

National Parks

The Magazine of
the National Parks
and Conservation
Association

July/August 1994

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NAFTA's Aftermath
Overflights
The New World Mine



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who participated in March for Parks 1994,
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thanks the corporations that made it possible:



National parks

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Vol. 68, No. 7-8
July/August 1994
Paul C. Pritchard, Publisher

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Established in 1919, the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) is America's only private, nonprofit citizen organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the U.S. National Park System.

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JEFF HENRY

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EDITOR'S NOTE

An unintentional theme that emerged as we put this issue together is that of borders. The story on NAFTA and lands along the U.S.-Mexico border fits most obviously into this theme, but the thread continues through the other features as well. "Fool's Gold" is about a proposed mine just outside Yellowstone's northeastern border that threatens the park. And the article on overflights raises the question of where a park boundary ends—is the airspace above a park considered to be within its borders? Whether between nations or between lands managed by different entities, borders are frequently assailed by conflicting agendas and demands. Likewise, most threats to the national parks originate outside their borders.

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OUTLOOK

Paying for the Parks

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS and foreign tourists are now heading to our national parks for summer vacation. For many people, their visit will raise questions about entrance fees. Are fees always collected? Does everybody pay the same fee? Where does the money go?



DUPONT PHOTOGRAPHERS

In the 35 percent of parks that collect them, national park entrance fees are low by any standard and affordable for virtually everyone. In Grand Teton, Yellowstone, and Grand Canyon, visitors pay \$10 per car per week; at most parks the fee is half that. Only about half of the total visitors to these parks pay an entrance fee—the rest hold annual passes or are small children or seniors. And, as often as not, no ranger is present at the gate to collect the fee. As a result, revenues received from fees are somewhat less than they could be.

In April the Clinton Administration proposed legislation to address some of these problems and raise the total amount of revenue for the parks. One of the biggest problems with the current arrangement is that entrance fees go to the federal treasury rather than to the parks themselves, a situation that gives understaffed parks little incentive to collect fees. The administration proposal would ensure that a portion of the fees returns to the parks, and NPCA has long supported this concept. It would also allow the secretary of the interior,

rather than Congress, to administer all fees paid by park users.

NPCA's position on the proposed legislation is mixed, however. Although the proposal fixes some chronic problems and would clearly produce much-needed additional funds, we believe it unfairly places the

burden on the public. Concessioners, utilities, filming companies, and commercial tour operators generate millions of dollars by using the parks, and many pay as little as \$50 per year.

NPCA has been the leader on the issue of concessions reform, and with any luck we will see President Clinton sign meaningful reform into law this year. And last year, NPCA convinced Congress of the need to consider commercial use fees for the tour bus companies that generate huge profits in the parks and pay very little for the privilege. But before the public is asked to pay higher entrance fees, commercial users such as utilities and filming companies should be considered as sources of additional revenue.

We do support the Administration's initiative to review the current fee structure. The real question is who should be asked to take the first steps in providing this revenue, the commercial users or the visiting public? We say the commercial users should go first; then the administration should evaluate a fair fee structure for the public.

President, NATIONAL PARKS AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

"Canyon of the Cat"
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L E T T E R S

On the Right Track

I agree wholeheartedly with Alfred Runte's visionary and practical analysis of the role of railroads in the parks ["Trains for Parks: A Second Chance," March/April 1994]. The need for the reduction of automobiles in the parks is clear, and railroads provide a compelling alternative. Runte seems to be calling for legal regulations on automobile access to parks and governmental support for railroads. While I would support such strategies, I believe that people go to parks to get away from the crowd and do not want to sit in neat rows with other visitors. Runte's proposals must be part of a larger effort to reshape Americans' personal and cultural orientations toward the parks.

*Steve Holmes
Ithaca, NY*

I read with great interest the article "Trains for Parks: A Second Chance." On two of my three visits to Alaska, I enjoyed the Alaska Railroad to Denali. However, I was unaware that rail transportation was available at Glacier and Grand Canyon. I drove to both last October but would have used rail if I had known. I will ride the rails next time.

*William P. Williamson
Cincinnati, OH*

I applaud and second Runte's arguments for expanding rail access to our national parks. As park units adopt in-park bus and shuttle systems to reduce congestion and air pollution, there should be opportunities to investigate renewed rail links at these places.

*William J. Neff
McLean, VA*

Shameless

I believe that Robin Winks' article "Sites of Shame" [Forum, March/April 1994], recommending that "disgraceful episodes from our past be included in the park system," can justly be labeled "pornographic," for clearly its proposition does and its consummation would provide intense gratification for America-haters.

We could, for example, designate a site to commemorate the black origins of slavery and black African support of the slave trade, without which slavery might not have been economically feasible. Then, since all significant evidence supports this conclusion, we should note an important medical episode and designate some cemetery to commemorate black Africa as the site of the origin of AIDS. Some people might say that such examples are warped and malicious ways of commemorating a people's progress, but, as Winks says, "we cannot omit the negative lessons of history."

*Ed Rosenblum
Brooklyn, NY*

NPCA gratefully acknowledges the following corporations, foundations, and friends for their generous support of NPCA's 75th Anniversary Dinner, "A Salute to Park Heroes", in San Francisco on May 19, 1994. We also extend special thanks to Maryon Davies Lewis and the Honorable William A. Newsom for their efforts as dinner co-chairs.

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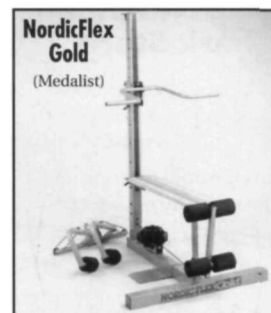
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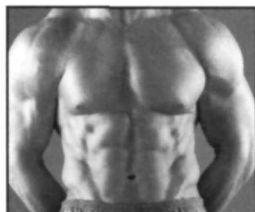
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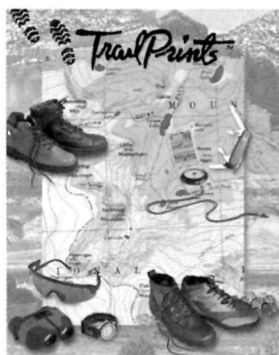
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Hells Canyon in Limbo

In reference to your article on making Hells Canyon a national park ["Salvation for Hells Canyon," March/April 1994], we are convinced you are wrong to seek national park status. National park status will increase the usage rate of the area. We have traveled to many sites that we would not have otherwise merely because of national park designation. Hells Canyon could not sustain high visitation. Facilities there are almost nonexistent. To put in even a parking lot could take years of nonstop bulldozing, destroying the entire point of access. We agree with Idaho Governor Andrus that Hells Canyon is one of those places where increased access would completely destroy its beauty.

*Bob and Carla Richardson
Moscow, ID*

Hunting Rights

I would like to respond to the letter written by Kelly Dietrick in the March/April 1994 issue. According to a recent article that I've read, hunters contribute more to conservation and the economy than any other group. I find Dietrick's statement that "too many people take advantage of hunting rights" to be ambiguous. I would like to assume that the writer is referring to poachers. Poachers are not hunters; they are criminals. There is no logic in holding a large group of responsible citizens accountable for the criminal activities of a few. Similar charges could be leveled against hikers, campers, cyclists, and boaters, since certain elements of these groups also contribute their share of environmental destruction. I am proud that I am a hunter. I feel that I have a better understanding of nature since I choose to interact with it rather than stand by as a mere observer.

*Doyle Rust
Morrison, TN*

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NEWS

SENATE APPROVES DESERT PROTECTION

Vast tracts of desert land in southeastern California may finally receive the park and wilderness protection long sought by NPCA and other environmentalists.

By a margin of 69 to 29, the Senate voted April 13 in favor of the California Desert Protection Act, which would create more than 7 million acres of wilderness. Senate approval of the measure is an impressive triumph for Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), whose main campaign promise two years ago was to push this legislation through Congress.

"Over the years, NPCA has unwaveringly supported the protection of the California desert and the diverse geology and wildlife found there," said NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard. "I salute Senator Feinstein's tireless efforts. She and the other sponsors of the bill have shown us that the conservation ethic still exists and that strong conservation measures are achievable."

The Senate bill, now before the House in a slightly amended form, would expand Death Valley and Joshua Tree national monuments and redesignate them as national parks; preserve 1.5 million acres of the Mojave Desert as a national park; and preserve another 4 million acres of federal land as wilderness. Some of this land has already been managed as wil-

derness for more than a decade without the formal designation. The House bill also includes in the Mojave park a 276,000-acre valley in the East Mojave that was deleted in the Senate version.

These three parks encompass "just an incredible place," Feinstein said. "There will be mountain ranges, dry lakes, cinder cones, badlands, washes,



Sand dunes along the Amargosa Range in California's Death Valley, along with other desert lands, may soon be given national park status.

mesas, buttes, lava beds, caves, and one of the most complex sand dune systems anywhere." The California desert is also home to the threatened desert tortoise and hundreds of other wildlife species. Thousands of archaeological sites can be found there as well.

This benign picture was on the verge

of being destroyed by off-road vehicles, poisonous mining waste, and cattle grazing, environmentalists claimed. A desert protection bill was first introduced in 1986 by former California Sen. Alan Cranston but went nowhere because of political infighting.

The 1992 election of Feinstein and her colleague Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), another proponent of desert protection, and the support of President Clinton and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt allowed the California desert to become a priority in the legislative arena.

The bill's opponents have argued that these new parks will be extremely costly at a time when the National Park Service suffers from downsizing and maintenance backlogs. "One does not go out and buy a Cadillac when one cannot make payments on the family Ford," said Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.).

But funding for the new parks is there, Babbitt has promised, available from existing budgets. "We'll pay as we go," he said. "The California Desert Protection Act will pass this year."

The House version of the bill was approved May 4 by the House Natural Resources Committee in a 28-14 vote. Although all four House members whose districts encompass the California desert are vehemently opposed to the bill, Committee Chairman George Miller (D-Calif.) stated that protection of the desert is his "highest priority"

CARR CLIFTON

and that he will work hard for quick passage.

"We've had Dianne put her shoulder to the wheel and just insist that this legislation was going to come out of Congress this session," Miller said. "We are sending that bill to the president's desk, and he has said over and over again that he will sign it when it comes."

In a somewhat contentious debate on the House floor May 17, members discussed controversial differences between the two bills. An amendment pushed by the National Rifle Association and the Congressional Sportmen's Caucus to allow hunting in the Mojave park may have more supporters in the House than in the Senate, where the amendment was quashed before it was formally introduced. Strongly opposed to the hunting amendment, NPCA and others are working to defeat it in the House.

Provisions that were approved by the Senate to allow cattle grazing to continue in the Mojave and Death Valley parks indefinitely also were adopted by the House Natural Resources Committee. The bill as introduced would have phased out grazing after 25 years. Rep. Bruce Vento (D-Minn.) is expected to sponsor a floor amendment that limits how long grazing will be allowed.

The Senate approved controversial language offered by Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.) that allows the military to continue training flights over certain desert lands. NPCA and other conservationists say that overflights disturb wildlife, natural quiet, and other park values and are concerned that this language exempts these lands from the protective restrictions of the Wilderness Act and other land management laws. Similar language permitting these overflights is expected to be introduced in the House.

NPCA will fight such weakening amendments and is hopeful that House passage of the bill, as well as Clinton's approval, is imminent.

"[It] will be a monumental achievement for Senator Feinstein, for the people of California, and for the people of this nation to have the establishment of these parks," Miller said.

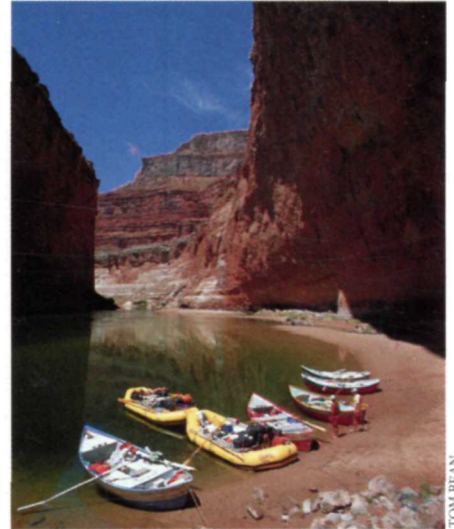
CONCESSIONS REFORM GOES TO HOUSE FLOOR

Reform of the national park concessions system, a priority for NPCA for two decades, may be put to a vote on the House floor soon.

The House version of a Senate reform bill cleared the House Natural Resources Committee by voice vote May 11, after several amendments were defeated. At press time, action on the House floor was likely to occur in June. The Senate passed its version of the measure in late March by a 90-9 vote.

Companies that provide food, lodging, and other services at national parks pay only a pittance of their revenues in franchise fees to the government—money NPCA says should be spent on the parks. The legislation would require large concessioners to compete for contract renewals, which would increase fee revenue to the parks by an estimated \$40 million annually.

"The House bill contains all the key provisions of the Senate bill," said Bill Chandler, NPCA director of conservation policy. "We were particularly gratified to see the committee defeat an



Outfitters in Grand Canyon and other parks are affected by concessions reform.

amendment that would have maintained federal real estate subsidies for concessioners who erect buildings in the parks under their contracts."

The amendment, offered by Rep. Austin Murphy (D-Penn.) and supported by Reps. Jim Hansen (R-Utah) and Don Young (R-Alaska), would have continued costly public buyouts of concessioners when contracts change hands.

NEWSUPDATE

▲ **Home to Yellowstone.** The gray wolf may return to Yellowstone National Park as early as October under a plan developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After more than 20 years of study and debate, the Interior Department is recommending the release of 15 wolves in the park this fall. By 2002, about 100 wolves will be restored to the area. NPCA hails the plan as a resolution to federal wolf extermination in the 1930s, although concerns remain about the number of roads and human activities near den sites.

▲ **Parks and the President.** In April President Clinton celebrated Earth Day at Meridian Hill Park in Washington, D.C. The park was reclaimed

from drugs and violence by a local friends group. Clinton highlighted environmental feats during his administration, including the addition of San Francisco's Presidio to the Park System and a decision to protect parks from the noise of overflights.

▲ **More on overflights.** This summer, the National Park Service and the Federal Aviation Administration will craft a plan to regulate the impacts of air tours on parks. Write to the FAA in support of natural quiet in parks. (For points to include in your letter, see story on page 24.) Send comments to FAA, Office of General Counsel, Rules Docket #27643, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20591.

NPCA's Utah members had asked Hansen not to offer this industry-promoted amendment, which was defeated in a 23-17 vote despite unanimous Republican support.

One industry criticism is that long-time concessioners, especially "mom-and-pop" ventures, will be driven out of business by reform. In response, the House bill allows small businesses annually grossing \$500,000 or less the preferential right to renew their contracts if they meet tightened performance standards.

The Senate version gives all guides and outfitters, such as river rafters, this right, regardless of their gross revenues. The House version does not include the rafter exemption. An effort by Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) to recoup the Senate language failed.

NPCA and the authors of the bill are confident that, by increasing competition among vendors, reform will offer park visitors even higher quality service. "The present [concessions] system is not the best for the park visitor," said Sen. Robert Bennett (R-Utah) on the Senate floor.

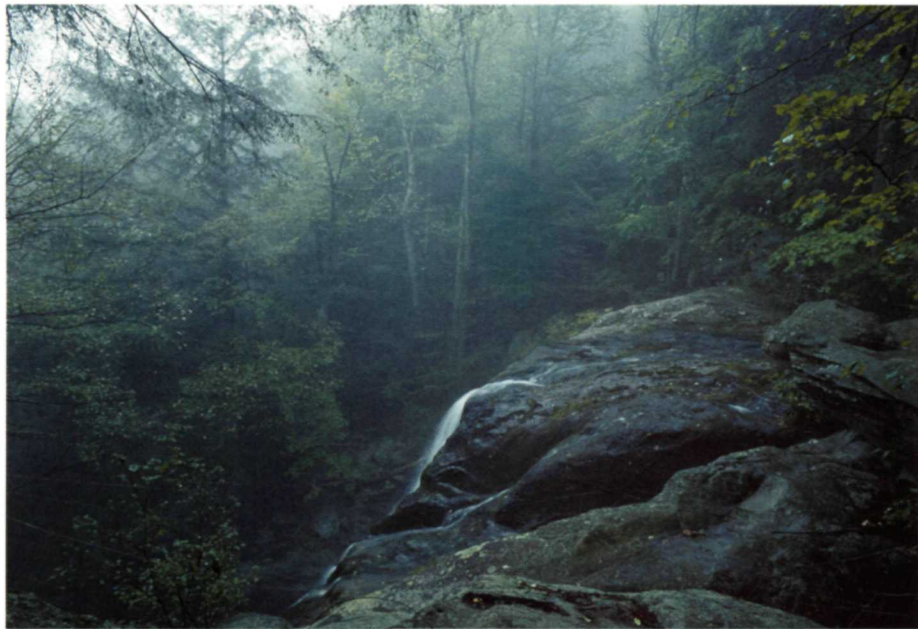
The House bill also limits concessions contracts, now as long as 30 years, to ten years unless specifically extended by Interior.

SURVEY FINDS MOST PARKS ARE AVERAGE

Most national parks garner only a "C" grade, report park superintendents in a survey conducted by NPCA and Colorado State University.

At a press briefing during its 75th anniversary conference in May, NPCA released the survey findings. Superintendents of every national park unit were asked to grade park resources, services, and facilities and to give personal assessments of the state of their parks. Grades were reported for seven critical areas: natural resources; cultural resources; park infrastructure; visitor information; law enforcement; work-force and budget issues; and special programs for visitors.

"Our national parks ought to receive



JEFF GREENBERG/UNICORN STOCK

An NPCA survey finds that Shenandoah National Park suffers from a multitude of problems.

a report card with straight A's," said NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard. "We are very disturbed that the report finds that the National Park System is in average condition at best."

Colorado State's Human Dimensions in Natural Resources Unit, which integrates social sciences into traditional resource management methods, conducted the survey between February and April 1994. Eighty-five percent of all park superintendents responded, a percentage the Colorado State researchers say ensures high reliability of findings.

Overall, 75 percent of national parks scored in the C category. Parks scoring higher were Glacier National Park in Montana and Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in Alaska. Parks receiving lower grades include Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks in California and Congaree Swamp National Monument in South Carolina.

Shenandoah National Park in Virginia in particular had consistently poor grades overall and in the areas of natural and cultural resources and law enforcement. The park, magnificent for its mountainous viewsheds, is plagued by air pollution, illegal hunting, and poor trail conditions.

Other parks similarly suffer from a multitude of problems, with lack of

funding and personnel most often cited. "Life is not that simple," responded Bob Gerhard, superintendent of Alaska's Cape Krusenstern National Monument, when asked what that park's biggest problem was. "Lack of baseline data, limited staffing, dealing with Alaska land legislation intertwine to create a single problem."

NPCA and the Colorado State researchers believe the lack of natural and cultural resource information, known as baseline data, is of real concern and a major hindrance to park management. "For ecosystem management and other new management philosophies, you need information about the resources that are available to do that job," said Michael J. Manfredo, leader of the survey unit at Colorado State. However, the survey does indicate trends toward improvement in this area.

Other major problems reported by superintendents include non-native plants and animals, a controversial issue at Olympic National Park in Washington, and high noise levels, particularly at Great Smoky Mountains and Grand Canyon national parks.

On the plus side, citizen involvement in the parks is growing in importance. Volunteers are used by 80 percent of parks to provide materials to visitors, to manage resources, and to perform

other activities.

"This report is the first of its kind in the nearly 80-year history of the national parks," said Pritchard. "I commend [National Park Service] Director Kennedy and [Interior] Secretary Babbitt for their support and enthusiasm for this report. It will be a constant reference for all of us."

NEW PLAN PROTECTS ALASKA BROWN BEARS

The coastal brown bears of Katmai National Park in Alaska, along with some significant cultural resources, will be better protected under a new plan for the park.

The plan, in draft form and incorporating an environmental impact statement, reduces human interaction with bears along the Brooks River. NPCA has been pushing for a new plan that recognizes the park's dual need to protect bears and visitors.

Katmai's brown bear population has increased dramatically in the last four decades of National Park Service protection, fueling a new ecotourism industry for bear-watchers and photographers. Brooks Lodge, built in the 1950s, sits in the midst of now-essential bear habitat on what has been identified as a significant archaeological site. The number of visitors, which increased tenfold in the past decade, has strained the lodge and other facilities to the limit, resulting in degraded resources and unsafe human-bear interaction.

A platform at Brooks Falls near the lodge offers the best viewing of brown bears, although its 25-person limit is often exceeded. In July, up to a dozen bears can be seen at once at the falls. Off the platform, strict rules regarding interaction with bears must be followed. An average of four incidents a day, however, "involving undesirable bear or human behavior" were recorded in 1991.

The Brooks River area is also an angler's heaven, home to sockeye salmon, grayling, and rainbow trout. Traditionally, bear activity has not been considered reconcilable with Alaska

Native fishing camps or modern sport-fishing. Under current management, anglers must refrain from fishing in the presence of bears.

The Park Service's recommendation is to move all facilities, including viewing platforms, south of the Brooks River area. This would leave the north side, more popular with bears and archaeologically richer, free of people. "It's a world-class spot and it deserves to be protected," said Katmai Superintendent Bill Pierce. "We would work with the Native groups to decide how to interpret [the cultural resources] and protect them."

NPCA believes that, while the plan heads in the right direction, it fails to consider moving Brooks Lodge into an adjacent "gateway" community. NPCA and Native groups agree that a gateway lodge and improved camping facilities in the park would offer the best protection for visitors and bears.

"The natural resources at Brooks River have changed, and society's view of the importance of these resources



FRED HIRSCHMANN

A new plan protects the brown bears of Brooks River in Katmai National Park.

has shifted as well," said Chip Dennerlein, NPCA Alaska regional director. "It's time to make the appropriate management adjustments."

The Park Service aims to release and implement the final version of the plan by January 1995.

MARKUP

KEY PARK LEGISLATION

Bill	Purpose	Status
California Desert Protection Act S. 21	Establishes Mojave National Park, expands Death Valley and Joshua Tree national monuments, redesignates them as national parks, and designates 4 million acres of Bureau of Land Management wilderness. NPCA supports.	The Senate passed S. 21 on April 13 by a 69-29 vote. The House Committee on Natural Resources approved the bill May 4. The full House held a floor debate May 17, and a vote is expected soon.
Concessions reform H.R. 1493 S. 208	Increases concessions fees and returns them to the park system; establishes competitive bidding for contracts; reforms possessory interest. NPCA supports.	The House Committee on Natural Resources approved H.R. 1493 on May 11. A vote on the House floor is expected soon. The Senate approved S. 208 in March by 90-9.
Presidio H.R. 3433 S. 1639	Preserves the historic Presidio in San Francisco intact and allows for leasing many of its buildings to offset the cost of turning it over to the Park Service. NPCA supports.	The House subcommittee on national parks held a hearing on H.R. 3433 May 10. The Senate subcommittee on national parks held a hearing on S. 1639 May 12.
Presidio H.R. 4078	Allows portions of the Presidio to be sold for commercial development. NPCA opposes.	The House subcommittee on national parks held a hearing on H.R. 4078 May 10.

NPCA is currently working on more than 60 bills.

ACTION NEEDED TO PRESERVE WEIR FARM

Encroaching development will pose a threat to Weir Farm National Historic Site in Connecticut unless Congress approves legislation to expand the park.

In 1990, the park was established to preserve the summer home and studio of American Impressionist painter J. Alden Weir, who purchased the farm in 1882. Along with the Weir Farm Heritage Trust, the Trust for Public Land, and others, NPCA helped to acquire the site from private landowners. "Weir Farm pays tribute to American art, which has been underrepresented in our National Park System," said Carol Aten, NPCA senior vice president. "We cannot allow adjacent development to destroy the integrity of this beautiful site."

Legislation introduced by Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) would extend the park's boundaries to include an adjacent parcel of land, known as Lot 18, considered crucial to the visual and historic character of the site. Rep. Gary Franks (R-Conn.) has introduced



PETER MARGONELLI

The historic home and studio of American painter J. Alden Weir need more protection.

a companion bill in the House.

Development of the area next to this two-acre lot has already begun. Lot 18 had been slated for development as well until it was purchased by the Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit land conservation organization that will hold the land pending action by Congress. "It's critical that [Lot 18] not be built on," said Sarah Olson, Weir Farm superintendent. "It is the last unprotected piece of the historic farm."

The park now comprises nearly 57 acres and includes Weir's home and studio as well as the studio of sculptor Mahonri Young, who married Weir's daughter. The farm's woods, meadows, and historic buildings were the inspiration for a significant portion of Weir's work, as well as that of such painters as Albert Pinkham Ryder, John Twachtman, and Childe Hassam. This tradition continues through a visiting artist program sponsored by the Weir Farm Heritage Trust that is the basis for a future artists-in-residence program.

According to the park's draft general management plan released in May, the Park Service hopes to rehabilitate existing structures to serve as a visitor center and a maintenance facility instead of constructing new buildings. The park would also display Weir's paintings and other artwork created at the farm.

Weir Farm is one of two sites cele-

brating American art that NPCA has recently pushed to preserve; the other, the proposed Hudson River Artists National Historical Park in New York, would preserve the home and studio of Thomas Cole, the American landscape artist.

NPCA AND PARK TRUST ACT TO PROTECT PRAIRIE

A nearly 11,000-acre ranch containing one of the last significant areas of tall-grass prairie may soon be a national preserve.

The National Park Trust, a private land conservancy founded by NPCA, purchased the Spring Hill Ranch in June. NPCA contributed a \$1.5-million loan to help the Trust acquire the \$4.79-million property.

The ranch, located in the Flint Hills of east Kansas, is as remarkable for its biological diversity and historic buildings as it is for its six- to ten-foot-high grass. Conservationists have worked for three decades to preserve the prairie, considered by many, including Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, to be the "missing link" of the National Park System.

"Protection for the prairie has long been supported by park advocates, naturalists, and historians," said NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard. "As the

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Although it will retain ownership, the Trust expects to have the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve managed by the Park Service once enabling legislation is approved. With the support of NPCA and the Trust, the Kansas delegation is expected to introduce legislation this session of Congress.

A privately owned public park can work well, Pritchard said, if a long-term commitment to preservation exists. He cited Canyon de Chelly National Monument in Arizona, which is owned by the Navajos, as an example. As currently envisioned, the tallgrass preserve will offer programs to interpret the Native American, pioneer, and natural histories of the prairie.

“What better way to celebrate our 75th anniversary than to help make possible this important part of the National Park System,” said Pritchard. “NPCA, the Trust, and the Park Service have worked closely with the Kansas delegation to bring about this unit.”

LOCAL INTERESTS POSE RISK TO THE MISSISSIPPI

A plan to manage the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) may be altered by agriculture, industry, and other interests, say NPCA and other groups.

MNRRA preserves 72 miles of Mississippi River in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Long celebrated in song and literature, the river provides essential habitat for a diversity of fish, migrating birds, and other wildlife. Toxic discharges, heavy sediment, and contaminated run-off from industry, however, have made the river one of the nation’s ten most endangered, according to a listing by American Rivers, a national river conservation organization.

The National Park Service’s original management plan, supported by NPCA, would have restricted development along MNRRA but was hotly contested by business and industry. Businesses wanted local governments, not the Park Service, to have control over the land.

The Mississippi, they argued, should remain a “working river” to save jobs.

Local governments agreed. Recently elected St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman urged MNRRA Superintendent Joann Kyril to adopt revisions to the plan proposed by businesses, including one company considered a heavy polluter of the river.

In May, the Mississippi River Coordinating Commission approved a final, amended version of the plan. It was scheduled to go to Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson (R) in June for a 60-day review period and then to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt for approval. Although the Park Service would manage the site and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources would monitor its use for compliance to the plan, local governments would be able to make land-use decisions. They would have to adhere only to existing zoning requirements that environmentalists say have not been stringently enforced.

“It’s a compromised plan,” said Rick McMonagle, executive director of

The National Parks and Conservation Association gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, corporations, and foundations for their generous support of our 75th Anniversary Conference, “Citizens Protecting America’s Parks: Joining Forces for the Future.” We also extend a special thanks to the Conference Chairman, Ambassador L.W. “Bill” Lane, Jr., and the San Francisco Steering Committee.

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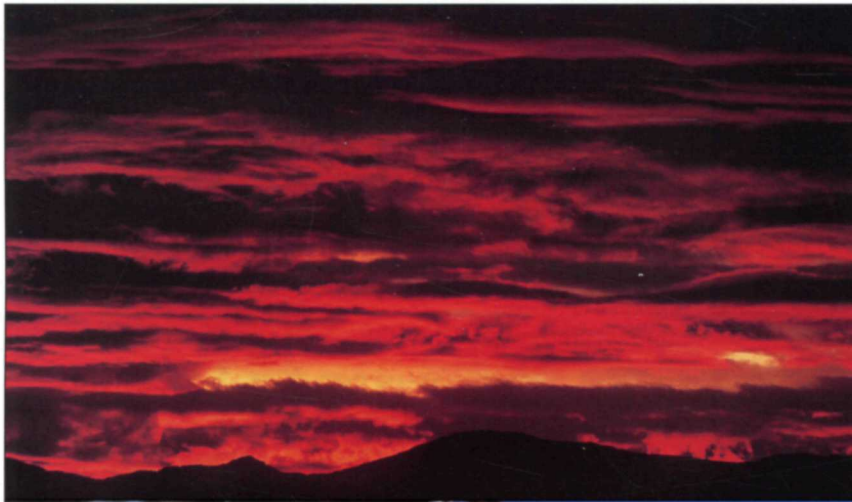
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NPCA, McMonagle, and Peter Gove, who chairs the advisory commission and favored the tougher version of the plan, agree that, despite the amendments, the current plan would protect natural resources while allowing recreational use of the river. The plan reflects that the river has "multiple interests and resources," Gove said.

Superintendent Kyril agrees. "We now have a plan that many groups feel

that they had a part in creating and that they can support." But if past actions are any indicator, McMonagle and NPCA contend, the plan could be further diluted by local interests now that it is out of the Park Service's hands.

"We believe the plan adequately protects the resource," said Lori Nelson, NPCA Heartland regional director. "Local interests have the political connections necessary to pressure the governor and other officials to tinker with the plan. The plan must be implemented

in its current form."

Write to Gov. Carlson at 130 State Capital, St. Paul, MN 55155 and Secretary Babbitt at Dept. of Interior, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, DC 20240 to urge them to approve the current MNRRRA plan.

WINTER USE EXAMINED AT CRATER LAKE

While everyone is enjoying summer, the National Park Service and NPCA are examining winter use at Crater Lake National Park.

The Park Service has prepared a winter use plan for the park that preserves solitude in backcountry areas while recognizing that participation in winter activities has increased. NPCA supports the plan, which relegates snowmobile use to a road north of the lake and encourages low-impact travel, such as snow-shoeing, around the rim.

"The park is to be commended for preparation of the plan," said Dale Crane, NPCA Pacific Northwest regional director. "Other Northwest parks should undertake similar planning before winter use activities overburden staff and resources."

Crane was instrumental in winning a fight against NPS plans to construct a massive hotel complex on the crater rim. The Park Service agreed to keep all new development away from the rim, except for the replacement of an unsightly concessions facility.

The Park Service instead intends to develop a 40-unit year-round lodge in Mazama Village, more than three miles south of the lake. NPCA has expressed some concern that the lodge could cause a significant increase in visitation and winter use and recommends a reexamination of the project before construction begins.

"There's nothing in the tea leaves that suggests a quick jump in visitation," said Crater Lake Superintendent Dave Morris. "If there is a need for [more] winter lodging, we'll put it outside the park. If it's inside the park, it will be away from the rim. Let's keep the rim inviolate."

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REGIONAL REPORT

News Briefs from NPCA's Regional Offices

ALASKA

Chip Dennerlein, Regional Director

Even as NPCA fights state plans to build a new road through Denali National Park, it is now engaged in a new battle at the park. A private property owner has requested a permit from the National Park Service to create a recreational-vehicle (RV) campground in Kantishna, an area of private land at the heart of Denali. NPCA believes that access for private RV use is incompatible with park protection. "This permit contravenes long-standing park policy at Denali, threatens wildlife resources, and contradicts national efforts to promote public transportation to and within parks," Dennerlein said.

HEARTLAND

Lori Nelson, Regional Director

NPCA has expressed concern to NPS, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Environmental Protection Agency over a sewage system that poses threats to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Homestead Development, granted the use of park property for the system, has had a long history of noncompliance with water quality laws. Its system has malfunctioned several times, sending raw sewage onto the ground and into groundwater in and near the park, posing serious threats to humans and wildlife. NPCA strongly urged the agencies to strictly enforce water quality laws and will monitor the situation.

NORTHEAST

The Civil War battlefields preserved in the National Park System trace nearly every major offensive save those in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, where more than 300 conflicts were fought during four bloody years. An NPS

survey found these sites to be in serious need of protection from development. On May 25 the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved a bill to preserve ten Shenandoah battlefields covering 1,863 acres. The bill calls for a partnership among local governments and NPS to preserve these sites. NPCA hopes for immediate action in the House and full Senate.

PACIFIC

Brian Huse, Regional Director

This summer NPCA opened a Pacific regional office based in San Francisco. Brian Huse, the new regional director, will work on behalf of national park units in California, Hawaii, Guam, and American Samoa. Huse, previously campaign director for the California League of Conservation Voters, brings to NPCA ten years of environmental policy and lobbying experience.

◆
The Presidio must remain intact when it becomes a national park this fall, said Tom Adams, NPCA Washington representative, at a May hearing before the House subcommittee on national parks. NPCA supported a bill sponsored by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) that would set up a public benefit corporation to manage the historic Army base in its entirety. Another bill, sponsored by Rep. John Duncan (R-Tenn.) and opposed by NPCA and NPS, proposes to sell off portions of the Presidio to developers. Pelosi contended that her bill will maintain the site's historic integrity and make it more attractive to private lenders, reducing a reliance on federal funding.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Dale Crane, Regional Director

On the same day in May that Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt openly con-

demned entertainment development in parks, a 68-foot tour boat, a private concession, began cruising Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park. The *M.V. Storm King* is intended to resemble historic Lake Crescent ferries (although no evidence of such has been found). NPCA has three main concerns about the boat—that its environmental impact was never assessed, that it is nearly three times the size of most boats on the lake, and that it docks in the habitat of the water lobelia, an aquatic plant on the state's threatened species list. NPCA is taking up these concerns with NPS.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Terri Martin, Regional Director

NPCA has prevailed against plans by NPS to mine gravel within Grand Teton National Park to supply construction materials for park roads. Federal officials have decided to reconsider a proposal to remove gravel from sensitive areas, including grizzly bear habitat and stream beds. NPCA and other conservation groups pressed park officials to consider obtaining gravel outside the park. While it typically is more expensive to import gravel, Martin argued that the plan gave "unacceptable priority to reducing costs" over park protection. The park will now seek a contractor to import gravel.

◆
Represented by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, NPCA is one of 20 groups and individuals who have filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its grizzly bear recovery plan. The coalition believes the plan does not adequately protect bears and bear habitat. Also, NPCA and the other groups criticized the plan for adopting low bear population goals and for establishing recovery zones that are too small. Fewer than 1,000 grizzlies remain in the lower 48 states.

SOUTHEAST

Don Barger, Regional Director

Under pressure from NPCA, NPS, local groups, and landowners, the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) has agreed to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a dam project that may threaten the Obed Wild and Scenic River. NPCA considers this a major victory since such projects are normally conducted with minimal environmental assessment. FmHA had been aiding a local utility district in its plan to build a dam and water treatment plant on a tributary of the Obed. The dam would withdraw 1.5 million gallons of water per day from the river, restricting recreational use and threatening wildlife habitat. NPCA, NPS, and the Tennessee Valley Authority will use the EIS to examine this and other watershed management issues.

SOUTHWEST

Dave Simon, Regional Director

NPCA is recommending that funds from the National Biological Survey be allocated for research at Saguaro National Monument in Arizona, where a May wildfire charred 1,200 acres. The fire spread when high winds fanned flames from a burning vehicle. Exotic grasses may have accelerated the blaze and may now become more abundant, since they can recover and grow more quickly than native vegetation.

In other news, a bill that would expand the monument by 3,640 acres has been approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and a full Senate vote is expected soon.

◆
Before the House subcommittee on national parks, NPCA suggested amendments to a bill that would provide better protection for archaeological sites near Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico. The bill would amend a 1980 law that protected "outlier" sites on Navajo, public, and private lands. NPCA recommended that the bill require the acquisition of sites threatened by destruction, adjust park boundaries, and strengthen NPS-Navajo ties.

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JOINING FORCES FOR THE FUTURE

Grassroots activists from all over the country gathered in San Francisco for NPCA's 75th anniversary conference.

by Linda M. Rancourt

AMERICANS WORKING together in their own communities will spark a renaissance of caring about the great outdoors. When the prairie fire catches...we will create a lasting corps of people who care about environmental quality."

This statement was made nearly ten years ago in *Americans Outdoors: The Legacy, the Challenge*, the report of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors. Today that prairie fire has caught across America.

NPCA's 75th anniversary conference in San Francisco May 18-21 was an attempt to harness citizen activism to create a vanguard for the larger park movement. With parks under fire and cuts on the way for the National Park Service (NPS) staff, creative ideas are needed to keep parks and the Park Service alive. To celebrate its 75th birthday, NPCA gave the gift of its experience to citizen groups.

"The goal of this conference is to send everyone away with sharper skills to do a better job...of making sure dreams become a reality," said Ambassador L. W. "Bill" Lane, Jr., conference chairman. No great movement has survived without "disciples," he said, whether it was headed by Buddha, Mohammed, or Martin Luther King, Jr.

Experts in fund raising, building membership, and starting friends groups conducted dozens of workshops during the conference.

NPCA organized the conference with help from NPS to build a network of activists to share ideas and strategies for park protection. Vera Guise, executive director of Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway, said that the conference "was the beginning of what will be a very long conversation among the people, their parks, and their government."

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said that it was crucial to "rekindle the relationship of people to parks."

Park Service Director Roger Kennedy echoed this theme. He told conference attendees that now was the time to change an attitude of disaffection that had developed during the past decade. "What we don't protect, we lose."





Opposite page, top, Amb. L. W. Lane served as chairman of the 75th anniversary conference. Park Service Director Roger Kennedy told participants to look for new ways to preserve the land. Clockwise from top left, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt speaks with NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard. Activists head across San Francisco Bay for a tour of Alcatraz, part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Charles Jordan, director of parks and recreation, Portland, Oregon, speaks about the importance of parks in society. NPCA Chairman Gordon Beaham III presents Amy Meyer with the 1993 Marjory Stoneman Douglas Citizen Conservationist of the Year Award for efforts to establish GGNRA and to preserve the Presidio. Corporate and foundation support allowed NPCA to give scholarships allowing activists to attend the conference and its workshops, such as this one focusing on strategies for working with the media. (Photos by John Ravnik.)



Breaking the Sound Barrier

The rapidly growing air tour industry is generating unacceptable noise levels in some of our most treasured national parks.

by David Lee

ON A LATE SPRING DAY, rock climber David Widden and his partner were rappelling down a 400-foot tower near Canyonlands National Park in Utah when a helicopter appeared out of the blue. The chopper hovered within 100 feet of the climbers as passengers inside snapped photos. Air drafts from the chopper's main rotor buffeted the climbers against the rock wall, creating what Widden said was an unnerving incident that "could have been a really dangerous situation."

Although most encounters are not so perilous, Widden's experience is not unique. A dramatic increase in air traffic has been ruining the experience of national parks visitors, an unforeseen repercussion of the Wright brothers' invention that changed our lives forever. Airplanes allow us to zip effortlessly across the country, but they also shatter natural quiet in the last enclaves of solitude. Aircraft flights over national parks have been increasing since the first "flightseeing" tours began in the 1920s.

Air tours have become increasingly popular at Hawaii Volcanoes, where the number has risen to more than 60 a day.

At least one federal official warned of the consequences of air traffic as early as 1934. "I think if we make it too easy for airplanes to go whizzing over our parks...we destroy a great deal of their value," said Harold Ickes, secretary of the interior under Franklin D. Roosevelt. "If we encourage the airplane business, we will see Glacier, Yellowstone, and Yosemite from the air at a hundred miles an hour. I don't see any sense in that sort of thing."

Until recently his warning was not heeded. The industry has grown exponentially in recent years, and today more than 100 of the 367 units of the National Park System are experiencing air traffic problems, many of them because of air tours. Unlike other companies doing business at national parks, air tours are not controlled by the Park Service because they operate from sites outside park boundaries, and the Park Service's authority to regulate air space over parks is disputed.

The noise from airplanes and helicopters is not the only intrusion on people seeking solitude in wilderness areas. Even the sight of aircraft in the backcountry can ruin a park's "sense of remoteness," says Carol Aten, senior

vice president of the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA). "Too many low-flying aircraft, even if they were silent, would diminish the national park experience."

Park staff receive thousands of complaints each year about the sound levels, which in a few parks equal those at some busy airports. Many grievances come from backcountry hikers, but other visitors are not immune to the volume and frequency of the noise. A look at six of the most affected parks reveals the severity of the problem. In some areas of Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, sightseeing planes swoop down the canyon every few minutes, a level of traffic that Colorado River guide Jeri Ledbetter says "has become oppressive...the noise is getting to the point where it's inescapable." Grand Canyon National Park does not keep records on air traffic, but according to Mike Ebersole, the park's air operations manager, the number of flights passing overhead reaches 10,000 a month during the summer.

Roger Clark, conservation director for the Grand Canyon Trust, became aware of the air traffic problem in the early 1970s while hiking near Thunder

River, a place where water comes rushing out of the North Rim. "Suddenly a helicopter was hovering below me," he recalls. "Its engines completely drowned the river's roar."

Air tours are becoming popular at two national parks in Hawaii: Haleakala and Hawaii Volcanoes. "Sightseeing by aircraft wasn't a problem here until the mid-80s," says Dan Taylor, resource manager at Hawaii Volcanoes, where in the past ten years the number of air tours has risen from perhaps one a month to more than 60 a day.

Acting Superintendent of Hawaii Volcanoes Jim Martin says in some parts of the park "the constant drum of helicopters overhead is outrageous. It ruins a once-in-a-lifetime experience for park visitors who have made the effort to hike for miles and find solitude."



FRANK S. BALTHIS

In the Southeast, Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the few places left where people can enjoy a wilderness experience, says park spokesman Bob Miller. But the growing number of air tour operations is threatening natural quiet there as well. At some popular spots, overflight noise is nearly constant, Miller says. "It's a very disturbing trend." Noisy aircraft often fly over peaks and waterfalls, and according to Miller "it's pretty intrusive, because they can stop and hover for a while."

Air traffic at Glacier National Park in Montana is not overwhelming yet, but the number of scenic air tours is climbing. Glacier's Chief Ranger Steve Frye says helicopter overflights have increased from almost none in 1981 to 15 a day last summer. Scenic flights are on the rise in many other parks including Arches, Canyonlands, and Denali National Park in Alaska, where a helicopter tour operator recently bought a landing site just outside the park boundary.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has

experienced firsthand the effects of park overflights. "Having spent a great deal of time in the Grand Canyon, I know how intrusive and offensive such noise can be, diminishing a good portion of the enjoyment and the restoration of spirit that comes from a visit to the park." Even some air tour operators are aware of the noise generated by their machines. Some have jokingly suggested that on-the-ground park visitors use earplugs to cut down on the noise.

While commercial tours, transcontinental flights, and general aviation account for much of the air traffic over national parks, the U.S. government also shoulders some responsibility for the problem. Low-flying military jets disturb visitors and wildlife when they blast over park units such as Joshua Tree National Monument in California

and Great Sand Dunes National Monument in Colorado, where the Air Force is increasing flights despite residents' complaints. Military overflights also are a problem at the relatively remote Badlands National Park in South Dakota.

The Park Service adds to the air traffic, using planes and helicopters for research, rescue operations, fire fighting, and emergency maintenance as well as wildlife roundups. "We do know that we contribute to the problem," says Ebersole. Grand Canyon plans to use quieter aircraft in the future and has reduced its flying time by half since the mid-1970s. Regardless of the source of irritation, it is clear that air traffic impairs the national park experience for visitors nationwide.

Although data proving overflights are harmful to wildlife are scarce, NPS resource specialist Wes Henry says some birds and large mammals are most certainly affected. He recalled an incident in Glacier when a helicopter was photographed hovering low over a grizzly bear. Situations such as that, he says, are unacceptable.

Biologists note that birds are espe-

cially affected by the noise because disruption of feeding, resting, or nesting has the potential of either increasing mortality or leading to the abandonment of an area.

"We know intuitively that overflights affect birds," says Hawaii's Dan Taylor, who has seen flocks of them scatter at the sound of low-flying aircraft. "There is a lot of anecdotal evidence." And at least one government report—the joint interior and transportation departments' Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking—asserts that park resources such as wildlife and natural quiet are being impaired by overflights and that action should be taken to preserve the "quality park experience for visitors."

Overflights affect other park resources as well. Sonic booms from jets and vibrations created by helicopter rotors can damage fragile archaeological treasures as well as geological formations. On this evidence alone, conservationists say, overflights should be eliminated. "There should be no risk at all allowed to these sites," says Terri Martin, NPCA Rocky Mountain regional director.

Jack Thompson, flight operations manager for the National Air Transportation Association, an industry trade group, maintains that seeing national parks by air is "ecologically friendly," and that airborne passengers affect a park far less than visitors who view the park from the ground. Thompson says that 800,000 people saw the Grand Canyon by air last year. Although Thompson says he understands backpackers work hard to find "natural quiet and solitude," his group has suggested closing trails inside parks to reduce the number of noise complaints. He says parks were created for all park visitors, not just backcountry users who make up less than 2 percent of the total. The air tour industry "provides a valuable service" for the thousands of other visitors who want to see Grand Canyon.

Backcountry hikers are not the only visitors who are complaining, and park officials believe that most of the people who choose air tours are doing so primarily for the ride and not to see a park. Flightseeing companies operating near Great Smoky Mountains National Park attract hundreds of thousands of

customers, says park spokesman Bob Miller. For the air tour passengers, "this is an amusement ride, it's not a planned activity." As in Great Smoky Mountains, airborne tourists in Hawaii "ride in helicopters to be entertained," says resource manager Taylor. "They don't fly to see the park."

Passengers are not considered park visitors and do not pay an entrance fee. They do, however, pay a high price for the ride. One Southwest company charges \$90 per person for a half-hour tour. The National Park Service is attempting to collect a fee from air tour operators at Grand Canyon, Hawaii Volcanoes, and Haleakala national parks as required by Congress, but most air tour operators are refusing to pay.

Escalating concern about overflights has sparked considerable debate. Because the problem is so pervasive, NPCA and other groups are suggesting a series of measures to counter the noise. They propose prohibiting overflights from parks that currently do not have them, phasing them out of parks that do, and further restricting them at parks such as Grand Canyon. NPCA's South-

Overflight noise affects wildlife, such as Dall sheep, left, and a visitor's experience at parks such as the Grand Canyon.

west Regional Director David Simon says that Grand Canyon is already a "sick patient. We don't want other parks to catch the disease."

NPCA's Terri Martin says, "Parks are a small percentage of the land base in the lower 48 states. You mean to tell me there is no way to avoid flying over them?"

But just as NPCA and others are pushing for more restrictions at Grand Canyon, representatives of the air tour industry there say that current federal regulations—enacted seven years ago—have substantially restored natural quiet to the park. Thompson says the number of aircraft noise complaints has dropped at Grand Canyon since flight restrictions were imposed. Prompted by complaints about noise and by a 1986 plane crash in Grand Canyon, Congress passed the National Overflights Act in 1987. The law called for studies on the impact of air traffic over several national parks and placed specific restrictions on flights



GREG PROBST

Sounds of Silence

A raven flaps its wings and croaks, the echoes peeling off into infinity. A tiny stream trickles in a canyon hundreds of feet below. These are the pleasures of natural quiet, untainted by human sounds. Increasingly recognized by land managers as a valuable resource, natural quiet is losing its foothold in a world dominated by machines.

It is difficult to capture the essence of natural quiet in any medium. It cannot be photographed or easily recorded, and its description tests the limits of our language. Dennis Brownridge has been enjoying the silence of Grand Canyon since the early 1950s. To him, natural quiet is “that feeling you get when you drop below the canyon rim. The air is so still you are overcome with a sense of spaciousness and timelessness.” The National Park Service defines natural quiet as the “natural ambient sound conditions” occurring in a park unit.

Noise from airplanes, oil and gas exploration, and mining operations in or near parks threatens natural quiet. To protect this resource and establish a baseline standard, the Park Service has been measuring natural quiet in many park units over the past several years. Working under contract for the Park Service, researchers have found “the ambient sound levels in national parks are impressively low—frequently at the noise floor of instrumentation.”

Regardless of how it is defined or measured, natural quiet remains an intangible resource. As Park Service Superintendents Dennis Huffman and John Lancaster put it, “what cannot be debated, however, and what must not be lost in all the technical discussions, is the intrinsic value of quiet in the parks...People need a place to go where they can escape their everyday lives and regain a sense of inner peace. A place where they can simply enjoy the beauty, the clean air, and the quiet. Parks are that place.”

—David Lee



over Yosemite and Haleakala national parks. The act also noted that aircraft noise at Grand Canyon “is causing a significant adverse effect on the natural quiet and experience of the park....” The act established “flight-free zones” and made flying below the canyon rim illegal.

Despite Thompson’s contention, park officials believe that the intent of the act—“to substantially restore natural quiet...”—has not been met.

Air traffic volume has increased since 1987, and noise from low-flying aircraft at Grand Canyon is heard as far away as 16 miles, easily penetrating most of the flight-free areas of the park, says Wes Henry. Although the zones are an improvement over the past, Henry says, they are not big enough to substantially restore natural quiet in the park. Monitoring studies show that from many points within the park, aircraft are audible 50 percent of the time.

While identifying overflight problems is easy, finding politically viable solutions may be difficult. The federal government, however, is becoming more responsive to complaints about air traffic over national park sites, despite past interagency differences.

Interior Secretary Babbitt has been working closely with Transportation Secretary Federico Peña to devise solutions, primarily at Grand Canyon. The two concur that increased flight operations at the Grand Canyon and other national parks have significantly di-

Tennessee’s state legislature passed a law to keep air tour bases at least nine miles from the boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, where overflight noise is constant at some popular spots.

minished the national park experience for park visitors. They have set up an interagency working group whose purpose is to study the issue and come up with ways to limit air traffic over national parks while still accommodating air tour operations. Peña says the transportation department cares about the environment and believes it can “provide air access to [national parks] while ensuring a quality experience for other park visitors.”

In March, the agencies announced a decision to develop new regulations governing overflights that would determine under which conditions scenic tours could be flown, at which times of day, and at what altitude. The agencies are considering other regulatory and technological alternatives as well. In addition to flight-free zones, these options include limiting the number of overflights, giving air tour operators “noise budgets” or quotas for total noise, and encouraging the operators to use quieter aircraft.

On the legislative front, Rep. Pat Williams (D-Mont.) introduced a bill last March that would place air tour operators under the Park Service’s concessions system. Williams’ bill would allow the Park Service to regulate and



even prohibit park overflights, giving the Park Service “the authority it has lacked up to now to restore a measure of peace and quiet to the skies over national parks....” Williams’ bill awaits a hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee.

Although environmentalists doubt whether voluntary solutions will work, these are also being considered. Agreements between air tour operators and the Park Service are in place at Hawaii Volcanoes, Grand Canyon, and Glacier. But according to park officials, tour operators realize they are under no legal obligation to honor the accords. The Hawaii agreement has met with strong opposition and is not working, says Superintendent Martin.

People living outside national parks plagued with heavy air traffic are taking action themselves to limit air tours. In Montana, 900 residents of the Flathead Valley west of Glacier have signed a petition opposing air tours in the park. And disturbed by the sight and constant noise of overflights in Tennessee, the state’s legislature passed a law to keep

air tour bases at least nine miles from the boundary of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The air tour companies are now appealing that law. Residents of Moab, Utah, are also organizing to limit air traffic around Canyonlands. And the government of Springdale, Utah, refused to allow a scenic tour operator to build a heliport outside of Zion National Park.

“We need to draw the line on overflights, just as we should have on snowmobiles 15 years ago. We never should have let them into the parks,” says NPCA’s Terri Martin. “We must drastically reduce or eliminate scenic air tours from parks that currently have them and prohibit them where they are not currently allowed.”

Martin says parks traditionally have been viewed as “two-dimensional postcards,” but threats such as increasing noise and air pollution are forcing a broader view. “We can no longer think in terms of just what’s on the ground,” she says.

Natural quiet is a resource that is just as important as clean water, clear

Air traffic is not yet overwhelming at Glacier National Park in Montana, a popular park with hikers, but the number of scenic air tours has climbed from none in 1981 to 15 a day during the summer.

air, and wildlife. While some may not realize it, natural quiet and solitude have long been valued. In 1920, naturalist John C. Van Dyke wrote of the Grand Canyon: “A silence reigns everywhere. The sun comes up over the Painted Desert through a haze of spectrum colors but there is no sound, and it goes down over the Uinkaret Mountains in all the glory of crimson and purple, but the silence is not broken.”

If the federal government and environmentalists succeed in restoring natural quiet, national park visitors of today and tomorrow may still be able to enjoy the unbroken silence that so amazed our ancestors.

David Lee is a Montana free-lance writer specializing in wildlife and environmental issues.



CARR CLIFTON

FOOL'S GOLD

A proposed mine near Yellowstone's northeastern corner threatens the precious resources of America's oldest national park.

by Todd Wilkinson



MICHAEL H. FRANCIS

STUART COLEMAN is not a ranger prone to dispensing hyperbole. A veteran of three decades with the National Park Service, he asserts an ultra-cautious demeanor when considering land management decisions. If there is anything he disdains, it is the tendency to exaggerate external threats to Yellowstone National Park.

But as Coleman lolls among trout fishermen near Soda Butte Creek, his thoughts drift to an area known as the New World Mining District. "If you were going to throw a dart at a map of the United States and place a gold mine there," he says, pointing to a spot less than three miles from the park border, "those mountains would probably be the worst place a dart could land. That's exactly what Noranda is doing, and we are very concerned about it."

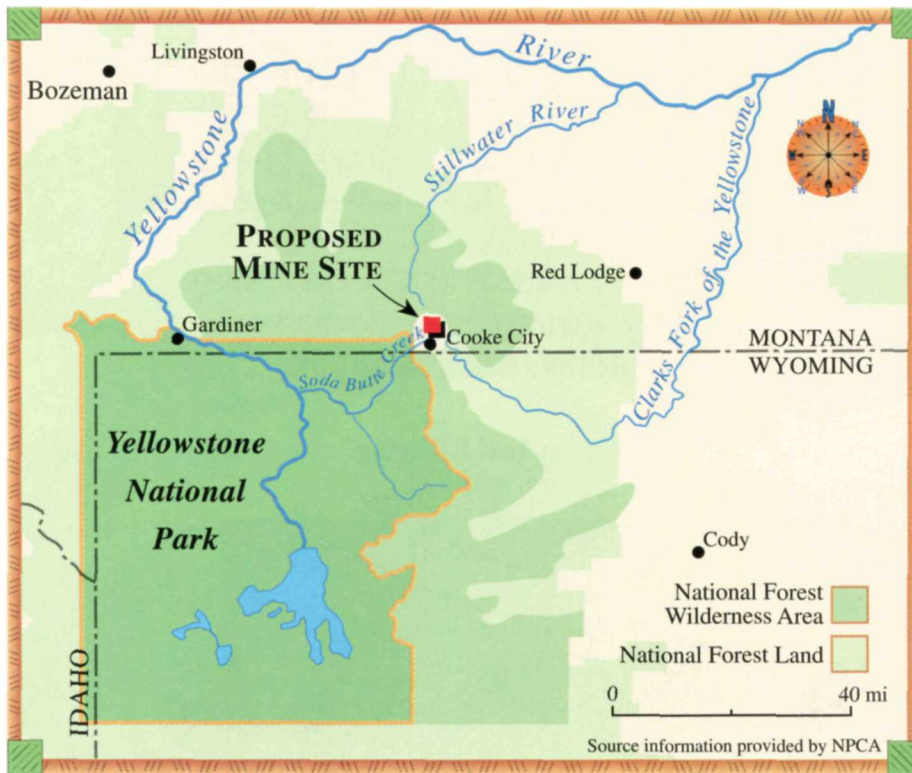
A little more than five years ago, business partners of Noranda Minerals Inc., a multinational Canadian corporation based in Toronto, announced their intention to blast a mine into the

high-elevation slopes of Henderson Mountain. Buried in the earth, company officials say, is a rich deposit of gold, copper, and silver worth more than \$600 million.

If it were any other place, Coleman suggests, the mine might already be in business, but New World is sandwiched between Yellowstone to the south and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness—the heaviest-used backcountry hiking area in Montana—to the north, east, and west. It also sits at the apex of three streams that tumble off the mountain: Fisher Creek, which drains into the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, Wyoming's only federal wild and scenic river; Daisy Creek, which angles into the Stillwater River as it flows through the adjacent wilderness; and Miller and Soda Butte creeks, a stream system that feeds directly into the national park's famous trout waters. Flanking the mountain is top-priority range for federally protected grizzly bears as well as habitat for bald eagles, bighorn sheep, and moose.

For good reason, New World may be the most controversial mine proposal now before the American public. It has

Toxic waste from the mine could flush directly into Yellowstone National Park and the headwaters of its namesake river.



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brought more protest mail to the offices of the U.S. Forest Service than any other resource issue this year, except perhaps the debate over old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest.

The question of whether a fortune in gold should be dug from Henderson Mountain, however, comes down to whom you want to trust—a mining company whose principal allies are the Wise Use Movement or a growing contingent of opponents, including conservationists, the Park Service, politicians, scientists, and former President Jimmy Carter. “This mine poses an extremely high risk for catastrophic damage to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem—one of America’s premier wilderness resources,” says Terri Martin, Rocky Mountain regional director for the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA). “From any perspective except those who stand to make a private profit at public expense, it makes no sense to mine there.”

Mining officials insist that New World will be a model of innovation that will quell fears about old-world mining disasters. And they say it will bring prosperity to the sleepy Yellowstone gateway town of Cooke City, which long ago forsook the pick and

shovel to make way for a tourist-based economy. “This mine is going to be a showcase. It will be state-of-the-art, a really classy operation,” says Allan Kirk, a spokesman for Noranda and the lead geologist who discovered the mother lode of metals. “I don’t think there will be a more modern or more sophisticated mining plan in the U.S.”

Targeting a mosaic of Forest Service land and roughly 2,000 acres of private land almost two miles above sea level, the mine over its 15-year life would be subjected to the harshest, most unstable conditions known to besiege mountain environments—bombardment by avalanches, brutal weather, and a geologic fault capable of producing a large-magnitude earthquake. Mincing no words, environmentalists have dubbed it “the mine from hell” and “a Superfund site in the making.”

Kirk concedes that if New World moves ahead, Noranda will be required to treat toxic mine waste at the site in perpetuity to prevent damage to streams. The reason is the volatile nature of the terrain. Scratch beneath the surface of Henderson Mountain’s bedrock where the gold is entombed and one finds an ore body marbled with copious amounts of pyrite (“fool’s gold”), a

naturally occurring sulfide that is transformed into sulfuric acid when exposed to air and water. Evidence of what can go wrong ecologically is visible in nearby streams that today run red and sterile with acidic effluent from mining that ceased 40 years ago. Such havoc, warns renowned geologist Kenneth Pierce, could be dwarfed by the magnitude of the new mine. “A long-term threat is posed by mine tailings to the streams draining the area,” Pierce wrote to the Forest Service, which is reviewing the mine proposal. “A closely related concern is [that] water percolating through the mine area itself, or the stored tailings, will react with sulfides rich in heavy metals and this acidic, heavy-metal effluent will then enter the surface streams. Extreme runoff events will certainly occur as a result of infrequent but high-intensity storms, particularly rapid melt of deep snows or a combination of rain falling onto the melting snow.”

Noranda estimates that it will need to move four tons of sulfide rock for every ounce of gold it gleans. Given the belief that some 1.5 million ounces of gold are stratified in the mountain, the earthmoving arithmetic is epic in dimension. The company intends to store this waste rock permanently by bulldozing a wetland and creating a tailings impoundment in the form of an experimental “bathtub” covering approximately 70 football fields in area and measuring 10 stories deep. The bathtub will actually be buried in the ground in the Fisher Creek drainage, a prospect that some consider an environmental time bomb. Fearing what may happen, American Rivers has proclaimed the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone, a magnificent wild river fed by Fisher Creek, to be the most endangered river in the nation.

Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have raised dire concerns about the impoundment design because it heralds the largest contemporary destruction of wetlands in either Montana or Wyoming. Because of the difficulty in acquiring a permit to ravage a wetland, Noranda may be prohibited from



JIM YUSKAVITCH

Above, an old mine in western Montana leaves a legacy of tainted water. Right, new exploration roads for the proposed mine.



ROB BADGER

erecting the tailings graveyard there. The alternatives are equally alarming; one is a plan to position the waste site in the Miller-Soda Butte Creek watershed. Leakage from the impoundment or natural disasters such as earthquakes could send toxic metals flushing directly into Yellowstone National Park and the headwaters of its namesake Yellowstone River.

“I cannot think of an area more sensitive than that being proposed by the New World Mine,” states Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), powerful chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. “Yellowstone is the crown jewel of our treasured National Park System,” Baucus says. “Its value to us and to future generations is beyond measure. I am not willing to gamble with a national treasure for short-term economic gain.”

Protest against the mine has become an international issue. In 1978, six years after the World Heritage Convention was ratified, Yellowstone was declared a “World Heritage Site” in recognition of its world-class resources. As a member of the convention, the United States made a commitment to protect Yellowstone from external harm. NPCA is now exploring options with Park Service

officials in Washington, D.C., to ensure that provisions of the treaty are enforced. Rick Cook, of the Park Service’s Office of International Affairs, says he may seek to have the 136 nations that signed the convention formally condemn the mine and apply diplomatic pressure to have it halted, should the Forest Service and regulatory agencies in Montana ignore public opinion and permit it to operate.

In its initial construction phase, the mine would bring 350 workers to Cooke City, doubling the size of the town overnight. Should the mine go into full operation, some 175 employees would work around the clock on Henderson Mountain. Jim Barrett, president of the Beartooth Alliance, formed in 1988 specifically to fight the mine, says the “boomtown” atmosphere ensures severe repercussions for Yellowstone, including increased traffic to the quietest section of the park and the spawning of wildlife poaching in and around the mine. On still, cloudless evenings, Barrett says, the glow of the mine and pounding of heavy machinery will be noticed by park visitors, a claim Noranda officials deny. “Seventy percent of U.S. gold consumption is for jewelry. I think it’s absurd to even think about

trading off our wild places so that the world has a few more gold chains,” Barrett, a carpenter, says. “I might be more sympathetic if there were a shortage of gold, copper, and silver, but...this mine is driven by greed.”

Geologist Lisa Kirk, president of the Cooke City chapter of People for the West (a Wise Use group) and wife of Allan Kirk, says environmentalists are engaging in fear mongering. “I consider myself to be an environmentalist, but I have a hard time with the extreme interpretation of those opposed to the mine. The slopes around Henderson Mountain are naturally acidic, and the water in some of those streams may never have been drinkable—yet they want the water to be maintained at unnatural pristine standards,” she says. “I agree there will be impacts associated with the mine, and I don’t think anyone will deny it. But by and large, people will travel through Cooke City without having any idea there is a mine.”

The mining company also is dangling a tempting carrot before the Forest Service and the Montana Department of State Lands. Paradoxically, Noranda claims it will mop up historic mineral tailings and restore the previously disturbed land to original contours. “When

mining is completed, the New World site will be in better condition environmentally than it is today, as abandoned mine workings will be stabilized and made safe," asserts the 1993 corporate report for Hemlo Gold, another Noranda subsidiary trying to promote the mine to its stockholders.

Rationalizing the continued destruction of Yellowstone borderlands is myopic and does not take into account how the quality of life will be degraded for wildlife and human residents in the next century, points out Bill Blackford, who moved to Cooke City and opened up a mountain bike touring company that relies on trails near the mine. "The reason part of the New World Mining District is messed up stems directly from past abandoned mining," Blackford said. "Now Noranda wants to create another disturbance with heavy machinery and tear things up even more. People passing through town will not be ignorant of the fact there is a mine up the hill. Mining is simply not compatible with recreation and our new tourist economy."

Currently, the Forest Service and the Montana Department of State Lands are preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS), which ultimately will decide whether Noranda can meet the standards for some 40 different operating permits. So far, however, both agencies have come under fire for their thinly veiled support of the mine. In 1992, the Forest Service gave Noranda's local subsidiary Crown Butte Mines a special "environmental stewardship" award—paid for at taxpayer expense and endorsed by the mining industry—for helping to reduce the surface disturbance of historic mining beneath Henderson Mountain. Later, the Forest Service cited the award as apologetic proof that the company is responsible, though it calls into question the agency's objectivity in examining Noranda's permit request. And in another bizarre gesture, the Montana state lands commissioner, Bud Clinch, wrote a letter defending the mine in response to questions originally penned to Noranda from Sen. Baucus.

"A lot of people think we're in bed



JEFF HENRY

with the mine, but our official comment is we're not taking a position, either pro or con," says Sherm Sollid, a mining expert with the Gallatin National Forest. The irony of Sollid's statement comes from the fact that, while the mining company has enjoyed verbal support from the Forest Service, Noranda officials went to Washington and sought to muzzle Park Service Director Roger Kennedy, who wrote a letter scrutinizing the mine. Kennedy has since instructed Coleman and other Yellowstone employees to refrain from commenting on the plan publicly until a draft EIS is completed, probably sometime in 1995. Still, when Kennedy was asked recently what he thought of the mine, he grimaced and said tersely: "Don't like it."

Although some 10,000 comments have poured into Forest Service offices in Montana and Washington, D.C., opposing the mine, Sollid says, "This issue is not being put out to a vote." He insists the Forest Service is obligated to give the mine "a fair review" because of the 1872 mining law, which grants mining companies an almost exclusive right to extract valuable minerals from public land—even if the firm is Canadian—without paying a cent in royalties to American taxpayers. "The New World mine is a perfect illustration of why we need to reform the 1872 mining law," asserts NPCA's Martin. "The law guar-

antees Noranda a vested interest to use public land, yet it doesn't instruct the Forest Service to determine whether mining is in the public's interest."

One of the grassroots groups pressing to stop the mine from opening is the Greater Yellowstone Coalition (GYC), based in Bozeman, Montana. "With every other mine proposal we've examined around the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, our policy has always been to work with the companies and try to make it a better, more responsible mine," says Peter Aengst, a geologist who has doggedly scrutinized New World for the GYC. "In this case we've taken an extreme position—no mine—because it's an extreme proposal and an extremely lousy location. We don't feel you can mitigate the impacts as the mining company claims."

Technically, the Forest Service cannot deny outright Noranda's request to mine, Aengst says, but the government can force the company to comply with so many environmental mitigation measures that the mine is no longer economically feasible. Sollid says that if the company cannot mine, then perhaps American taxpayers should compensate Noranda with a multi-million-dollar buyout.

Kirk claims his company already has spent more than \$35 million developing the project. He says Noranda has voluntarily modified its original plans to

Once the ore is extracted, mines are frequently abandoned, leaving behind rusted machinery and scarred landscapes. This site is at the head of Fisher Creek just outside of Yellowstone, near the location of the proposed New World Mine.

erect giant open pits and extract gold using cyanide in response to concerns from environmentalists. The tailings impoundment, he adds, is “a composite” that incorporates the best concepts Noranda has used at mines across North America. What he fails to mention is Noranda’s dismal environmental record at other mines in northern Montana, Idaho, Utah, British Columbia, and Quebec. A foreshadowing of battles ahead, Crown Butte and Noranda are being sued by nine environmental groups for failing to acquire necessary permits at New World as mandated by the federal Clean Water Act for water discharges. Trust, environmentalists point out, is one commodity Noranda cannot buy.

The number of unknowns, Aengst says, combined with a clean-up job stretching into perpetuity, would require faith in a tailings impoundment system that is at best novel, at worst theoretical and untested. Kirk says, in fact, his company plans to reinforce the bed of acid brew with a double layer of plastic liners and keep the pyrite submerged in water to render the sulfides inactive. Critics liken the tailings pond to the *Exxon Valdez*. Eventually, maybe not today but certainly in the future, the tomb holding the tailings will breach, placing one of the three headwater streams in peril. Even a national engineering trade journal took the design to task. “Don’t experiment in a place where the price for failure is ruining a wild and scenic river or the oldest national park in the U.S.,” wrote the publishers of *Engineering News-Record* in March 1994.

Aengst says the worst-case scenario is a replication of the disaster at Summitville, Colorado, where another Canadian-owned mining firm abandoned its clean-up responsibilities when a tailings pond built at high elevation almost failed. American taxpayers are spending

\$40,000 a day to prevent toxic mineral tailings from destroying a stream. “Summitville is a real nightmare for the whole mining industry,” acknowledges Kirk. “It was a whole series of problems. One of them can be blamed on the state of Colorado for not revising its bond. The bond turned out to be totally inadequate.”

Bonding is a tool used by regulators of the mining industry to ensure that any environmental problems are properly cleaned up. If Noranda is allowed to start mining, federal officials explain, it will be required to post a cash bond in the tens of millions of dollars. Environmentalists consider it a hollow concession, since pollution problems that may begin after the company has extracted the last ounce of gold and left the area could cost ten times as much to fix, leaving taxpayers holding the tab. Montana’s archaic law requires that bonds posted by mining companies be returned within two years following the completion of surface reclamation. Troubling to the Forest Service is how to ensure enough money will be available to treat polluted water forever, as Noranda admits is inevitable.

The safest course for preventing a disaster is abstinence from mining, environmentalists argue, though it may be difficult to slow the corporate juggernaut, which has a sympathetic ear from agencies holding its fate. After all, few in the corporate boardrooms of Canada expected any obstacles. Like the fight to save wildlands around Canada’s Tatshenshini-Alsek rivers, where Americans were recruited to help stop a copper mine, Yankee conservationists have asked their Canadian counterparts to return the favor and pressure Noranda into withdrawing its proposal.

Noranda’s Achilles’ heel may not lie so much in the brashness of its proposal as in the company’s gross miscalculation of how much Americans care about protecting the ecological health of their first national park and surrounding ecosystem.

“Unfortunately, this mine could be permitted if for no other reason than citizen apathy,” warns Peter Aengst of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

“Nobody wants this mine, so it has become a question of getting people off their duffs to take action. Otherwise, if you allow Noranda to build a suspect mine next to Yellowstone and Montana’s most popular wilderness area, you’ve basically conceded that this type of industrialization...is appropriate next to any of our national parks or wilderness areas.”

Aengst and the expanding chorus of mine opponents are optimistic that good judgment will prevail. “Don’t forget that Yellowstone National Park exists today because a handful of citizens joined forces more than a century ago to create the national park idea and protect Yellowstone’s special features from exploitation,” said NPCA’s Martin. “We have the power to stop this mine, and I have faith we will do it, but no one can stand on the sidelines. We need citizens from around the world to say no to the New World Mine.”

Todd Wilkinson lives in Bozeman, Montana, and writes regularly about national parks.

What You Can Do

NPCA encourages readers to challenge the mine by writing letters to government decisionmakers, telling them that the New World project poses an unacceptable risk to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and should be stopped. Send copies of your letter to your representatives in Congress and to:

Montana Gov. Marc Racicot
Room 204
Montana State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Jack Ward Thomas
U.S. Forest Service Chief
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

Vice President Al Gore
Office of Environmental Policy
360 Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Bridging the Border

As NAFTA goes into effect, U.S. and Mexican officials must ensure that economics does not overshadow the need to protect parks and other public lands.

by Ron Steffens

MOST YEARS, the “monsoons” come to Arizona by early July. The saguaro cactus, which blooms in the heat of June, bears fruit with the rain. During this season, when washes flood the roads, the Hia-Ced O’odham return to Quitovac, a Mexican village they inhabited long before European explorers arrived.

For more than a millennium, the Hia-Ced O’odham have traveled through the desert that lies along the U.S.-Mexican border. They convene during the short summer rains to harvest cactus and to celebrate *Vigitha*, a ceremony of rejuvenation and the beginning of a new year.

The U.S.-Mexican border, an artificial line on a map, cut the traditional lands of the O’odham in half. Today, the O’odham—not recognized as a tribe in Mexico—cannot cross that border casually. Traditional Hia-Ced lands include Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Luke Air Force Base, and lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management.

What was once a land occupied by bands of the same tribe and tied together by ancient trade routes is now divided into a variety of countries, states, and other bureaucratic jurisdictions, not all of which share the same goals.

The Department of the Interior controls an impressive 37 percent of the 1,500-mile-long border with Mexico; 18 percent of that total is National Park Service (NPS) land. While the lev-



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els of protection vary, a legal framework exists for preserving a portion of the landscape that stretches 250 miles from the Sea of Cortez northeast into the Gran Desierto, a huge, hot sandflat, and then into the lava fields of Pinacate.

Parklands along the border are many and include Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Coronado National Memorial, and Tumacacori National Historical Park in Arizona; and Padre Island National Seashore, Big Bend National Park, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site, Amisted National Recreation Area, and Chamizal National Memorial in Texas. Mexico’s preserves include the Pinacate Desert, a biosphere reserve, Sierra Del Carmen or the Santa Elena Canyon Project, and the recently created marine preserve in the Gulf of California. Mexico’s preserves are often administered by states instead of the government, and America’s borderlands are administered by three states and federal agencies that do not always agree. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation, NPS, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service as well as the Mexican states of

Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila have a stake in what occurs along this shared border.

“For every agency that wants to encourage the greater flow for wildlife, another agency wants to build 14-foot walls to keep immigrants and drugs out,” says Dave Simon, NPCA’s Southwest regional director. “All of our conservation problems are affected by social problems: drugs, illegal immigration, the language barriers....If we don’t make progress with illegal immigration and drug traffic—which will continue to be difficult to resolve—we won’t make progress on conservation issues. We need to be working on all of these issues together.”

Along with this bureaucratic patchwork is a layer of cultural complexity. The Hia-Ced are only one of many bands of O’odham, and the O’odham are only one of many groups of people who live along the border. Add cowboys and *vaqueros*, Anglo farmers and Mexican *ejidatarios*, who farm their small plots, along with the factory workers, ecotourists, and multinational entrepreneurs, and the complexity of life along the border becomes more apparent. Then add the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with its promise of an economic boom in a land of fragile resources, and a potential nightmare of conflict takes shape.

NAFTA has provided a rallying point for environmentalists, uniting them with community activists and land managers to preserve the border region. The po-



Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, one of the parklands on the border, is home to hedgehog cactus, left, and saguaro.

tential alternative, a barren landscape choked by pollution, can be seen with every rain, when sewers overflow in cities on both sides of the border. Eight cities are paired along the border and include Tijuana, Baja California, and San Diego, California; and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, and Brownsville, Texas. Many towns and cities along the border are crowded and lack adequate water and sewerage. Much of the money being devoted through NAFTA will first address these infrastructure concerns.

The Interior Department's Office of International Affairs says a total of \$8 billion has been committed to develop and repair infrastructure along the border. Half of that total will be provided by the World Bank as repayable loans; the other half will be provided as new funds. Of the World Bank's total, up to \$10 million may be directed toward conservation projects, including the enforcement of wildlife laws. The Agency for International Development is providing another \$20 million to establish

a Conservation Fund in Mexico.

Although the trade agreement has directed sorely needed attention to our southern border, even without NAFTA these changes would be necessary.

"NAFTA has provided an intense spotlight to focus on these problems, and now we have to live up to the agreement," says NPCA's Dave Simon. "NAFTA provides a foundation on which to build. We needed to fix water and sewer services with or without it."

NAFTA included an environmental side agreement that will be administered by a soon-to-be-appointed Commission for Environmental Cooperation. The commission, represented by the environmental ministers of the United States, Mexico, and Canada, will function through a secretariat that will direct an independent staff. A joint international advisory committee will oversee the secretariat and the commission, which will have the authority to settle long-standing disputes. The secretariat will issue periodic reports on the state of the environment in North America.

Some groups such as NPCA are concerned that NAFTA offers inadequate protection against the exploitation

of scarce natural resources. The Park Service, too, is uneasy. Rob Arnberger, superintendent of Big Bend, never forgets that NAFTA was a trade agreement, not an environmental treaty. "It's a beginning, a basis for negotiating something else. Until we have a treaty solely centered on protecting the environment of these two countries, then everything we do to protect the environment will be on the side."

NPCA also fears that greater numbers of people will converge along the border, causing a significant increase in development and putting an even greater strain on fragile lands and a limited water supply. Border parks are especially at risk. But some observers say that Mexico will ensure enforcement of environmental standards to maintain its NAFTA-partner status. They also say that Mexico has shown some promising signs of change and the trade agreement will serve to improve a poor environmental record.

Activities in both countries have contributed to the situation along the border, which is indeed not a pretty one. A coal-fired power plant complex south of Big Bend belches pollution un-



checked and has been at least partly responsible for the reduction of visibility at the park. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NPS, and the State Department are all pushing to clean up the plant's smokestacks. Toxic waste runs freely from so-called *maquiladora* factories that moved to Mexico in search of cheap labor and lax environmental controls. The runoff from these factories along with agrichemicals on both sides may be spawning an epidemic of cancers in border communities. Water is being drawn from the ground at a rate faster than rain can replenish it, dooming small-scale agriculture along with old cottonwood groves. Overgrazing is widespread on both sides; when the rains fall, the soil erodes and the waters flood downstream, unable to soak into the compacted earth and replenish the groundwater.

Agricultural interests in the United States have siphoned off so much water from the Colorado River that by the time the "river" crosses the border, it is a salty trickle laden with pesticides and other chemicals from ranches and farms. The lack of fresh water and the amount of pollution contributed by the Colo-



JACK W. DYKINGA

The Interior Department's lands on the border include Big Bend National Park in Texas, top left, and Algodones Dunes in California, bottom left, a BLM site, where off-road vehicle riders have disregarded a prohibition. Right, the threatened ocelot is among the species relying on these lands.

rado to the Gulf of California estuary have severely damaged a nursery that once spawned an abundance of shrimp and fish. Today, Mexican shrimp fishermen are being encouraged to seek jobs in the recently created ecotourism industry. The Mexican government has set aside part of the Gulf as a preserve to protect the endangered *vaquita* dolphin and the *totoaba* fish, but biologists say that damage to the estuary may be irreversible.

The picture along the border began to show some signs of change even before NAFTA's approval. Under pressure from its own citizens, Mexico strengthened its environmental statutes in 1988. As a result, Mexico's environmental protection agency, SEDECOL, can now shut down a business for violations, an action unavailable to EPA. Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari also has demonstrated a willingness to establish reserves.

Today's reality, with or without NAFTA, is that border parks, wildlife refuges, biosphere reserves, marine sanctuaries, and other federal lands are becoming islands of open space surrounded by development. Ten million residents live along the border, more than double the number in 1960. An estimated 200 million border crossings occur each year, making this the busiest border in the world. Once protected by their isolation, desert parks are becoming engulfed by development. As many scientists have proven, the smaller and more fragmented the habitat, the greater the chance of extinction.

These desert parks and reserves are ecological marvels that provide natural corridors for an abundance of wildlife that live in alpine, desert, and tropical habitats. Without some safeguards, a booming border trade could doom wildlife within these ever-shrinking oases.



ERWIN & PEGGY BAUER

Threats to wetlands in the United States are both well known and well documented. Mexico has no wetlands protection laws and has not conducted baseline inventories. Without the Gulf Coast wetlands, which stretch from Key West, Florida, to Padre Island, Texas, wintering ducks and nesting sea turtles will dwindle and eventually disappear. In California, visiting birdwatchers would be lucky to see the few light-footed clapper rails and least Bell's vireos that remain. In between, the border hosts migrating monarch butterflies and neotropical songbirds,

which are already beleaguered by diminishing habitat in South and Central America.

As many as 460 endangered, threatened, and near-threatened species live within 25 miles of the border and are at risk from development pressures. Some of the threatened species that depend on the region's habitats include the ocelot, jaguarundi (a wildcat), Mexican gray wolf, Mexican spotted owl, masked bobwhite quail, Sonoran antelope, Yaqui catfish, chub, and topminnow.

The decline of these species is a warning that has not been lost on park

The people along the border are as diverse as the landscape. A Mexican farmer's mules pull a cart of maquey cactus, used to make tequila. A cholla cactus skeleton, far right, is silhouetted against a twilight sky.

managers and environmentalists. To maintain wildlife corridors and increase the buffer zones around comparatively healthy ecosystems, land managers and environmentalists, like free-trade economists, are borrowing a lesson from nature and reaching beyond their own boundaries.

In Big Bend, park rangers cross the Rio Grande and attend the monthly meetings of the *ejidatarios*, the communal farmers who—even though their government has no intention of displacing them—fear that the proposed biosphere reserve in Mexico's rugged Sierra del Carmen will rob them of their land. The message of the Park Service, according to the park's Chief Naturalist Dennis Vasquez, is one of cooperation rather than of conquest.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, former governor of Arizona, believes the United States and Mexico share the goal of preserving lands along the border. Testifying on NAFTA last fall before the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, Babbitt said, "I think there have been far-sighted leaders in both countries who have always understood the reality, and that is that... conservation and park and natural environmental issues of the two countries are inextricably intertwined. I think those of us who have responsibilities in these areas in both countries have always recognized specific examples that illustrate the interdependence" of the land. He used migratory waterfowl and monarch butterflies, which spend winters in Mexico, as prime examples of creatures dependent on protection in both countries.

Even though Mexico's environmental policies are in flux because of the assassination of lead presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio Murreita, the former head of SEDECOL, at least one environmental official believes "the priority of protected areas on the border is very high." Exequiel Ezcurra,



the director of environmental planning for Mexico's National Institute of Ecology, says, "whoever comes into office as president will have taken environmental matters into serious concern."

He added that "people are realizing that the federal governments have limited power of action. If we want to save species and ecosystems, we have to get involved personally."

Certainly, the two sides squabble. But for the most part, both sides seem to be working toward cooperation. The Park Service is engaged in an exchange of skills and services. Big Bend's personnel have trained a 20-person firefighting crew from across the river in Boquillas, and electricity has been provided to this Mexican town. A preliminary low-impact solar-energy system is in place.

Mexican park managers and other staff regularly come north to learn the lessons (and mistakes) of the National Park Service. The first park rangers for the Santa Elena Canyon Project might be housed on the American side until their offices are built.

The Park Service also has established a Mexican Affairs Office to work on a number of border initiatives with Mexico, one of which involves the protection of Cases Grandes archaeological sites

dispersed throughout northern Mexico and the south central United States. President Salinas recently made a commitment to spend \$35 million to protect these sites. Another initiative would establish Los Caminos Del Rio, a heritage corridor passing between Texas and Mexico.

An international education program centered around Organ Pipe plans to connect environmental science to traditions of honoring the land. This program will educate 1,000 fifth graders and their teachers about the local culture and landscape, using elders from Anglo, Mexican, and Native American communities. The Park Service is training Mexican park guards, who are beginning to model familiar gray-and-green uniforms, and is sending its new rangers to the Pinacate Desert preserve to learn how a new park can be launched with the help of the local people.

THE POST-NAFTA CONSERVATION movement will succeed because of the incredible diversity of voices in the region, or it will fail for the very same reason. The variety of people, languages, occupations, allegiances, and political systems, coupled with environmental diversity, makes a single



FRED HIRSCHMANN

solution impossible. Yet, by crafting an environmental movement from the people who love this desert as their home, this same diversity might spawn an international environmental ethic that can withstand the pressure of economic need and greed.

In the Sonoran desert, this grassroots movement has called itself the International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA), a group of Americans, Mexicans, and O'odham who have agreed to talk, debate, and eventually present a unified voice to the various powers that govern the desert. "NAFTA is for big business," says Wendy Laird of the Sonoran Institute, who is helping to organize the group. "We're creating a NAFTA for the people."

At a recent ISDA conference on the environment, the languages of three different groups could be heard describing a common land, a place that sustained both people and wildlife. But

along with protection for the land, the people sought health care and safe drinking water. A community, whether natural or human, is fragile.

"There's a growing tide of people working together across the border, and the federal government is listening," says Mexico's Ezcurra. "And it is working because no one has claimed [ownership] of the progress; everyone is just a grain of sand in this growing dune."

To ignore these voices is to doom the people to a history already full of extinctions. In July, it should be raining in Arizona and raining in Sonora, Mexico. The Hia-Ced, like the rain, will ignore the border as they gather in Quitovac to dance and sing and pray to rejuvenate themselves, as the land rejuvenates itself with a brief and brilliant green.

Ron Steffens last wrote about gateway communities for National Parks.

A Neighborly Gesture

Mexico is considering a biosphere reserve called the Santa Elena Canyon Project in the Sierra del Carmen Mountains. President Salinas has expressed his commitment to protecting this site, calling it a priority. To show support and encourage Mexico's plan to set aside this land, which is south of Big Bend National Park, write to Miguel Ruiz, Minister for the Border and Environmental Affairs, care of the Mexican Embassy, 1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20006. Or send letters of support to President Salinas at Presidencia de La Republica, Residencia Oficial de Los Piños, Puerta Central, Col. San Miguel Chapultepec, 11850 Mexico, DF.

Star Treks

As urban glow obscures the night sky, some remote parks offer unparalleled opportunities for star-gazing.

by Connie Toops

WHERE DOES A park boundary end? Lateral borders are finite, but cast a gaze skyward. Does the park stop at the treetops, or above the clouds, or perhaps beyond the farthest star? Like stunning sunrises and sunsets, the night sky should add to the appreciation of natural areas. Years ago, parks were enhanced at night by the dark zone outside their boundaries, but now the glowing lights of urbanization burn brightly on many park horizons.

The International Dark Sky Association promotes public awareness of pollution caused by poorly designed outdoor lighting. The association claims that 30 percent of the light produced by outdoor mercury fixtures is emitted horizontally or upward. This misdirected light causes glare and sky glow, and on a national scale, the association estimates a billion dollars is wasted annually by inefficient lighting. It recommends low-wattage sodium or fluorescent lamps in shielded fixtures or spotlights with motion-sensor switches to direct outdoor light only where and when it is needed.

Viewing dark, unpolluted skies in national parks and monuments is a revelation to visitors robbed of such sights near their city homes. Many parks schedule activities to interpret the night sky.

Star maps and field guides help visitors to recognize constellations on their own.

Cloudless evenings with a new or crescent moon are ideal for watching the stars. About 60 constellations can be seen from the mid-latitudes of the United States throughout the year. Some two dozen constellations are visible on a given evening. Because of the Earth's

The Southern Cross can be seen from Everglades along with a moonrise.



CONNIE TOOPS

rotation, constellations rise and set four minutes earlier each night, and thus the starscape changes with the seasons.

Everglades

Although the urban glow of Miami, Florida, is creeping ever closer, Everglades National Park remains a good place to watch stars in a tropical setting. Because of summer's abundance of mosquitoes, winter and spring are best for outdoor viewing.

In the past, visitors have been able to ease into the night on a moonlight tram, offered once a month at Shark Valley, 30 miles west of Miami on U.S. 41. This service may be available only erratically, so it is best to call 305-221-8455 to be sure the trips are offered. When they are available, a naturalist accompanies this 2 1/2-hour tour into the heart of the freshwater glades. Halfway around the loop drive, visitors disembark at an observation tower where frogs croak, insects buzz, gators splash, and limpkins wail from the moonlit marsh. Reservations are required, and a fee is charged.

Inside the park, interpreters present programs at two campgrounds. The amphitheater at Long Pine Key campground overlooks a lake, and at Flamingo, the campground adjoins Florida Bay. Sky vistas at both are lovely. Among the prominent constellations visible after sunset are Orion, the hunter; Canis Major, the great dog; Taurus, the bull; and Cassiopeia, a Queen on a W-shaped throne.

Flamingo is the southernmost village on the mainland, and from the shore on very clear nights, visitors can see the Southern Cross, a constellation of the Southern Hemisphere. It is visible due south on the horizon. Look for it in January before dawn, and by April, it rises around midnight.

Flamingo boasts a 295-site campground, restaurant, motel, gas station, and grocery. Long Pine Key and Chekika campgrounds have 108 and 20 sites, respectively. Support services for both are in nearby Homestead.



DEWYS/SIPA/ZULLO

Cactus and rock forms silhouetted against a desert sky in the Southwest.

For more information, write to Superintendent, Everglades National Park, 40001 SR 9336, Homestead, FL 33034. The Miami Space Transit Planetarium is in downtown Miami and can be reached for more information at (305) 854-4242. A 24-hour cosmic hotline also is available at 305-854-2222.

Organ Pipe Cactus

Arizona's dry air and clear skies offer some of the best night viewing conditions in the nation. Among the state's astronomical centers are Lowell Observatory at Flagstaff and Kitt Peak Observatory west of Tucson. Star-gazing is particularly good at remote Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, located on the Mexican border 120 miles west of Tucson. Ajo, 40 miles north of park headquarters, is home to Windowpane Observatory, open by appoint-

ment. Tucson, Ajo, and about 50 other Arizona cities have enacted ordinances to reduce light pollution.

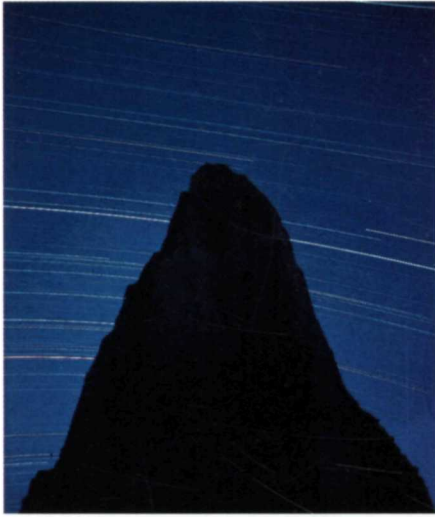
Evening temperatures are pleasant year-round. Naturalists offer sky interpretation programs once a week during the winter at the campground. On your own, explore the trail between the campground and the visitor center where there are benches for leisurely star-gazing. A short walk on the Victoria Mine trail leads to some dark washes with good sky vistas. On the nights of December 12 and 13, watch for the annual Geminid meteor shower. After midnight, observers have counted as many as 50 "shooting stars" per hour.

The monument includes a 208-site campground. Restaurants, lodging, gas stations, and other services are available in the nearby towns of Lukeville and Why. For more information, write to Superintendent, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Route 1, Box 100, Ajo, AZ 85321.

Acadia

A pleasing mix of rugged mountains and wave-washed shores, Acadia National Park preserves the natural beauty of Maine's Atlantic coast. Although tidepools and seabirds get their share of attention, one night per week during the summer interpreters invite visitors to Sand Beach to look at spectacularly starry skies. The beach faces the Atlantic Ocean on the eastern shore of Mount Desert Island.

Naturalists identify easy targets first, such as the Milky Way and colorful planets. Reddish Mars and blue-white Venus may appear in either the east or the west, since they revolve around the sun at different speeds than the Earth does. Through a small telescope, the yellowish rings of Saturn or a few of Jupiter's moons may also be visible. A bright group of stars, the Northern Cross, will be directly overhead. If fog does not obscure the southern horizon, Scorpius and Sagittarius ride the waves.



KERRICK JAMIES

Star gazers can also view skies over Capitol Reef, above, and Yosemite, right.



KERRICK JAMIES

The top of Cadillac Mountain is a terrific lookout for star-gazing on your own. A paved road winds to the 1,530-foot summit. It can be very windy on top, and on most nights, temperatures plummet after sunset. Wear warm clothes and take a blanket.

Two campgrounds are located within the park, and the nearby town of Bar Harbor offers a wide range of lodging, restaurants, scenic cruises, and boat and bike rentals. For more information, write to Superintendent, Acadia National Park, Bar Harbor, ME 04609.

Devils Tower

To geologists, Devils Tower is an ancient volcanic core, rising from the eroded hills of northeastern Wyoming. To Native Americans, it is Mateo Tepee, Bear Lodge. According to Kiowa legend, eight children once played here. One was mysteriously transformed into a bear. His seven sisters ran in fear to a huge tree stump, which they climbed even as it rose out of the ground. Clawing furiously, the bear tried to reach the girls but could not. The stump turned to stone, preserving gouges from the bear's claws. The sisters floated into the heavens, where at night they can be seen as seven bright stars in the Big Dipper.

As the summer sky darkens, the Big Dipper appears in the northwest. The two outermost stars of the Dipper's

bowl point to Polaris, the North Star. One of the monument's best observation points is Joyner Ridge trailhead, two miles beyond the campground on West Road. The trailhead also provides a stunning view of the north face of the Tower and a pleasant vista from which to enjoy the sunset.

Despite scenes in the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, which was partially filmed in the monument, ascent to the top of the Tower (elevation 5,117 feet) is not advised for casual visitors. Getting to the top is a strenuous technical climb. The campground is open year-round, but water taps are on only in the summer. Food is sold outside the entrance, two miles from the campground. Lodging and supplies are available ten miles away in Hulett. For more information, write to Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument, P.O. Box 8, Devils Tower, WY 82714.

Lava Beds

The night skies at Lava Beds are amazingly clear. The park is nestled on the dry side of the Cascade Mountains in California, 30 miles from the nearest village. Good vantage points are available throughout the monument; the most convenient are the campground and Cave Loop.

In midsummer, a huge triangle of stars—the Summer Triangle—glistens overhead. While looking for constel-

lations, visitors often see fiery meteors streaking across the black sky. They are actually particles of space dust heated to glowing incandescence as they fall into the atmosphere. Each summer the Earth revolves through a cosmic cloud that creates the Perseid meteor shower. Activity peaks on August 11.

Moonrises are also spectacular at Lava Beds. Schonchin Butte fire tower is a superb lookout point. On evenings of the full moon, the sun sets behind Mount Shasta to the west, and within a few minutes, a glowing moon rises above the vast lava plains to the east. Wildlife overlooks along Tulelake are also great for moon-watching, especially in autumn. The full moon in September is called the Harvest Moon; in October, the Hunter's Moon. Set up a spotting scope to study the craggy details of its surface, and you may see migrating ducks and geese silhouetted as they fly through the field of view.

Although water is available only in summer, the 40-site campground is open all year. The closest amenities are in Tulelake, 30 miles from the visitor center. For more information, write to Superintendent, Lava Beds National Monument, P.O. Box 867, Tulelake, CA 96134.

Connie Toops, who lives in Martinsburg, West Virginia, last wrote about black bears for National Parks.

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MARCHING IN A NEW DIRECTION

NPCA plans to build on this year's highly successful March for Parks by bringing it into the classroom.



drew attention to these issues and informed the community about what would occur after the transfer. The march drew 1,500 people who hiked four miles in the wind and cold to support the Presidio.

In Washington, D.C., a March for Parks was held in Rock Creek Park, one of the largest urban parks in the country. An oasis of natural beauty, Rock Creek is heavily used by the city's residents, many of whom have never been to a remote natural park. A bike trail runs the length of the park and is used every day by hundreds of bikers, joggers, rollerbladers, and walkers. A portion of the money raised at the Rock Creek march will be used to upgrade the exercise stations along the bike trail. Other funds will be used to produce an audiotape for the handicapped-accessible trail at the nature center.

This year NPCA introduced the first March for Parks teacher's guide, which gave teachers suggestions and lesson plans for using March for Parks in science, social studies, language arts, or other classroom activities.

Next year March for Parks will take a new direction. NPCA is planning a larger and more detailed in-school program, which will encourage teachers to start in the fall and examine a park issue each month with their students, working toward participation in a march April 21-23, 1995.

EVERY YEAR ON APRIL 22, people around the country join forces on Earth Day to celebrate the wonders of the natural world and to call attention to environmental issues. NPCA celebrates Earth Day with March for Parks, begun in 1990 with slightly more than 100 march events nationwide. This year, on March for Parks weekend (April 22-24), nearly 400 march events took place, with 550,000 participants nationwide. March for Parks events, including flagship marches in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, raised money and awareness for national, state, and local parks across the country.

Hundreds of park supporters marched on behalf of Rock Creek Park in Washington.

Participants in the San Francisco march celebrated the addition of the Presidio to the National Park System. Scheduled for transfer to the park system in October 1994, this 218-year-old military site will require considerable restoration of some of its historic and cultural landmarks. Questions about the transfer, the amount of land involved, and several proposed changes, such as building and vegetation removal, have drawn criticism from Congress and elsewhere. The flagship March for Parks



Left, some 1,500 people turned out for the San Francisco flagship march, sponsored by Foghorn Press, in support of the Presidio. The historic military site is scheduled for transfer to the National Park System in October.

Below, people of all ages enjoyed the Washington, D. C., march in Rock Creek Park. Following the four-mile walk, participants helped plant trees, assemble picnic tables, and clean up litter along the creek.



The program will be interdisciplinary, using parks to teach subjects such as history (how the park started, why it is important to protect, what cultural resources it preserves); government (the roles local, state, and federal governments play in the selected park and how students can play a part in its future); environment/science (what kinds of wildlife and vegetation can be found in the park, the natural biological cycle of the park); English (poetry and prose written about parks); and math (calculating the number of acres or the number of plants, given an estimation or survey of one area). If you are an educator and have suggestions or would like to receive information on the March for Parks education program, contact:

Ellen Wilson, March for Parks/school program, NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

If you participated in a March for Parks this year, we hope it was a successful event for you and that you plan to participate in—or better yet, organize—a march next year. The 1995 March for Parks will coincide with the 25th anniversary of Earth Day, which promises to be an important environmental event.

If you are interested in supporting March for Parks, see the merchandise offered on the next page. One hundred percent of the proceeds go toward funding the March for Parks program, enabling NPCA to provide all materials at no cost to March Partners.



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N O T I C E S

Grassroots Guide Released

In May, Foghorn Press and NPCA announced the release of *Our Endangered Parks: What You Can Do To Protect Our National Heritage*, an updated version of NPCA's guide for citizen activism. The book is designed to help the public recognize and act on its responsibility to preserve national parks unimpaired for future generations.

The book is divided into three main sections: "Parks in Peril—What You Can Do," "Park Issues, Park Answers," and a final section addressing park policy, laws, and regulations.

Our Endangered Parks includes appendices that list park advocacy and friends groups, NPCA at a glance, and other resources. NPCA thanks Foghorn Press for its careful attention to the book and hopes the book will help activists to be effective champions of the national parks. To purchase a copy, write to Foghorn Press at 555 DeHaro Street, The Boiler Room #220, San Francisco, CA 94107. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to NPCA's March for Parks event.

Friends in Need...

NPCA's 75th anniversary conference was an important step toward the association's goal of building a national friends group network. With information acquired at the conference, NPCA will develop regional training. NPCA salutes other organizations that support the friends network effort, such as the National Park Foundation, which held a conference for friends groups in April.

NPCA is putting together a video library of its conference workshops, including organizational management training, media skills, and grassroots techniques and tactics. For more information, write to Tom St. Hilaire at NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

March for Parks 101

To increase the positive impact of March for Parks, NPCA is incorporating its annual walk event into an environmental education program. NPCA hopes educators will use March for Parks to teach students about environmental issues and civic responsibility. NPCA wants to hear your ideas about the role March for Parks can play in education as well as how you have successfully involved students in environmental community events. Send comments to Ellen Wilson at NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For more on March for Parks, see page 46.

Checks, Prize, and Videotape

This summer, record your trip to the national parks, get a chance to win a free trip, and help NPCA save the parks in the process. In participating retail stores, you can enter the TDK "Save the Parks" Sweepstakes for a chance at a grand prize vacation or other prizes. Also, for every TDK 8mm, VHS-C, or full-size VHS videotape sold before September 30 at participating retailers, 25 cents will be donated to NPCA for its park protection programs.

Link Up with NPCA

NPCA has entered the age of electronic mail via CompuServe's Outdoors Support Forum. Type "GO NPCA" and post messages to **NPCA-National Parks**, or E-mail to ID# 73441,1406. NPCA members can receive a free introductory CompuServe membership. Call 1-800-524-3388, department 156.

Next Issue...

In the September/October issue, *National Parks* examines butterflies, waste management, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Also, "Access" delves into archaeological digs in the parks.

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Why We Need A Smaller U.S. Population And How We Can Achieve It

We need a smaller population in order to halt the destruction of our environment, and to create an economy that will be **sustainable** over the very long term.

We are trying to address our steadily worsening environmental problems without coming to grips with their root cause -- **overpopulation**.

If present immigration and fertility rates continue, our population, now over 258 million, will pass 400 million by the year 2050 -- and still be growing rapidly!

All efforts to save our environment will ultimately be futile unless we not only halt U.S. population growth, but reverse it, so that our population can eventually be stabilized at a **sustainable** level -- far lower than it is today.

The Optimum U.S. Population Size

The central issue is surely this: **At what size should we seek to stabilize U.S. population?** Unless we know in what direction we should be headed, how can we possibly devise sensible policies to get us there?

The size at which our population is eventually stabilized is supremely important because of the effect of sheer numbers of people on such vitally important national goals as a healthy environment, and a sustainable economy.

We believe these goals can best be achieved with a U.S. population in the range of 125 to 150 million, or about its size in the 1940s. This optimum size could be reached in about three to four generations if we do two things now that are well within our grasp.

How To Get There

1. **Reduce annual immigration to about 200,000** so that it is in rough balance with emigration (out-migration). Then, immigration will no longer contribute significantly to our population growth, as it does now.
2. **Lower our fertility rate** (the average number of children per woman) from the present 2.1 to around 1.5 and maintain it at that level for several decades. We believe

that non-coercive financial incentives will be necessary in order to reach that goal.

If almost all women had no more than two children, our fertility rate would drop to around 1.5, because many women remain childless by choice, or choose to have not more than one child. **We promote the ideal of the two-child maximum family as the social norm, because that is the key to lowering our fertility.**

Incentives to Lower Fertility

NPG proposes these incentives to motivate parents to have no more than two children:

- Eliminate the present Federal income tax exemption for dependent children born after a specified date.
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- Give an annual cash grant to low income parents who pay little or no income tax, and who have no more than two children. Those with three or more children would lose the cash grant entirely.

Two Vastly Different Paths Lie Before Us

With the reductions in immigration and fertility we advocate, our nation could start **now** on the path toward a sustainable, and prosperous, population of 125 to 150 million.

Without such a program, we are almost certain to continue our mindless, headlong rush down our current path. That path is leading us straight toward catastrophic population levels that can only devastate our environment, and produce universal poverty in a crowded, polluted nation.

If you agree that we need to work toward a smaller U.S. population, we need your support. **NPG is the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and for specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. population growth, write today for our FREE BROCHURE.

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American Places

WILLIAM ZINSSER is perhaps best known for his books about writing, which include *On Writing Well*. He has taught for dozens of years and written for a variety of magazines and newspapers.

In *American Places*, Zinsser embarks on an 18-month pilgrimage to 15 sites considered among the most important in America. Zinsser visits Mount Vernon, Niagara Falls, Yellowstone, Pearl Harbor, and the Alamo. He chose these "super icons"—shrines in the American psyche that host huge numbers of visitors and embody a powerful idea about America. It is not surprising that six of the places are national park sites.

When touring Mount Rushmore, Lexington and Concord, Yellowstone, Appomattox, Kitty Hawk, and the *USS Arizona Memorial* at Pearl Harbor, Zinsser asks each custodian a fundamental question: "Why do so many people visit these sites?"

Many of the rangers and site managers attribute their site's popularity to the Hollywood mystique. The 1950s television series "Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier" immortalized the Alamo for millions of baby-boomers. And who among the older generation could forget Cary Grant's visit to Mount Rushmore in Alfred Hitchcock's thriller *North by Northwest*?

But more than the movies, Zinsser finds that each site captures an aspect of "place" in the national memory. For example, he discovers that for those who can recall the infamous attack at Pearl Harbor, the *USS Arizona Memorial* remains a national shrine to fallen heroes. But for those born generations later, the memorial holds little meaning.

Education and self-discovery are fundamental roles for the National Park Service. George Robinson, chief interpreter at Yellowstone, says it best when

he tells Zinsser that people visit park units because they "have an innate need to reconnect with the places from which they have evolved. That's where the Park Service's role comes in: to help people see that Yellowstone is not just black bears and Old Faithful but a spiritual and emotional experience."

American Places is a keenly written, refreshing, personal guide to places of the heart and mind. It encourages us all to embark on our own journey to search for a sense of place.

American Places: A Writer's Pilgrimage to 15 of This Country's Most Visited and Cherished Sites; paperback, \$10; Harper Perennial, New York.

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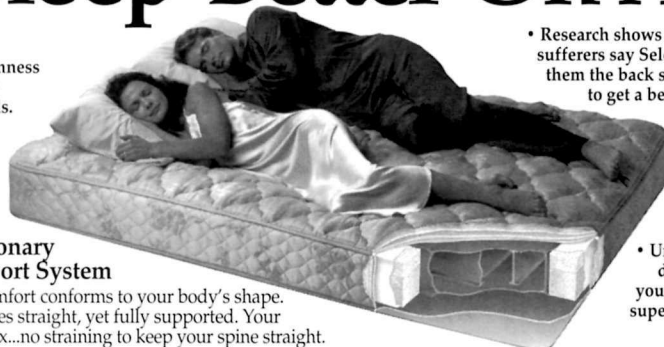


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Night Lights

PARK PURSUIT tests your knowledge of the history and the natural resources represented within the National Park System. Clues can be found in past issues of the magazine, in books, or in literature about the parks.

The July/August quiz focuses on lighthouses within the park system, and information has been provided to aid you in identifying those depicted.

Lighthouses have always held a fascination for the coastal dweller as well as the seafarer. Their blinking lights herald land to returning voyagers or guide them to a safe haven during a storm. These welcoming beacons first appeared along the New England coast in the 18th century and represent the earliest efforts to reduce the dangers of

seafaring. After the Revolutionary War, the new federal government was especially concerned about approaches to New York, already a center for trade, and chose to erect its first lighthouse in 1797 at Montauk Point, Long Island. Sperm whale oil was used to fuel this and other lights until the 1860s, when petroleum oil was discovered.

Nearly 150 years after the first light was installed, the functions of the independent Lighthouse Service were taken over by the Coast Guard.

The romance of the often lonely life of the lightkeepers and their families is a thing of the past. All lighthouses today are automated because of the availability of commercial electric power and reliable maintenance.

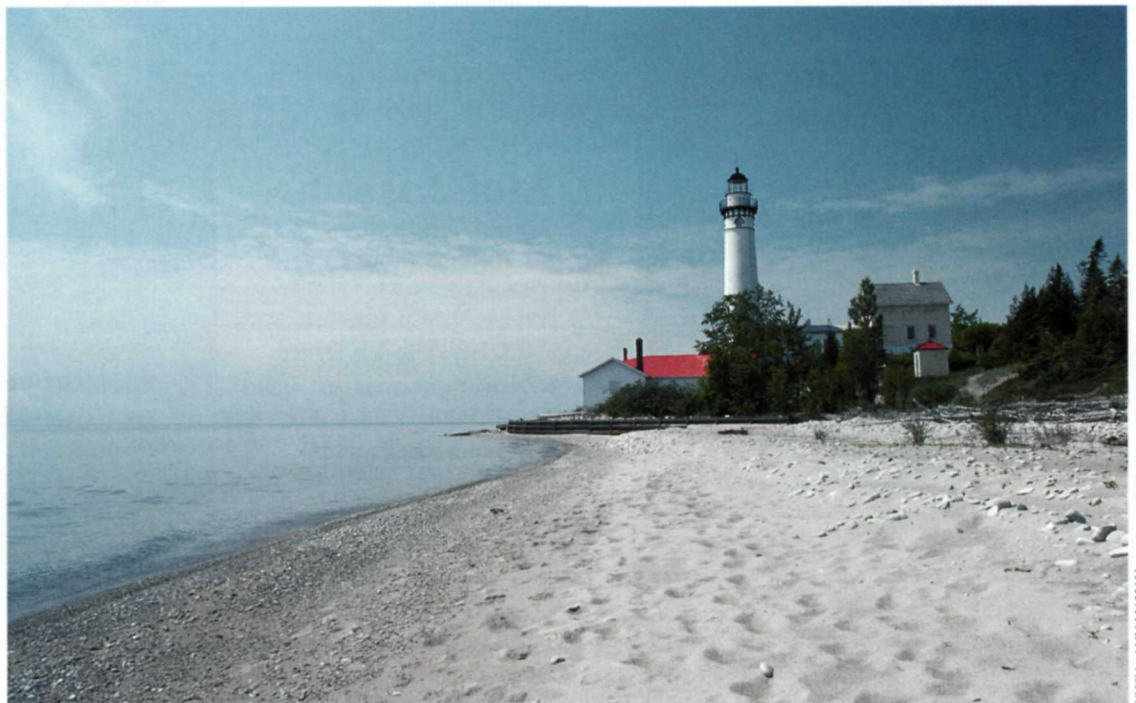
Despite automation, lighthouses have

retained their distinctive colors or designs. For instance, the candlestick light at Cape Hatteras National Seashore is readily identifiable by East Coast dwellers and many others.

The lighthouses depicted here are on but three of the dozens of island, coastal, and lakeside park sites containing these reminders of a time when nearly all efficient trade and transportation were over water.

If you are unable to wait until the next issue for the answers, call our 900 number from a touch-tone phone (see page 8). The answers to the May/June quiz are: 1. Buck Island Reef National Monument, St. Croix, Virgin Islands; 2. Isle Royale National Park, Michigan; and 3. Channel Islands National Park, California.

- 1.** This lighthouse was built in 1871 to guide ships through the passage between the mainland and the island during storms on the lake. The island on which the lighthouse sits is several miles off a national lakeshore. What is the name of the lighthouse, and what national park site is this?



JOHN&ANN MAHAN



FRANK S. BALTHUS

2. In 1851 this headland was selected as the site for a lighthouse. In clear weather, the light was visible for 25 miles, but the seemingly good location concealed a serious flaw. Low clouds often obscured the light, and in 1891, the keeper extinguished the lamp for the last time. What is the name of the lighthouse, and what national park site is this?



BRIAN TAGUE

3. Fishing has played a major part in the history and life of the cape where this lighthouse is located. To guide fishermen and other mariners, five lighthouses were built within the boundaries of the national seashore. This lighthouse defines the end of the peninsula, marking a site where the ocean's waters meet those of the bay. What is the name of the lighthouse, and what national park site is this?

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