they are descendants of William, one of the first children born of African parents in colonial America.



LOCAL HISTORIAN William Wiggins stands in a small cemetery at Bluebird Gap Farm, which historians believe was once the property of Capt. William Tucker. Anthony and Isabella, who were among the first Africans in Virginia, may have worked at the estate in the early 17th century.



TERRY BROWN, Fort Monroe's superintendent, stands in front of Robert E. Lee's quarters, which are now the park's headquarters. Brown has reached out to Hampton's African American community and started a black cultural tour. "I want to create my own traditions," he said.

Cramped spaces, lack of fresh air, disease, and inadequate food and water took a devastating toll. More than a third of the San Juan Bautista's original 350 enslaved Africans died on board.

the pirates may have traded two or three additional Africans with Virginia's colonists.

There is no known description of the captives, but accounts of similar journeys detail the harrowing conditions endured by enslaved people on their transatlantic journey, so it's likely they arrived emaciated and in poor health. Cramped spaces, lack of fresh air, disease, and inadequate food and water took a devastating toll. More than a third of the San Juan Bautista's original 350 enslaved Africans died on board. (The roughly 115 enslaved Africans who remained on the ship after the encounter with the White Lion and the Treasurer were sold in Mexico; before the attack, 24 had been sold in Jamaica.)



ENSLAVED LABOR helped build Fort Monroe, a large masonry fort that was completed in 1834 and named after former President James Monroe.

Little information exists about the Africans' early years in Virginia. The 1620 census shows that 32 Africans — 17 women and 15 men — were living in the colony. They were described only as "others not Christians in the service of the English." Four years later, their population had dwindled to 21 or 22, likely as a result of disease and attacks by Virginia Indians. In 1624, a dozen Africans are listed by name in the historical record. Those individuals include Anthony and Isabella, who are described as members of an estate in Elizabeth City. The property, now part of Hampton, belonged to Capt. William Tucker, a prominent settler. Anthony and Isabella are significant because by 1625, they are recorded as the parents of William. He and another unnamed child listed on that year's census are the first known children born of African parents in colonial America.

Archaeology has provided few additional details. An ongoing excavation of the Jamestown household of Capt. William Pierce, where an African woman named Angelo or Angela lived after arriving on the Treasurer, has yielded little aside from tools, pottery fragments and cowrie shells that may be connected to Angela. Historians say Bluebird Gap Farm in Hampton, which some believe to be the site of Capt. Tucker's estate, would be a good spot for an excavation, but digging there is a distant prospect because of limited resources.

Today, Bluebird Gap is a family attraction with farm animals, a playground and peacocks wandering the grounds. One late afternoon, I visited the farm with Wiggins, a former history pro-



SEVERAL UNMARKED graves were discovered in the Tucker family's cemetery when family members and local residents cleared the plot from overgrowth a few years ago. They are now marked with small stones and flags.

fessor at Hampton University, and we spoke to Adam Newland, the farm's manager. He told us that he had recently uncovered ancient bricks while installing a fence for a new turtle enclosure, but without formal research, the area's significance remains speculative. "The legend says there was a slave graveyard over there," Newland said, motioning toward the woods behind the turtle pen.

Historians who believe that the first Africans were slaves say that the Virginia colonists were very familiar with prevalent racism toward Africans in English society and knew slavery was growing in Brazil, Mexico and other colonies. They point to the fact that unlike white indentured servants, Africans had no written contract that guaranteed an end to their servitude and that the occasional African who later gained his freedom was the exception rather than the rule. They also note that the Africans were

THE OLD POINT COMFORT LIGHT, built in 1802 near the Africans' landing site, is the oldest standing structure at Fort Monroe. After the Civil War, the lighthouse was operated for about 10 years by William Roscoe Davis, one of the first enslaved people to seek refuge at Fort Monroe during the war.



The future of Fort Monroe was a big question mark in 2005. The site was on a list of U.S. military bases slated to be closed within six years, and commercial developers were salivating at the prospect of turning much of the peninsula into condominiums.

That's when NPCA, along with local activists and leaders, stepped in to push for the creation of a national park site protecting the historically important fort. Making nearby beaches part of the park also was critical, they argued, partly because only a fraction of the Chesapeake Bay's coastline (less than 1% today) is open to the public.

The campaign succeeded: In 2011, President Barack Obama established Fort Monroe National Monument, which includes a section of the beachfront. But NPCA has "unfinished business" at the park, said Pam Goddard, NPCA's senior Mid-Atlantic program director. The problem is that the beach is separated from the fort by an area called the Wherry Quarter. That concerns conservationists, who worry about inappropriate development there and would like to see the monument's two distinct parcels joined.

Virginia has agreed to donate 40 acres for that purpose to the Park Service, and the state's senators introduced a bill in July to enact the land transfer. To date, the agency has declined the gift, saying that it doesn't want to take on additional maintenance costs. Mark Perreault, the president of Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park, said that fear is unwarranted. Only a few buildings are located on the tract of land in question, and since they have no historical value, they could be razed to enhance the area's natural setting. "The federal government would get it for nothing, which is a pretty good deal," he said.

enslaved on the San Juan Bautista and were sold as commodities. "It does a disservice to the people that came here as slaves and the challenges they faced to call them anything other than what they were, which is slaves," said James Horn, president of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation and the author of "1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy."

Other historians contend that saying the Africans were slaves from the beginning negates the deliberate establishment of slavery by white colonists in the decades that followed the 1619 landing. Wiggins notes that the initial, limited opportunities Africans had to secure their freedom quickly vanished as the colony codified slavery through a series of laws and court rulings over the course of the 17th century. One of those decisions was a verdict on the escape of three servants from Virginia into Maryland in 1640. The two white escapees were sentenced to lashes and saw their indenture contracts extended by several years, but John Punch, who was black, received a harsher sentence. "He was told after being soundly whipped: 'You will serve for the rest of your life,'" said Wiggins, who views the ruling as a milepost in the transition toward institutionalized slavery.

Identifying descendants also can be contentious. It's likely that the first Africans had more children than the two documented in the census and that their descendants are still around today. But because the evidence is spotty, historians say tracing one's ancestry to the original Africans is an impossible quest. "There is a real frustration with how little is really known, and so there

NPCA
AT WORK

“He was told after being soundly whipped: ‘You will serve for the rest of your life.’”

is that temptation to fill in the story more,” said Beth Austin, a historian at the Hampton History Museum.

Some genealogy sleuths have attempted to close the gap. A few years ago, Kathryn Knight, a Florida-based land developer turned professional genealogist, discovered that her husband was a descendant of Margaret Cornish, who Knight believes arrived on the White Lion. Knight became obsessed with the story of Cornish and other original Africans. She pored over archives and books and started a databank to store the DNA profiles of people who thought they might be related to the first Africans. “I believe we’ll be able to find all the descendants, and I believe there are a lot,” she said. Knight published a book, “Unveiled: The Twenty & Odd,” about her findings, but historians who have looked at her research are not convinced, saying it’s nearly impossible to make such connections without a more detailed historical record and DNA material from the first Africans.

The strongest claim to a direct line to the first Africans is that of the Tucker family, who consider themselves descendants of William, the son of Anthony and Isabella. Tucker was, of course, the name of the owner of the colonial estate, and Tucker family

members believe that William took the moniker.

I met a Tucker, Carolita Jones Cope, at the family’s cemetery, which is located less than a mile from Bluebird Gap Farm — the supposed location of Capt. Tucker’s property. Cope’s late grandfather said the family’s ancestors lived there, and Cope’s cousin, who spent much of her adult life researching the lineage of the Tucker family, not only believed that Anthony and Isabella’s son was their relative but also thought he was buried in the family’s cemetery.

Cope, her relatives and local residents cleared the overgrown cemetery a few years ago. They located many unnamed graves and even unearthed a skull during the cleanup. The discoveries are tantalizing, but Cope isn’t keen on conducting further investigations to figure out whether William is indeed buried in the family plot.

“I’m so grateful that I’m a descendant of survivors, of people who had to fight to go through such a difficult experience,” she said while swatting mosquitos. “Let’s just try to let our ancestors rest in peace.”

NICOLAS BRULLIARD is senior editor of National Parks magazine.

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In national parks around the country, camera traps capture images that astonish, delight, inform, reveal — and have the power to change human behavior.

BY KRISTIN HENDERSON

candid cameras

Bears like baths. It turns out they don't just go to pools to drink, splash and frolic — they also slip into the water to scrub their faces and ears and rinse themselves clean. In this photo, shot in the backcountry of Yellowstone National Park, a mother grizzly shows her cubs proper hygiene in a so-called bear bathtub.

Wildlife photographers, no matter how discreet and experienced, could never get close enough to capture this quiet family moment. But camera traps can. Outfitted with infrared sensors, these cameras snap images and video whenever something moves in front of them. The equipment is relatively cheap and easy to use, and unlike humans, cameras don't get tired and never have to come in from the cold, heat or rain. They can stay out in the field, untouched, for months, until a magical moment unfolds before them.

The photos are amazing to see, but the images offer far more than aesthetic pleasures: They're frequently used by scientists, public policy experts and law enforcement officers. The bear bathtub camera trap, for example, provided new insights into bear behavior. Other camera traps have been used to fight poaching, prove the existence of elusive and rare creatures, and determine whether animals are healthy. Jaw-dropping photos such as a widely circulated shot of a mountain lion below the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles can raise awareness and sway public opinion, especially in the age of social media.

While camera traps can be used almost anywhere, the protected wildlife and landscapes of national parks provide one-of-a-kind subjects and backdrops. In turn, the parks, their visitors and the animals that live in these places reap the benefits of this powerful tool.

©MICHAEL NICHOLS WITH ROMAN DONOVAN AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION





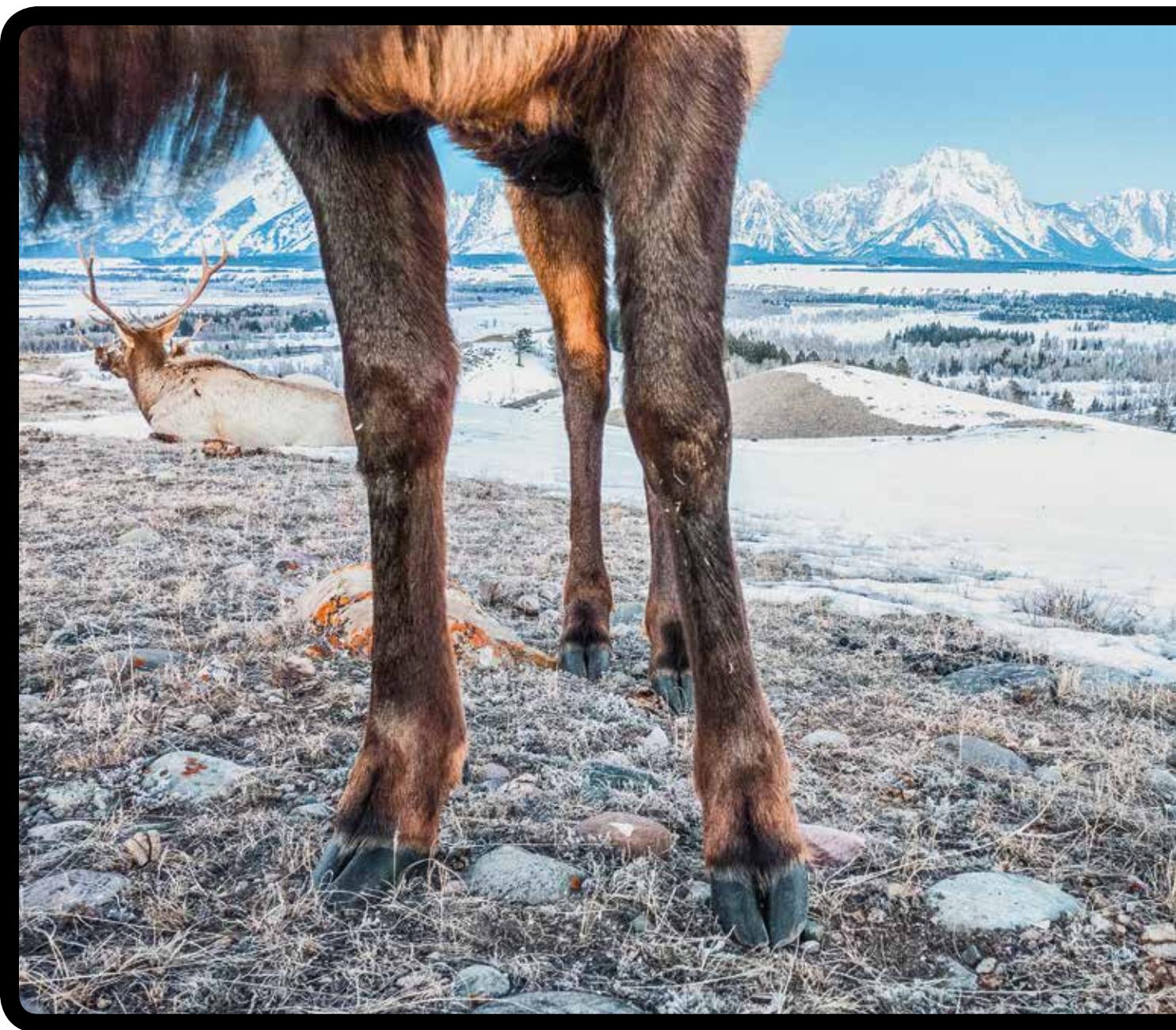
© MICHAEL DURHAM (3)

n First things first: You can't just waltz into a national park and set up a camera trap. To protect the land and wildlife, special permits and permissions are an absolute must-have. Photographer Michael Durham worked closely with the National Park Service when he was photographing insects at Big Hole National Battlefield in Montana. "I had a permit to run a UV light at night — and this brought in many insects," he said. "Any that flew within range of the camera automatically got its photograph taken." In John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in Oregon, Durham helped a Park Service biologist document pinion mice, which they discovered venture further north than previously known. In the process, Durham captured this action shot of a deer mouse. And in Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve in Idaho, Durham's photos helped scientists catalog the species using one of the park's caves. The images are now part of an educational video for visitors about the nearly invisible creatures that roam the park at night.

p It's like looking at a ghost. The Sierra Nevada red fox was prized by trappers for its thick, soft fur until California finally banned trapping in 1974. By that time, the fox hadn't been seen in Yosemite National Park for decades; everyone figured it had been wiped out there. Then one snowy day, a motion-sensor camera brought it jauntily back to life.



NPS



© CHARLIE HAMILTON JAMES/NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

n The one thing you can't control when you're camera trapping is the thing you need the most: luck. Photographer Charlie Hamilton James did everything he could to control the results he got. And then the elk did this. Bad luck, right?

Or is it? Sure, the top half of the elk is out of frame. But that gives you a sense of how close this 700-pound animal got to the strange contraption in a remote corner of Grand Teton National Park. In the background, another elk just chills. There's not another creature in sight all the way to the snow-capped peaks on the horizon.

It's an ordinary moment in the lives of two fellow mammals as they go about their day, and yet it's hard to take your eyes off the page. That's a pretty lucky shot.



© NPCA (2)



© NPCA

▲ **Brian Wuertz**, a former NPCA intern, sets up a camera trap on Longarm Mountain in Pisgah National Forest just outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Volgenau Wildlife Fellow Steve Goodman is now overseeing NPCA's camera trap project there.

▼ **When a bison met** its end near a road in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park, it was bound to attract scavengers, predators and tourists — a potentially dangerous combination. So workers moved the carcass to a remote location, where it became the perfect bait for a camera trap.

Photographer Charlie Hamilton James, who was in the park on assignment for National Geographic, seized the opportunity. His mission: Get as close as possible to the wild animals of the Tetons, while keeping the remarkable landscape in the frame.

All day long and into the night, the camera trap he set up near the bison carcass captured images like this one of a grizzly bear feeding while fending off ravens. Scavenger by scavenger, photo by photo, the carcass gradually disappeared.

▲ **If these look** like some of your own selfies (particularly the accidental kind), that's because camera trap photos are essentially wildlife selfies. That's especially helpful with animals that are dangerous or, like these two, people-shy.

In Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which straddles Tennessee and North Carolina, a young bull elk's handsome backside was preserved for posterity. The bobcat's peek-a-boo mugshot was snapped just outside the park in Pisgah National Forest.

NPCA staff in partnership with Wildlands Network are using these camera traps to help reduce collisions between animals and cars on Interstate 40. These high-speed encounters always end badly for the animals, and often injure humans, too.

Camera traps have helped confirm where the animals travel and the different approaches they take when trying to cross the highway. Armed with that data, NPCA Senior Program Manager Jeff Hunter is leading a coalition of federal and state agencies and tribal and nongovernmental organizations to improve the effectiveness of existing wildlife crossings and examine whether new structures are needed, such as overpasses or underpasses designed for animals.

"To have all these different agencies coming together in good faith, sitting around the table agreeing to work cooperatively, is very heartening," Hunter said. "The beneficiaries are the wildlife and the people who drive this road every day."



© CHARLIE HAMILTON JAMES/NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

▼ **The artificial lines** that humans draw between parks and the surrounding lands don't mean a thing to bison, elk and pronghorn herds. As the seasons change, they migrate as they always have, moving in and out of parks in search of food. Camera traps make it possible to witness this spectacle of nature. Here, a herd crosses the Lamar River in Yellowstone's rugged backcountry.



▲ **NPCA's Jeff Hunter** was thinking about kids, cameras and the thrill of discovery when he teamed up with the Park Service and Metro Nashville Public Schools this year. Their goal: to use camera traps to introduce students to parks and public lands careers.

Many of the young people had never been to a national park site until this project took them to Tennessee's Stones River National Battlefield. The eighth graders helped deploy camera traps and later returned to swap out the cameras' memory cards. That's when they got their first look at the data they were gathering, such as this cool shot of a coyote.

"Our students have been engaged with real science with real scientists gathering real data," says Jennifer Berry, Nashville schools' STEAM director. "This is the kind of learning a classroom does not provide. To see their expressions when they review the wildlife cameras is life-changing."

© RONAN DONOVAN/NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION



© INGO ARNDT

n It took a prop plane, a four-wheeler and lot of hiking for Ingo Arndt to get within sight of coastal brown bears on the tidal flats of Lake Clark National Park in Alaska. For months, he photographed them from a safe distance using a telephoto lens. His close-ups were fascinating, but the context was missing.

“It was important to show the bear in his habitat,” Arndt said. “Not many people expect a brown bear on the ocean coast.”

The problem was that if he zoomed out to show the landscape, the bears became very tiny. To cap-

ture the animals in their unusual environment, he needed to get next to them with a wide-angle lens.

“Of course it was not possible to go this close to the bear with the camera in my hand,” Arndt said. “That was the moment when I started to think about a remote camera car.” He turned a toy car into a tiny vehicle for his camera, which he maneuvered from afar.

Voila! The result is a mesmerizing face-to-face encounter with the bear and his world. And no one was hurt in the process.

p Camera traps tell a story with a happy ending in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, where fencing that often has five or six strands of barbed wire is a problem for pronghorn antelope.

If the bottom wire is too close to the ground, they can't squeeze under. And though the animals can run as fast as 60 miles an hour, they are not very good at jumping over fences. If they try to get over or under anyway, they can get injured or tangled up. Going the long way around uses precious energy during lengthy migrations.

NPCA staff, along with local landowners and hundreds of volunteers, are working to solve the problem by reducing the number of wires and installing smooth (rather than barbed) wires on the bottom that allow pronghorn to pass through but prevent cattle from leaving their pastures. Staff set up camera traps to see where barriers are interfering with pronghorn migration and to determine if the modified fences work. The proof is in the picture.



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KRISTIN HENDERSON is a writer based in Washington, D.C.

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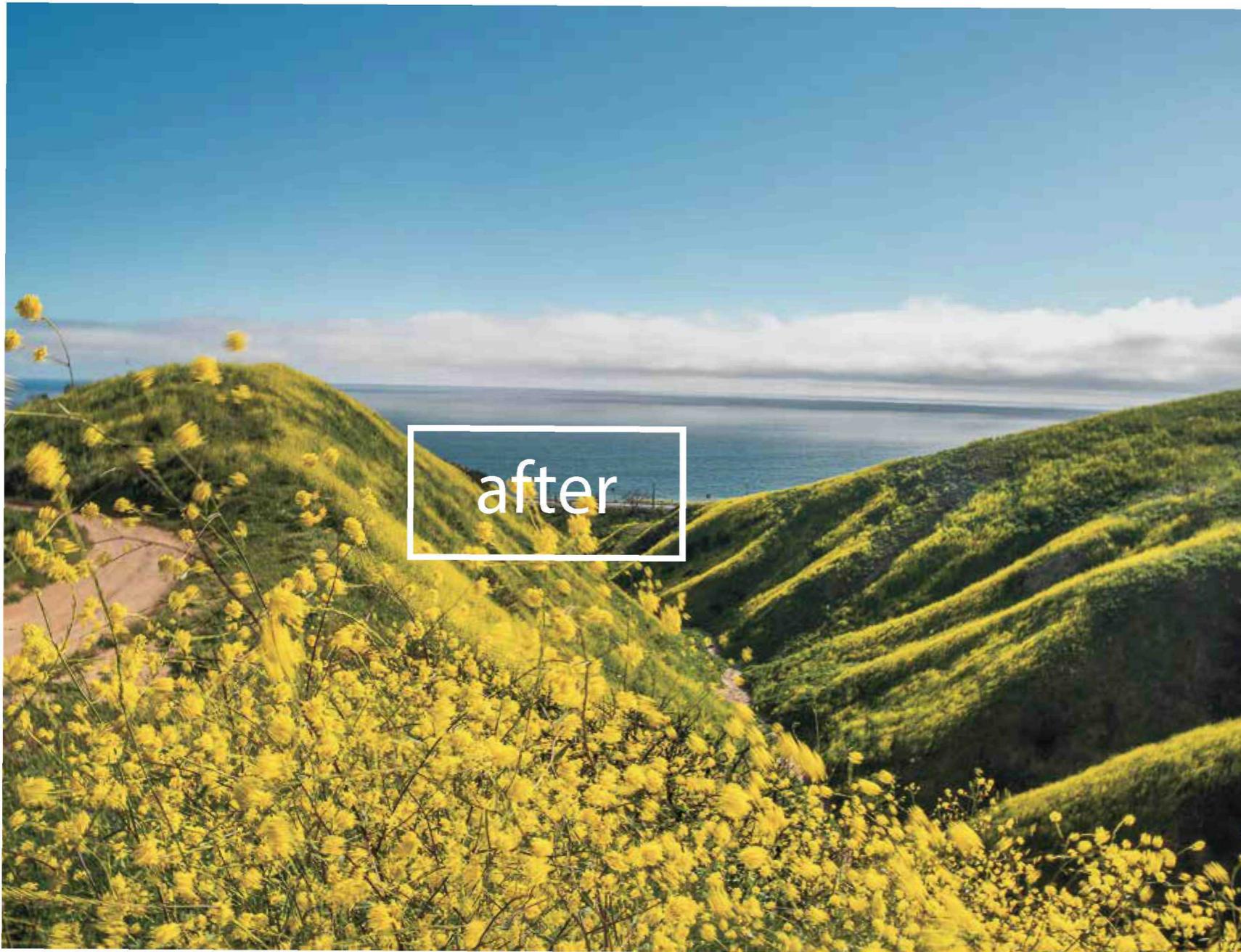
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MONTHS AFTER A DEVASTATING FIRE CONSUMED 100,000 ACRES IN AND AROUND LOS ANGELES' SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA, A TRAVELER FINDS NEW LIFE AND BEAUTY AMONG THE RUINS.

BY KATE SIBER • PHOTOS BY DAVID ZENTZ

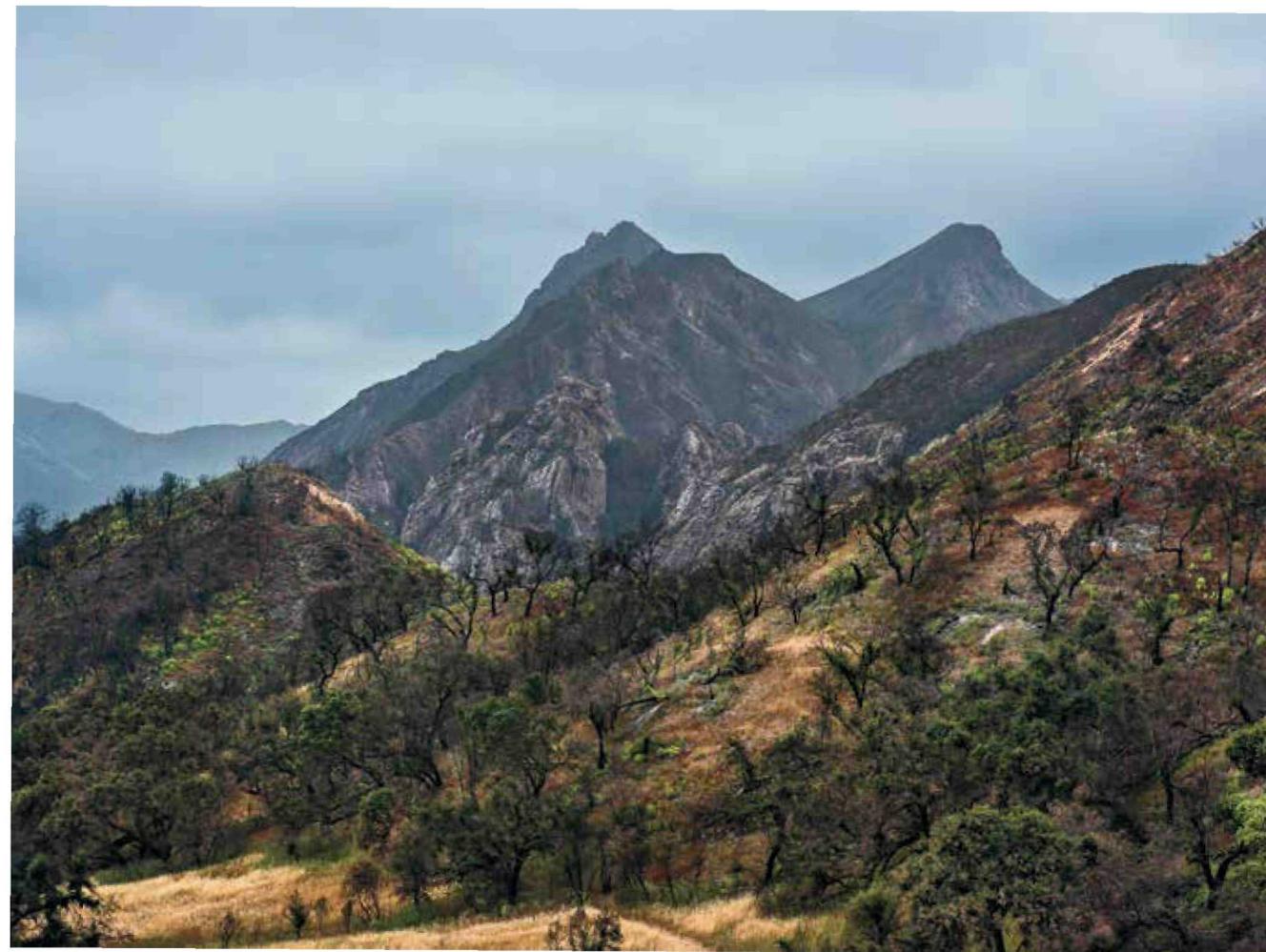
Just beyond the sun-bleached subdivisions of greater Los Angeles, the steep slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains rise into a pale blue sky. As I drive along narrow, twisting roads, the landscape unfolding before me starts to look like a war zone. Most of the hills have been charred by wildfire. Where the occasional home once stood, there's nothing but flattened ash. The skeletal remains of trees dot the ridges, and burnt cars and trucks sit in driveways like carcasses.

Much of this land is part of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a patchwork of federal, state, county and private property and the largest urban national park in the country. At more than 150,000 acres, it encompasses rugged 3,000-foot mountains, chaparral hills, ancient stands of live oak, serene grasslands, beaches and dunes. Last fall, however, the landscape was radically transformed when the Woolsey Fire ripped through, becoming the worst conflagration in the history of the park, Los Angeles County and Ventura County.

No one knows precisely what caused the Woolsey Fire to ignite northwest of the city near the Santa Susana Field Laboratory on the afternoon of Nov. 8. Within two hours, the flames engulfed 750 acres. The next day, the fire leaped across a 10-lane freeway and barreled south into the heart of the Santa Monica Mountains and toward the Pacific Coast and the mansions of Malibu.

Some residents were evacuated by helicopter as the fast-moving blaze enveloped their homes. Others drove through storms of flying embers. By the time the fire was fully contained nearly two weeks later, it had consumed 1,500 structures and nearly 100,000 acres, including almost 90% of the National Park Service's land. Three people were killed.

I watched the news of the Woolsey Fire with heartache. I have been captivated by the Santa Monica Mountains since learning about their most famous residents several years ago — not the movie stars but the mountain lions that manage to survive in one of the country's biggest cities. One collared cougar, P-22, crossed two major freeways to settle in 4,210-acre Griffith Park, the smallest known territory of any mountain lion. After



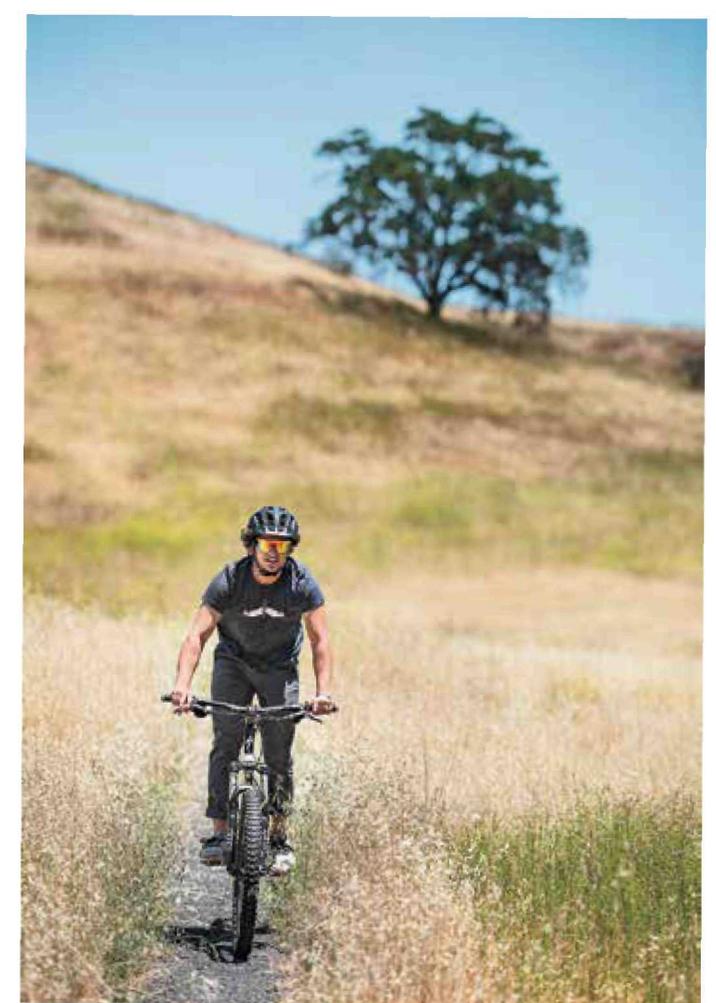
THE WOOLSEY FIRE swept through the Santa Monica Mountains last November, consuming 100,000 acres, including 90% of the National Park Service's land. Months later, charred trees and other signs of fire damage were apparent throughout the park (above). Right: Millions of people visit the national park site each year to hike, bicycle, swim, ride horses, and see the historical and natural sights. Mountain biking is permitted on many of the park's trails. Previous pages: An unusually spectacular wildflower bloom blanketed hillsides and meadows in the Santa Monica Mountains just months after the Woolsey Fire was extinguished. The fire, which ignited northwest of the city, took nearly two weeks to contain.

appearing in the December 2013 issue of National Geographic sauntering in front of the iconic Hollywood sign, P-22 has inspired a Facebook page, children's book and documentary film.

In late March, I flew to Los Angeles to visit the park in person. I wanted to see the landscape and how the blaze had reshaped it. Wildfires are a natural and essential part of this ecosystem, but big fires have swept through only once every century or so. With droughts, rising temperatures, the proliferation of flammable invasive species and a booming population of people who start more fires than ever before, the Santa Monica Mountains now burn much more frequently. Some areas of the park have burned 11 times in the last century.

"These plants are adapted to a fire regime, but we're experiencing way too much of it," Joey Algiers, the park's

restoration ecologist, told me when I met him on-site one day. "There are predictions that we'll experience more conditions like these, which means we would continue to see these really large fires." Algiers said that the increasing frequency of fire causes a feedback loop: Burn-scarred landscapes are more susceptible to invasive plants. Because many of the non-native species are highly flammable, they in turn ignite more often. In some



places, over the coming decades, Algiers expects to see whole areas morph from one ecosystem to another, like from shrublands to grasslands, in what's called "type conversion."

Before I left, I wondered if this might be a sad trip. I anticipated traveling through landscapes of eerie devastation, portents of global climate disruption. Over the course of four days, however, I found that while the Wool-



© KAREN MINNOT



HORSEBACK RIDERS pass burned hillsides on their way to the Paramount Ranch in March (above). Left: The fire produced nutrient-rich soil and that, along with abundant winter rains, led to the so-called superbloom. The writer walked by thousands of purple lupine flowers (pictured here) on one hike.



sey Fire was undoubtedly calamitous, destruction isn't the end of the story.

Soon after I arrived, after negotiating a snarl of Los Angeles' infamous traffic, I made my way to Solstice Canyon, which stretches north from the Pacific coast. An easy 2.5-mile loop trail winds along a stream to the ruins of a couple of historic homes that were ravaged by past wildfires then up onto a ridge above the canyon floor. Sunshine filtered through branches burnt black by the Woolsey Fire. As I walked, I immediately noticed that, in contrast to other national parks I've visited, the cast of visitors was notably diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age and style. The fleece-wearing set was outnumbered on the trail, and the people-watching was entertaining. "This is cool as f---!" I overheard a 20-something who looked like he could have been in a punk band say to his friends. "So glad y'all were down to hit this today!"

As I looped up onto the hillside, the crowd lightened, and I had the trail to myself. It rolled through the coastal sage scrublands, which the fire had turned into an undulating sea of blackened sticks. But the fire had produced nutrient-rich soil and that, along with abundant winter rains, had led to a rare occurrence: an unusually spectacular wildflower bloom. Thousands of purple lupines waved from the slopes like an ebullient stadium audience. Taking my time, I stopped repeatedly to admire the vibrant colors on display: the lipstick reds of Indian paintbrush, the pale white-violet petals of Catalina mariposa lily and droves of deep purple flowers.

The spindly stalks and yellow flowers of black mustard, a non-native species that some believe was planted by Franciscan padres along roads to help them find their way, also spread over the land. I know ecologists wince to see hillsides gilded in this tenacious species, but I couldn't help but feel euphoric. As I walked, views opened over the Pacific Ocean, which wore a slim mantle of clouds, and the low light of early evening lent the scene a dreamy quality. With no signs of the city in sight, it wasn't hard to imagine what this place must have looked like hundreds of years ago.

This land, one of only five areas in the world with a Mediterranean climate, has been providing for human beings for at least 10,000 years. Before colonization, the Chumash and the Gabrielino-Tongva prospered here.

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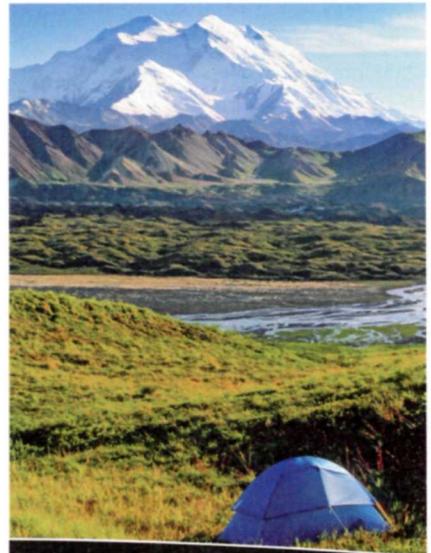
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NPCA at Work

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is stunning, fascinating and expansive, but it could be even bigger and better. For years, NPCA staff, conservationists, community members and political leaders have argued that expanding the park would protect important historic and cultural sites as well as some of the last remaining wild lands in the region.

The realization of that dream may be at hand. In March, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) reintroduced legislation that would create the Rim of the Valley Unit of the park, adding 191,000 acres and more than doubling the size of the recreation area.

“As more of this area is developed and open space diminishes, the wildlife it supports is increasingly at risk,” Schiff said in a statement when he introduced the bill. “Congress must preserve the Rim of the Valley for the next generations.”

An expanded park would promote the preservation and restoration of critical wildlife habitat and corridors used by mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats and other animals, supporters say. It would also create new outdoor opportunities in a metropolitan area with more than 17 million people. And it would stitch together disparate lands that tell the complex story of Southern California going back to its earliest inhabitants.

Similar legislation failed in the past, but the bill is moving ahead.

“It’s looking very promising,” said Dennis Arguelles, NPCA’s Los Angeles senior program manager, who led the effort to assemble a diverse, bipartisan coalition of supporters.

The Rim of the Valley corridor includes the mountains surrounding the San Fernando, Simi, Santa Clarita, Crescenta and Conejo Valleys, as well as parts of the San Gabriel Valley foothills. A collection of state, county and private land, the area would be collaboratively managed — like the current site — if added to the park. “What the Park Service brings to the table is its expertise in research, planning and community engagement,” Arguelles said.

The Rim of the Valley campaign is just one piece of NPCA’s work in the recreation area. The organization has teamed up with local groups to connect urban and underserved communities to the park. NPCA also has supported wildfire recovery efforts, working with corporate partners such as The Body Shop to help with habitat restoration.

They gathered acorns from oak woodlands, fish from the sea and game from the mountains, and they traded up the coast and as far as Arizona. Today, the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center, located in the park, hosts ceremonies, cultural workshops and other programs.

I was surprised to learn that many Angelenos don’t know that the wild terrain on the edge of their city is public parkland. The site’s unusual form may contribute

to the lack of awareness: The park weaves in and out of communities, and it is collaboratively managed by the Park Service, California State Parks, the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. One day, I stopped by the visitor center, which was built on the former site of a Chumash village, and overheard a woman say that she had lived in Los Angeles her whole life and had never been here — never even known about it. Luis Jimenez, the Park Service ranger on duty, nodded, unsurprised. He too hadn’t had much of an interest in or opportunity to visit parks before he scored an internship here in college, then assumed a full-time role.

“The Park Service is not something people think about when they’re living in Los Angeles,” he said. “People think the national parks are only the iconic pictures you see on Nat Geo.” He told me that he occasionally goes to the supermarket in his uniform and gets quizzical looks. “People are like, what are you doing here? This is L.A., not Yellowstone.” And yet, millions of people, including more than 20,000 schoolchildren, go to the park every year. Because it’s so close to an urban area, the Park Service considers it an important gateway where city kids and those with limited access to open space can enjoy the natural world.

In addition to providing places to play outside, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area protects everything from Chumash archaeological sites to old movie-studio properties. Sadly, the Woolsey Fire incinerated many of the park’s cultural gems, including the 1926 Peter Strauss Ranch, a historic vacation home

and amusement park; a museum full of archaeological artifacts, fossils and other collections at Rocky Oaks; and Western Town at Paramount Ranch, an Old West set that had been used for TV and movie filming since 1927. One overcast afternoon, I walked through the wreckage of Western Town. There wasn’t much there. A church and a railroad depot on the outskirts survived, but other than the remains of a washing machine (from a home that was destroyed in the fire) and scraps of deformed



A TEENAGER jumps into a swimming hole in Malibu Creek State Park (left). The national recreation area is a patchwork of federal, state, county and private property and the largest urban national park in the country. Below: Dean Arnold, right, a volunteer docent, leads a guided hike.



metal, it was little more than wispy ash.

The Park Service plans to rebuild the set as well as the Peter Strauss Ranch, but the recovery process will take years, and many are still reeling from the losses. Thirty Park Service structures burned down, including three houses that four park employees lived in, and Jimenez told me that among employees, a sense of sadness has lingered. Visitors also felt some grief. Many people had hosted weddings and events at Paramount Ranch. My Airbnb host, Anne Flanders, told me that she and her husband used to spend long lazy Sundays reading the paper in the shade of a eucalyptus grove that vanished in the

fire. Before I left Western Town, however, I noticed that a huge, mature live oak tree that had been scorched by the fire and looked dead was, against all odds, sprouting green growth from its charred branches.

It didn't take me long to figure out that the best way to see this park is on foot. One day, I persuaded my college friend Matt Jones, who lives in Los Angeles, to come with me on a hike up Sandstone Peak, the tallest mountain in the range. In his convertible, we zoomed around the back roads that curl through the mountains, but all routes to the trailhead seemed to be closed for repairs related to the fire and the storms that followed it. Foiled, we instead



headed to Point Mugu State Park, the westernmost section of the recreation area, arriving about an hour and a half after we set off from my Airbnb in Woodland Hills in western Los Angeles.

This region burned in 2013, but thick vegetation has already grown back. We climbed up the Overlook Trail through hills awash in greenery and flowers, inhaling the delicate scents of various blooms and watching as crows floated below us, their shadows cruising across the land. Matt pointed out a whale surfacing offshore. Before turning around, we stopped for a snack on a rocky knob dotted in yellow-bloomed giant coreopsis. Sitting on top of this singular knoll felt like lounging in an enormous flowerpot.

The next day, I figured out a way to get to the Sandstone Peak Trailhead on a remote two-lane highway winding through the countryside. After a dizzying climb up from the coast, it turned into a serpentine, one-lane (but two-way) road with hair-raising drop-offs. I honked before blind corners but still nearly collided with cars twice. When I arrived at Circle X Ranch, a former Boy Scout camp with several trailheads, a volunteer told me that rare waterfalls were flowing at the Grotto, so I decided to hike there instead.

Perhaps because it was a weekday afternoon, I had the path almost entirely to myself. A yellow-striped

MANY ANGELENOS don't know that the wild terrain on the edge of their city is public parkland. At more than 150,000 acres, the recreation area encompasses rugged 3,000-foot mountains, chaparral hills, ancient stands of live oak, grasslands, beaches and dunes.

snake slithered through a stream right in front of me, and a bird swooped so close to my head, I could hear its wings slice the air. I passed by what some call a ghost tree, a tree that had been so completely incinerated that its roots vanished, creating a hole in the ashy soil.

The final leg down to the Grotto requires hand-and-foot clambering over a stretch of boulders. Since I was alone, I felt a hint of anxiety, and sure enough, a rock dislodged near the bottom, and a zing of adrenaline shot through my body. I went tumbling, arriving — unceremoniously and a bit scraped up — in a garden of rocks threaded by a vigorous stream. Branches formed an intricate latticework overhead, and beams of afternoon sunlight illuminated the small insects floating about, turning them jewel-like. I entered a small cave and circled around to an alcove behind a cascade. Beads of water rained down from the walls and streamed off vines. In the murky darkness, all I could hear was the sound of water.

On the way back, I climbed through burnt shrubs and

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lush meadows. Buttresses of sandstone surrounded the valley like a council of elders, and crickets and other insects heralded the arrival of evening.

When I read about the losses borne of climate change, I often think of them as permanent, leaving a void. The devastation that this powerful fire wrought made me fear for the future of this landscape — for all of our futures. At the same time, the bold, fleeting beauty of the verdant growth and a possibly once-in-a-lifetime bloom reminded me that there is so much more uncertainty — and possibility — than I usually believe. The future has not yet been written.

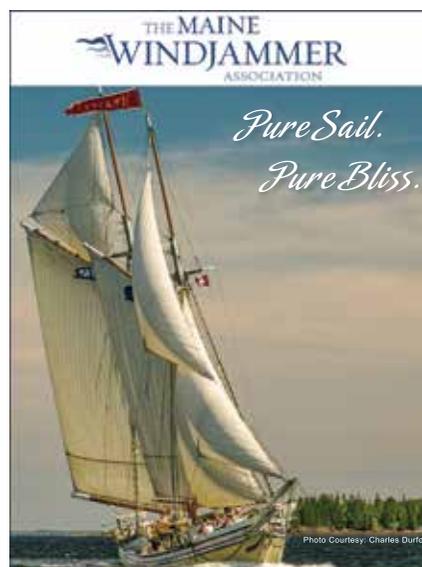
As I neared the trailhead, I noticed a pair of small butterflies chasing each other about. They landed in the middle of the trail right in front of me, opening and closing their wings in a mysterious rhythm. Then suddenly, they rose, and as easily as they had alighted, they set off toward some unseen destination, and I carried on toward mine.

THIS MOTHER-DAUGHTER

duo were among the many visitors who flocked to the park during the rare superbloom in the spring.

KATE SIBER is a correspondent for Outside magazine and the author of a children's book, "National Parks of the U.S.A."

DAVID ZENTZ is a photographer based in Los Angeles.



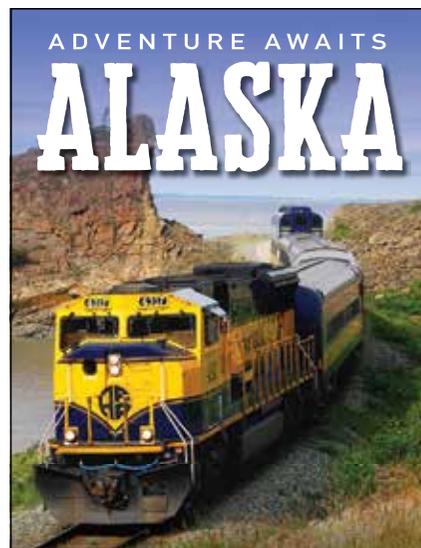
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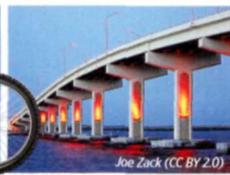
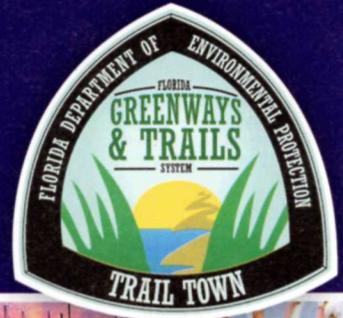
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Playalinda Beach on Canaveral National Seashore near Titusville, on Florida's Space Coast.
Courtesy Dawna Thorstad, for Titusville/Launch From Here

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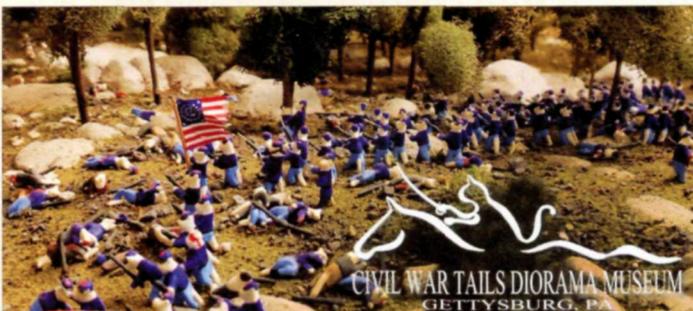
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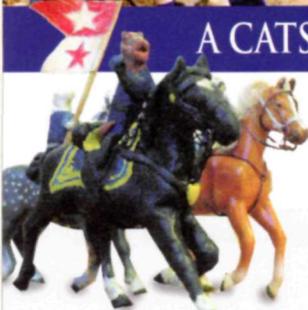


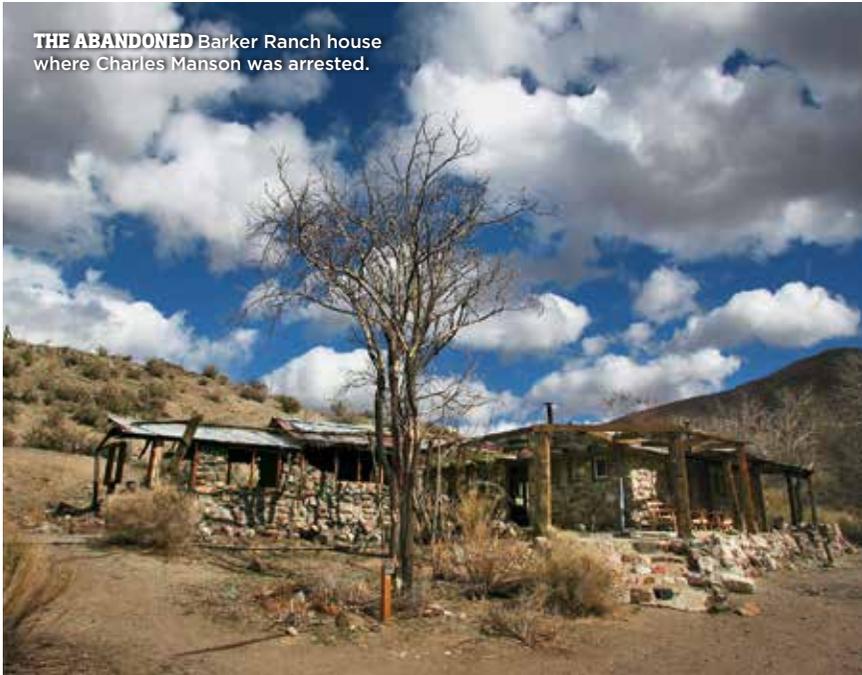
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THE ABANDONED Barker Ranch house where Charles Manson was arrested.

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A Mystery in Death Valley

Fifty years ago, rangers in a California national park helped apprehend a band of hippie outlaws hiding out in the desert. Weeks later, they learned how big of a catch it was.

DICK POWELL WAS JUST starting his workday at the Wildrose Ranger Station in what was then Death Valley National Monument when the call came over the radio: The Michigan loader was on fire. The maintenance crew had been using the brand-new piece of heavy machinery to fix some roads near a dry lakebed called the Racetrack Playa. As they arrived at the job site that morning, flames were still licking at the loader's wheels. The crew discovered a cut fuel line, an empty gas can and tire tracks leading away from the scene. Arson.

It was mid-September 1969, another sunny morning in California's vast inland desert. As the day heated up, rangers poked around the crime scene gathering evidence, then started to fan out across the park, searching for the culprits.

Powell didn't know who could have set fire to the machine, or why. But he knew someone was up to no good in his park, and he wasn't going to stand for it. He was 27 years old and hadn't received any formal law enforcement training, but he had good instincts, his daughter Lenox Powell said of her father, who died in 2017. "He took to this search like a dog to a bone," she said. "Just wouldn't give it up."

Powell and his National Park Service colleagues joined forces with a small band of California highway patrolmen and Inyo County sheriff's deputies. Right away, they found clues that the arson on the Racetrack Playa wasn't an isolated incident. They discovered a rental car from Los Angeles that had been abandoned after it crashed into a tree. They found campsites strewn with trash, food and tattered clothing. They followed a maze of tire tracks, turning up stolen vehicles and dune buggies hidden in the brush. Powell and his fellow investigators questioned other park visitors, miners and local residents. Had they seen anything out of the ordinary?

For weeks, the informal alliance of park rangers, patrolmen and deputies roamed across thousands of square miles in and around the park, over mountain passes, through dusty small towns and up rugged canyons. They worked overtime and overnight on stakeouts and long drives to link the growing number of puzzle pieces.

Gradually, an unsettling picture came into focus. Some park visitors reported that a ragtag bunch of young

people who had camped near them had stayed up all night driving dune buggies. The local sheriff questioned and issued warnings to some hippies who were panhandling in town and trying to sell marijuana to high schoolers. Others said they saw a suspicious group crowded into a dingy, abandoned cabin on the old Barker Ranch. Their long-haired leader wore robes and preached weird sermons, and his followers were wandering around the desert naked.

By the second week of October, Powell and his colleagues had enough information to start making arrests. In two days of raids on the Barker Ranch, a small force of park rangers, highway patrolmen and sheriff's deputies rounded up 26 people on suspicion of arson, vandalism and grand theft auto. During the October 12 raid, a patrolman found the leader hiding under the bathroom sink. When asked his name, the man replied, "Charles Manson."

The name meant nothing to Powell and the other officers. They wouldn't know until weeks later that they'd just apprehended the most wanted murderer in America.

Earlier that summer, cult leader Charles Manson had directed his followers to murder actress Sharon Tate, businessman Leno Labianca and his wife Rosemary, and six other people in a brutal killing spree. Through confessions, testimonies and trials, it emerged that the random murders were all part of Manson's plan to instigate an apocalyptic race war, abscond with his followers — who called themselves the Manson Family — to a subterranean paradise hidden somewhere beneath Death Valley, and emerge in the aftermath to rule over the survivors.

By mid-September, most of the Manson Family had fled the city and assembled in decrepit squatters' camps and mining cabins in and around

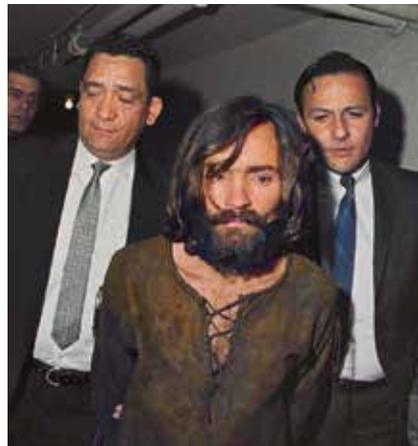
"Death Valley could well have had its own blood bath, had the officers provided the opportunity."

Death Valley to await the next chapter of Manson's dark plan. Los Angeles authorities, meanwhile, had made little headway: They'd erroneously ruled out any connection between the Tate and Labianca murders, and detectives soon exhausted their leads.

Terror and speculation gripped Los Angeles that summer and fall, but news of the Tate-Labianca murders hadn't made much of a splash 250 miles away in Death Valley. Even if rangers had followed the headlines, they wouldn't have read anything linking the bedraggled kids arrested at the Barker Ranch to the grisly murders in Los Angeles.

But once in custody, one of the women who had murdered Sharon Tate bragged about the crime to her cellmates, who promptly informed the guards. It was the definitive break in the case: On December 1, Los Angeles authorities announced that the suspects in the Tate-Labianca murders were a bunch of hippies led by a delusional prophet named Charles Manson — and

CHARLES MANSON in 1969 as he is escorted to his arraignment on conspiracy-murder charges.



they were already in custody in the Inyo County Jail.

"It came as a terrible shock to the Inyo officers when the vicious record of the Family ... came out into the open," wrote Bob Murphy, the park's superintendent in 1969, in a book called "Desert Shadows" about the Manson Family's apprehension. "Death Valley could well have had its own blood bath, had the officers provided the opportunity."

Manson and four of his followers were eventually convicted of first-degree murder for the deaths of their nine victims and sentenced to death. Their sentences were commuted to life in prison following the passage of a law that outlawed the death penalty in California. Manson died at age 83 in 2017.

In the end, the Manson Family misjudged Death Valley National Monument as the perfect place to hide out. It was vast and remote, but they failed to account for the dedication of people like Dick Powell and his fellow desert-dwellers. "My dad was actually the first person to suspect that the arson was part of something much bigger," Lenox Powell said.

"That the Manson folks were out raising hell with dune buggies, vandalizing park property and damaging the pristine beauty? That really ticked him off," she said. "Death Valley is too special and too delicate. My dad's attitude was: If you're going to mess with this place, we will hunt you down, and we will find you."

JULIA BUSIEK has worked in national parks in Washington, Hawaii, Colorado and California. She lives in Oakland.

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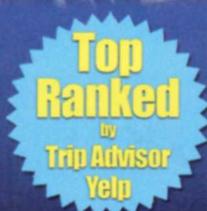
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