

National parks

The Magazine of
The National Parks
Conservation
Association

JULY/AUGUST 2002

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Desert Bighorns
Taking the Pulse
of the Parks

Mapping Sound

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Vision





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National parks

Vol. 76, No. 5-6
July/August 2002

The Magazine of the National Parks
Conservation Association

FEATURES

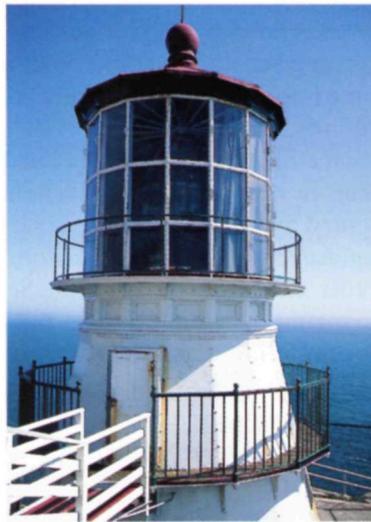
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For decades, wildlife biologists and park rangers at Canyonlands and other Southwest parks have worked to restore desert bighorn. These efforts represent a great success story, although the animals' continued recovery is far from ensured.
By Jeffrey Cohn

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NPCA's State of the Parks program assesses the overall health of the national parks by analyzing scientific data on the condition of a park's natural and historic resources. The goal is to provide information to policy-makers and the National Park Service that will improve conditions.
By Kim A. O'Connell

- 34 Preserving the Peace and Quiet**
The dull roar of progress and its machines is overwhelming the ambient sounds of nature in the parks and harming wildlife in the process. The Park Service and environmental groups are working to restore the soundscape, as important to an ecosystem—and our own well-being—as clean air and water.
By Brian Lavendel



COVER: Though still endangered, the desert bighorn population has risen considerably in certain parts of the Southwest.
Photo by Michael H. Francis.



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OUTLOOK



A Clear View

The Bush administration has not done enough to obtain clean air over national parks.

Shenandoah National Park in Virginia does not have the grand peaks of the Tetons or the glacier-carved granite walls of Yosemite. But it does have a wonderful central ridge that overlooks parallel, descending watersheds and surrounding valleys rich in American history—and sometimes you can even see it.

I hike in Shenandoah several times each year, most recently as part of a staff field trip. It is a national embarrassment, and a violation of the legal foundation of our national parks, that Shenandoah's historic vistas are frequently shrouded by dirty air. Often the visibility is only one-tenth of what it was before power plants with no emission control equipment started polluting our skies, hurting both parks and people. That same pollution is blamed for 30,000 premature deaths nationwide each year.

Some of America's most polluted air occurs in national parks throughout the country, from Big Bend in Texas and Sequoia/Kings Canyon in California to Acadia in Maine and Great Smoky Mountains in North Carolina and Tennessee. During peak tourist season over the last four years, the staff at Great Smoky Mountains has posted air quality warnings 140 times, indicating that the air was at levels dangerous to visitors, plants, and animals.

Inadequate federal and state laws and the inadequate enforcement of those laws have brought air pollution to its



CHAD EVANS WYATT

current level. The Bush administration did not create the problem, but it has the legal and moral obligation to dramatically improve air quality.

So far, its efforts have been mixed. The administration has taken steps to

require industries with aging equipment, such as power plants and refineries, to install pollution control devices. Until now, these industries have been exempt from doing so, and many fear that corporate pressure could significantly weaken or even eliminate this program before it begins. In February, the administration proposed a "Clear Skies Initiative" to improve air quality in our parks, even though a bipartisan proposal, supported by NPCA, would reduce pollution more quickly. And, even while the administration is putting forth its initiative, it has signaled that it will weaken one of the few existing programs that already helps to protect parks.

This administration has made national parks a focus of its environmental agenda. Ensuring that our air is clean enough to breathe should be a part of that agenda. Clearing the air is not simply a matter of preserving majestic views; it's a matter of preserving the health of our children and of our planet. Encourage the administration to do the right thing. Please visit our web site at www.npca.org/take_action to let your voice be heard.

Thomas C. Kiernan
President



EDITOR'S NOTE

Sanctuaries

Many of us view the parks as sanctuaries for wildlife. These open spaces provide food, water, and habitat for a variety of creatures, including desert bighorn sheep. The sheep are just one of hundreds of endangered species found within the National Park System. Our story on page 26 explores the role of Canyonlands National Park in Utah in maintaining the sheep's numbers as well as establishing the animals elsewhere.



CHAD EVANS WYATT

But even these sanctuaries face challenges. Point Reyes National Seashore provides habitat for 15 percent of California's native plant species, nearly 30 percent of the world's marine mammal species, 45 percent of North American bird species, and 23 federally listed endangered and threatened species. Yet, it is considered among the most threatened of all biologically rich terrestrial regions in the world. Our story on page 30 outlines how NPCA's State of the Parks program is poised to educate the public about the issues challenging the Park Service in the hope that the integrity of the sanctuary can be maintained.

In addition, these special lands serve as oases for us. They are places from which to escape civilization, to listen to birds singing, wind rustling the leaves, or water crashing down a falls. Unfortunately, even in the parks, we can't always escape. Our story on page 34 explores a Park Service program under way at Biscayne National Park that is mapping the soundscape of the park and may be used elsewhere to help preserve the peace and quiet.

Although the parks are neither pristine nor perfect, they are among the best places this country has to preserve our wildlife and to restore our well-being.

Linda M. Rancourt
Editor-in-Chief

National Parks

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About NPCA

WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT WE DO

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

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

HOW TO JOIN

You can become a member by calling our Membership Department, extension 213. *National Parks* magazine is among the benefits you will receive. Of the \$25 membership dues, \$3 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

EDITORIAL MISSION

The magazine is the only national publication focusing solely on national parks. The magazine creates an awareness of the need to protect and properly manage park resources, encourages an

appreciation for the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, and informs and inspires individuals to help preserve them.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Members can help defend America's natural and cultural heritage. Activists alert Congress and the administration to park threats; comment on park planning and adjacent land-use decisions; assist NPCA in developing partnerships; and educate the public and the media. For more information, contact our grassroots coordinator, extension 222.

HOW TO DONATE

For more information on Partners for the Parks, contact our Membership Department, extension 213. For information about Trustees for the Parks, bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 145 or 146. You can also donate by shopping online at www.npca.org, where 5 percent of your purchases is donated to NPCA at no extra cost to you.

HOW TO REACH US

National Parks Conservation Association, 1300 19th St., N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036; by phone: 1-800-NAT-PARK; by e-mail: npca@npca.org; and www.npca.org.



On the Homefront, Political Climate



On the Homefront

After seeing your cover photograph of the Statue of Liberty and reading the President's Outlook and the letters column [April/May 2002], I could not help but express my thoughts concerning the issue of snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park.

After witnessing the World Trade Center attacks on September 11 (the school where I teach is located less than a mile from ground zero), we were, indeed, lucky and grateful to have been spared the tragedy of being in or near the Twin Towers. For months on end, however, we smelled the aftermath of this disaster. Smoke and toxic fumes filled the hallways of our school, our neighborhood, and city streets.

In view of the recent events, pollution of the air from recreational snowmobiles within our National Park System is completely selfish and inane. Banning snowmobiles appears to be a viable solution, especially at this crucial point in time where clean air is becoming more of an endangered natural commodity.

*Bruce Colin
New York, NY*

Political Climate

I am writing to you in response to the article "Climate Change" [Jan/Feb 2002]. This article answered many of my questions regarding the Bush administration's environmental policies. After September 11th, I, along with many of

my fellow students at Central Michigan University, asked where environmental action would stand on the new list of priorities for the nation.

I agree with Michael Finley, former Yellowstone superintendent, when he said, "...The Bush administration has adopted a public land policy that so far is nothing but smoke and mirrors where environmental protection is concerned."

A pledge was made for additional park system money; however, the majority of the money will go toward construction, not science or wildlife. I realize that the tragedy of September 11th needs to be dealt with and terrorism handled. I just hope with all the focus on terrorism our nation doesn't forget to protect the one system that keeps us bonded—our environment.

*Melissa M. Hughes
Mount Pleasant, MI*

Pacific Gems

I hope you will correct the impression given by your article "Gems of the Pacific" [Jan/Feb 2002], which, in referring to the leprosy settlement on Molo-kai, states that "the U.S. Government forced native people to relocate beginning in 1865...."

In 1865 Hawaii was an independent monarchy under the rule of Kamehameha V. This kingdom existed until 1893, when it was overthrown by a group of its own citizens, which included members of its government. It was not until 1898, when Hawaii was annexed by the United States, that the U.S. government had any control over Hawaiian affairs.

*Richard McMahon
Kabuku, HI*

Power of Place

"The Power of Place" [Jan/Feb 2002] brought to mind an absolutely memorable visit to John Adams' house. We were on our way to Boston from Cape

Cod and made an unscheduled stop there. We were very glad that we did. What made it so great was our guide. She obviously loved showing people this historic place. We felt she was talking about her beloved ancestors. That was in 1986, and it is still the high point of our many visits to historic sites. We can't emphasize enough how important it is to have quality personnel at our national historic parks in addition to maintaining the buildings and grounds.

*Nancy & Glenn Aston-Reese
Washington, PA*

To see more letters on these and other topics, please visit our web site at www.npsca.org.

CORRECTION

Two photographs that ran with "The Forgotten Colony" in April/May were misidentified. Neither the replica of a colonial sailing ship nor the living-history museum is located within Colonial National Historical Park. They are part of an adjacent theme park run by the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

WRITE TO US

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ParkScope

News and Notes

BY RYAN DOUGHERTY

RESOURCE THREATS

Zion's Cottonwoods Could Soon Vanish

Park Service examining how to restore canyon's ecosystem.

ZION N.P., UTAH—Lingering effects from decades of human manipulation of the Virgin River have placed the spectacular cottonwood trees at Zion National Park in danger.

"We have an aging forest that is gradually going to die," said Jeff Bradybaugh, chief resource manager at Zion. "In 30 to 60 years, there will be very few if any cottonwood trees in the canyon."

That prediction echoes the findings of a recent study conducted by the park and the Grand Canyon Trust. "Without active intervention," the report states, "the magnificent canopy of cottonwood trees, part of the historic landscape within Zion Canyon, will vanish."

The trees are simply not regenerating, the study revealed. The main culprit is a series of revetments, stone levees that are reinforced with wire mesh, built in the 1930s to protect the road and facilities from the flood-prone river. Although successful in protecting infrastructure, they have also altered the canyon's ecosystem.

The river no longer reaches its flood-

plain, where it once left sediments and nutrients crucial to cottonwood seed germination. Its flow is now faster during snowmelt and significant precipitation, scouring away young cottonwoods. And, the water table has lowered, making it tougher for established cottonwoods to get moisture.

As a result, there has been almost no reproduction or replacement of the cottonwoods. The revetments have also affected the river's riparian and aquatic systems, jeopardizing the indigenous fish species.

The report recommends a restoration program that entails removing the revetments along a two-mile stretch of the river, as well as a reconstruction of the river's natural bed, which would spur growth of new cottonwoods to replace the old ones.

The park's final decision won't be easy, though. Aside from the cost, preliminarily pegged at \$5 million, concerns abound on protecting the park's infrastructure from

the river and preserving water quality for downstream users.

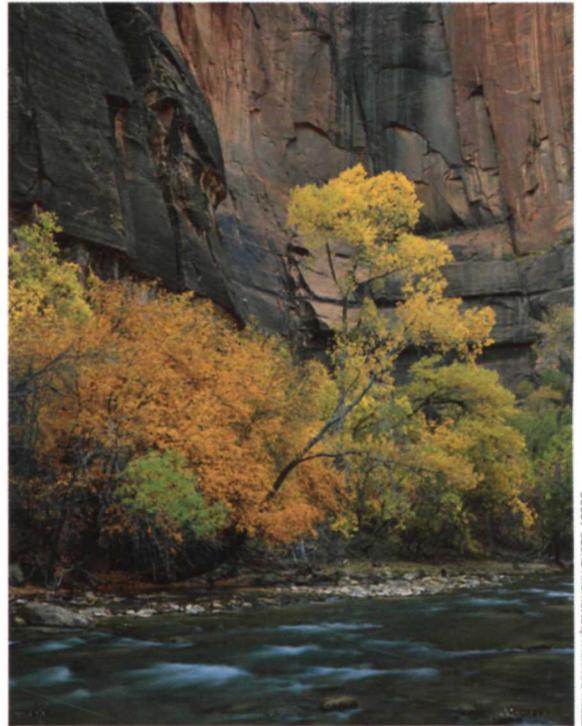
"We're taking the slow approach on this," Bradybaugh said, "evaluating all

effects, both short-term and long-term."

The park is gathering information on various actions, from complete removal of revetments in the canyon and reconstruction of the river channel to simpler alternatives such as removing the revetments and letting the river establish a channel within the available floodplain.

The ultimate goal is to restore the floodplain and riverine environment in Zion Canyon, Bradybaugh said, thereby restoring the processes that affect the biological communities in the river.

Park Superintendent Martin C. Ott has said a formal proposal is at least a year away, after extensive study and input from the public.



Cottonwood trees along the Virgin River at Zion.

NEWS FLASH!

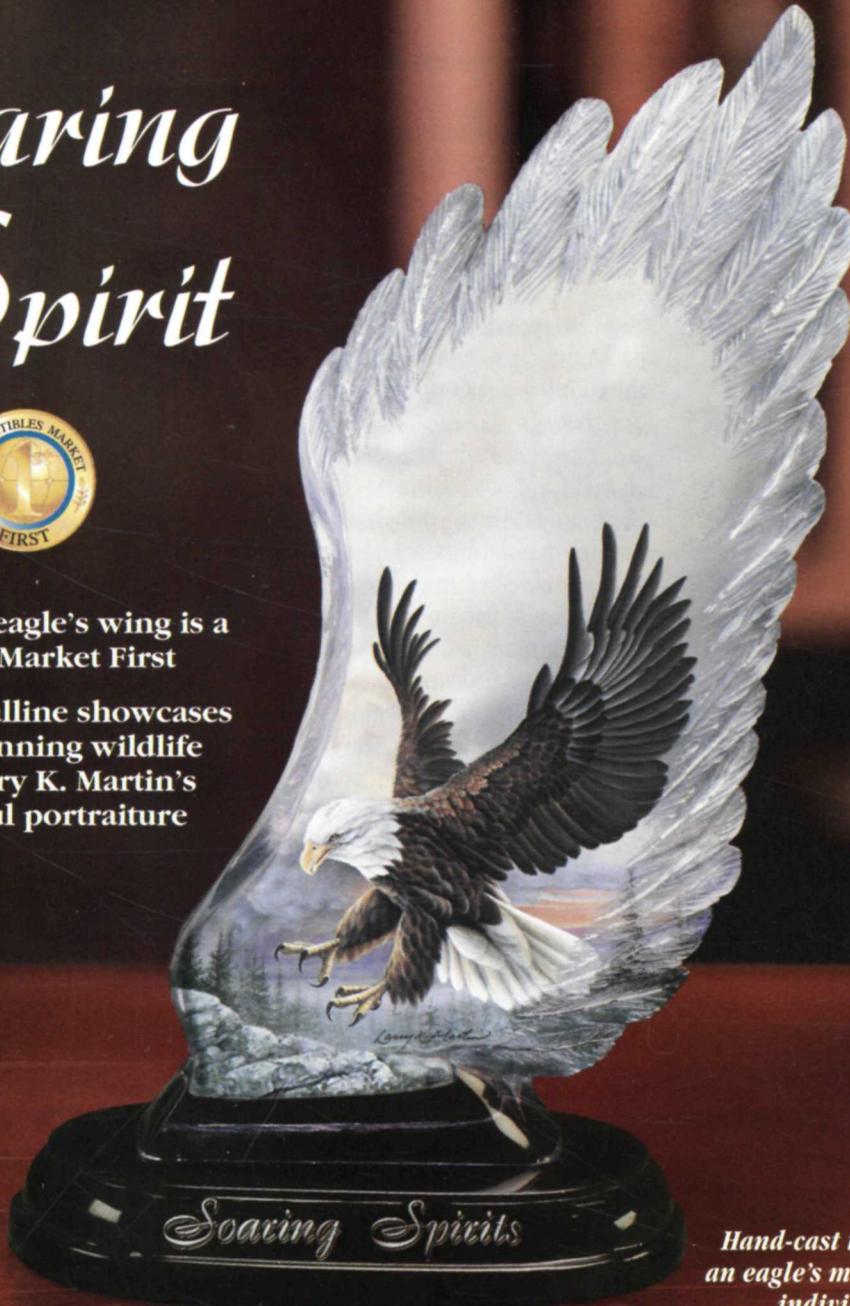
Zion's cottonwood trees could be gone in 30 to 60 years, park officials say, if the Virgin River's floodplain is not restored.

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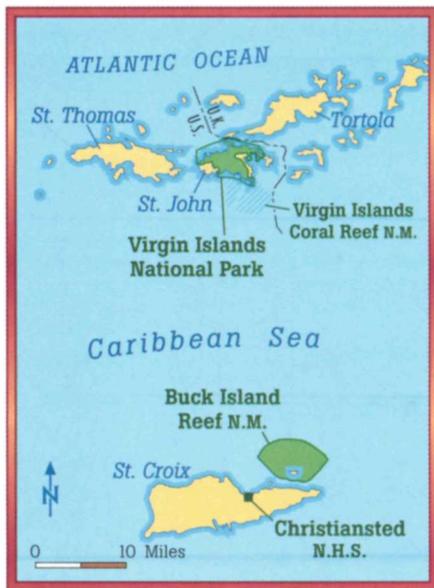
Marine Reserves at Virgin Islands Likely

The no-take zones would protect the island's diverse marine life.

VIRGIN ISLANDS N.P., V.I.—The designation of coral reefs circling the Virgin Islands as a national monument, an order by former President Bill Clinton that drew both raves and heavy criticism, appears to finally be moving forward.

Clinton's order in January 2001 created the U.S. Virgin Island Coral Reef National Monument, encompassing more than 12,000 acres of coral reefs, and added nearly 18,000 acres of protection to nearby Buck Island National Monument. The presidential order designated marine reserves to protect the extraordinary diversity of marine life around the Virgin Islands.

Since then, however, the designation has been wrapped in red tape. The Virgin Islands' two top elected leaders, Gov. Charles Turnbull and Delegate to the U.S. Congress Donna Christian-Christiansen, opposed the designation, saying it would hurt fishermen who depend on coastal fishing grounds. They



requested that the federal government's General Accounting Office conduct a full legal review of the designation.

That review lasted several months. At press time, its finding had not been officially released, but Virgin Islands Superintendent John H. King and other park advocates said indications were that the ruling would uphold the monument designation.

Once the Park Service gets the go-ahead from the Interior Department, King said, three things will happen: interim regulations for the monument will be published in the Federal Register, the park will proceed with planning for the monument, and the park will begin an aggressive educational outreach effort on the benefits of managing the monument area as a marine reserve.

"Some fishermen oppose the monuments because they fear the loss of some of their fishing grounds," said Mary Munson, NPCA's South Florida regional director, "but there is increasing recognition that no-take reserves actually help fishermen, since they provide safe havens in which fish can grow and reproduce. Fishermen can catch more and bigger fish in adjacent areas."

Before Clinton's order, Department of Interior officials said overfishing from traps in and around the islands had reached crisis levels. Under the designation, fishing would be off-limits in all but two areas of the new monument, the thought being that the no-take zones will replenish area fisheries and restore habitats.

"The science is overwhelming on the positive benefits of marine reserves for the growth of fisheries," said Joe Kessler, president of the Friends of Virgin Islands Park, a group that, along with NPCA, has urged its members, as well as citizens and businesses in the Virgin Islands, to support the marine reserves.

Once people became aware of the seriousness of the issue, they were eager to help, Kessler said.

"The oceans are dying," Munson said, "and these network marine reserves have been identified as an excellent solution to the problem."

NPCA Notes

► In March, NPCA's Community Partners group hosted "Get to Know South Florida's National Parks" in Miami. The conference was designed to bolster the relationship between minorities and southern Florida's national parks by emphasizing the parks' natural beauty and historical ties to people of color. About 100 residents of nearby communities attended. Park Service staff from Biscayne, Everglades, and Dry Tortugas national parks, Big Cypress National Preserve, and members of the Miami Community Partners Program participated and shared stories about historical connections. Staff told how African-American homesteader Lancelot Jones and his sons hacked out a channel in the coral reefs, still visible today, to enable their family to transport their citrus crops by boat to the mainland. Although today no one would advocate destroying the coral, Audrey Peterman, event organizer and NPCA board member, hopes that stories such as Jones' will encourage people of color to use and associate themselves with south Florida's national parks.

► On May 17, Americans for National Parks launched the National Parks Scrapbook. Individuals can log onto www.americansfornationalparks.org/scrapbook and post their photos of national parks, in the hopes of inspiring others to care about such treasures. ANP, a coalition launched by NPCA, is working to get lawmakers to address the full funding needs of the National Park System. ANP will share posted entries with members of Congress and the president as evidence of the public's concern.

—Jenell Talley

Cape Hatteras Light Remains Closed

Repairs to the lighthouse force closure for second year in a row.

CAPE HATTERAS N.S., N.C.—The renowned black-and-white-striped lighthouse at Cape Hatteras National Seashore will be closed for repair this summer, as it was last year—a disappointment for visitors and a financial blow to the park and area businesses.

The lighthouse has been closed since June 2001, when a piece of cast iron fell from its spiral staircase. The National Park Service (NPS) found cracks in many of the stairs and corrosion and rust on nuts and bolts.

Repairs will cost about \$750,000, depleting most park program funds, officials said. The park also had to cut several seasonal interpreter and ranger

positions to pay for the repairs.

NPS began charging fees for climbing the lighthouse before the stairs crumbled last summer, which was expected to yield about \$500,000 a year.

No timetable has yet been set for the repairs, as congressional approval was still pending, but even the best-case scenario would mean closure until October.

However, park officials don't expect overall visitation to plummet, citing brisk sales at the nearby Eastern National Bookstore last summer while the lighthouse was closed.

"Our indications are that we are not losing visitation due to closure," said Mary Doll, public information officer for the Outer Banks Group of NPS. "Lighthouse visitors are still coming."

Last summer, business owners complained that the lighthouse closure hurt tourism. The lighthouse, constructed in 1870, attracts about 200,000 visitors a year. In 1999, it was moved 1,600 feet inland to protect it from the encroaching surf, at a cost of almost \$12 million. The beach erodes roughly ten feet a year.



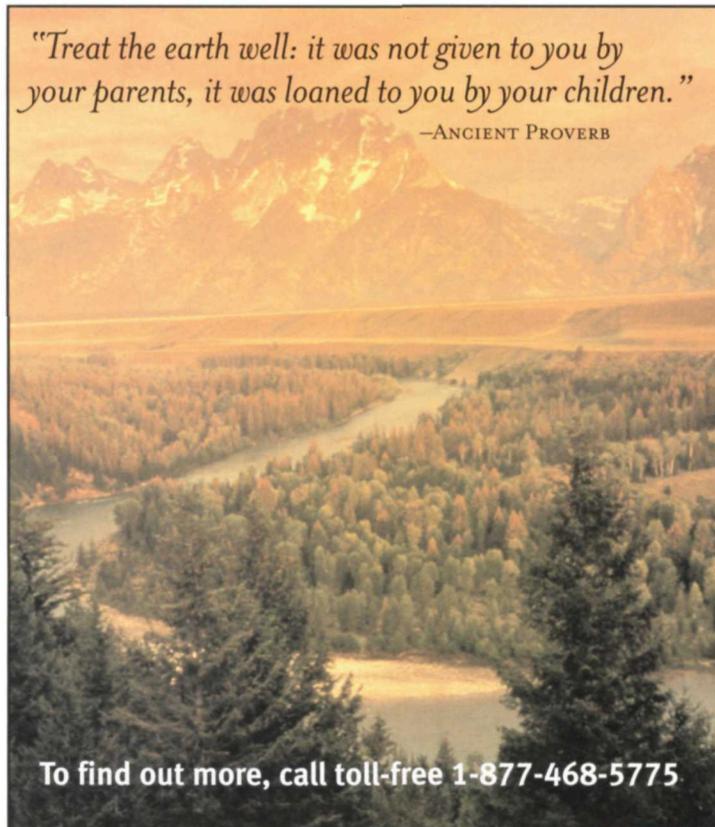
Couples searching for an awe-inspiring, off-the-beaten-path, and inexpensive place for their wedding need look no further than national parks.

Indeed, planning a wedding at a national park is no more difficult than arranging one at a church. First, contact the ranger headquarters at the park you are interested in, as far in advance as possible, and ask about locations, times, and whether you will need a permit (which costs between \$50 and \$200). Each park has different rules governing these special ceremonies. Then, take a field trip to the park to settle final details.

Were you married in a national park? Please share your wedding stories with *National Parks* (addresses on page 6) for possible publication in the magazine or on NPCA's web site.

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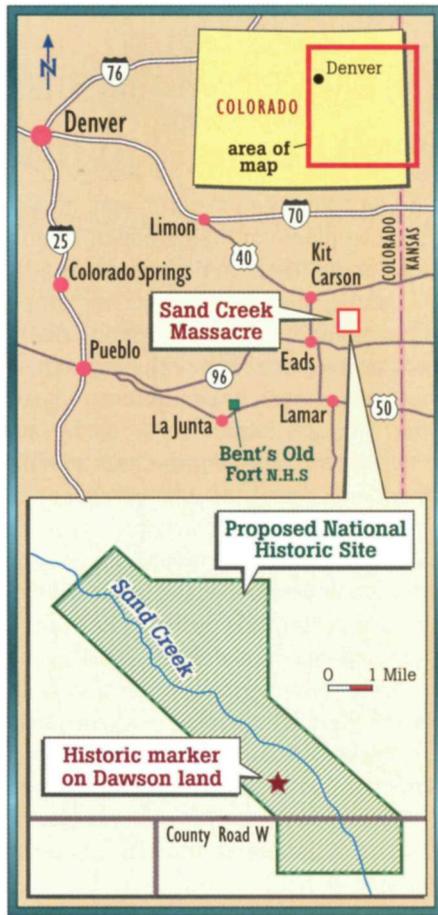
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Sand Creek Site Donated to Indians

Land expected to become part of designated national historic site.

CHIVINGTON, COLO.—The story of the Sand Creek Massacre, considered one of the great shames of American history, is closer to being properly told, after a casino management company agreed to buy land at the heart of the massacre site and donate it to two Indian tribes that consider it sacred.

Southwest Entertainment Inc. of Minneapolis agreed to buy the 1,465-acre ranch, known as a key piece of land at the site, in April and donate it to the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. Ultimately, the Park Service is expected to administer the property as part of

Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, which could cover as many as 12,500 acres.

The historic site would commemorate the massacre during which about 700 Colorado militia troops killed approximately 163 Cheyenne and Arapaho women, children, and old men under the leadership of Black Kettle and other chiefs, who thought they slept under the protection of the United States, on November 29, 1864.

“Establishment of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site would be final recognition of American military might used against an essentially defenseless native civilian population,” said Alicia Seyler, NPCA’s American Indian liaison.

For the tribes driven from the land so long ago, the site would allow an opportunity to tell the story of the massacre from their perspective.

“Our history will be told the way it happened,” said Clara Bushyhead, an Arapaho from Oklahoma, “not the way it was told to us in school.”

“We are very excited about it because it has been over a century, and we haven’t had the opportunity to take care of the land properly,” added Robert P. Tabor, chairman of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma.

Initially, the federal government had offered to buy the ranch, owned by William Dawson. Frustrated by what he considered a low offer, Dawson put the land up for public sale. Two months later, he got the money he wanted, about \$1.5 million, from Southwest Entertainment Inc.

“This is a win-win situation for everyone,” said Dawson.

Without Dawson’s land, establishing the historic site would have been next to impossible, said Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colo.), sponsor of the legislation passed in November 2000 that designated the site.

Since then, the Conservation Fund has purchased 240 acres—other than the Dawson ranch—from three of 17 property owners who have land within the proposed park boundary. The Park

Service, the tribes, and the state of Colorado must now determine whether enough property has been acquired to establish the site, said Alexa Roberts, project manager for the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

“At this point, we probably still have a few additional properties to acquire, one way or another,” she said.

Following the purchase of the crucial Dawson land, however, officials are optimistic that the Sand Creek site will someday be a reality—and an important historical achievement.

“This is the first unit in the National Park System to be called a massacre site,” Roberts said. “That is historically very significant—we are finally acknowledging a terrible event in American history.”

“The recognition of this land as a massacre site is long overdue,” Roberts added, “and the story needs telling.”

NPCA Notes

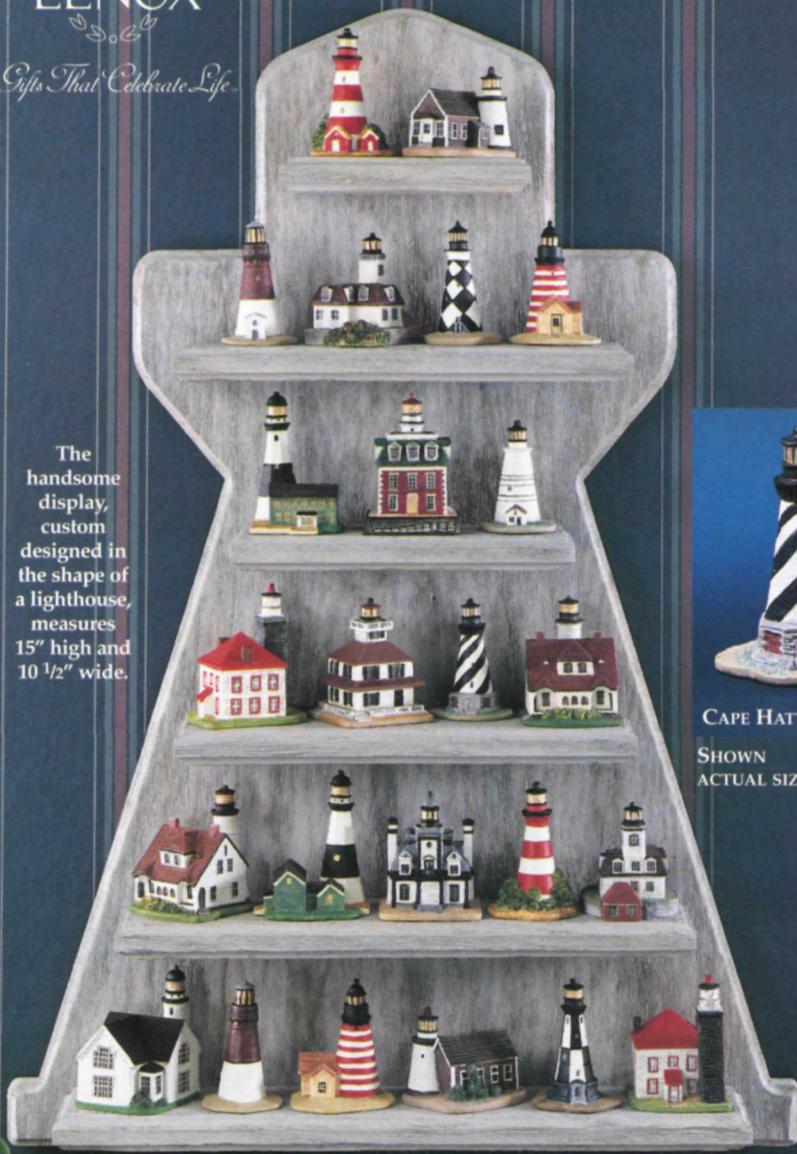
► On July 18, the Murie Center pays homage to Mardy Murie, as the 1998 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient prepares to celebrate her 100th birthday. The center will host the “Evening of Enchantment” gala at the Murie Ranch in Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming to commemorate Murie’s lifetime commitment to conservation and to raise money for the center. The Murie Center works with people from various professions and geographic regions to promote nature and its connection to the human spirit. The night will be filled with food, live music, a performance based on Murie’s writings, and a showcase of original designs inspired by Murie’s and her husband Olaus’ passion for wildlife. The premiere of “Place of Enchantment: The Mardy Murie Story,” performed by Voices of the South, will conclude the evening.

—Jenell Talley

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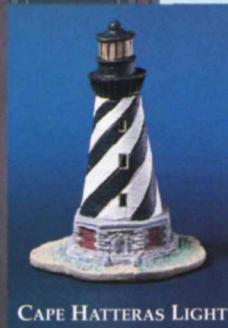


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ENDANGERED SPECIES

Bald Eagle Returns to Channel Islands

Whether the species can thrive in southern California will be tested.

CHANNEL ISLANDS N.P., CALIF.—The bald eagle has been reintroduced at Channel Islands National Park, a project that, if successful, could punctuate the endangered species' comeback.

As part of a five-year study, the National Park Service will release 12 chicks into the park each year, starting this summer, to see whether they can thrive there as they have across the United States in recent years.

Channel Islands had been a marine stronghold for bald eagles until DDT contamination from a manufacturing plant decimated them 50 years ago. Many nesting locations in California have also been eliminated by development or other human disturbance, said Laura Valoppi, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The reintroduction of bald eagles at Channel Islands is especially important because the park represents a key coastal area at which the species once flourished, Valoppi said.

"The bald eagle has largely reached recovery goals in the rest of the United States," except for specific areas such as Channel Islands, she said.

Remnants of DDT remain in the Channel Islands, resulting in the failure of recent bald eagle restoration efforts on

Santa Catalina Island. The contaminants thinned the shells of eggs laid by the bald eagles, causing chicks to die.

But wildlife officials hope this attempt will be more successful, because the four islands to be studied—San Miguel, Anacapa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa—are farther from the contaminated area, and the birds will be closely monitored.

The bald eagle was listed as an endangered species in 1973. But the DDT ban, enforcement of the Endangered Species Act, and persistent restoration projects have resuscitated the eagle to the point that there is a proposal to remove it from the endangered species list. There are about 6,000 breeding pairs nationwide, up from 417 in 1963.

MOTORIZED USE

PWCs Banned From Most of Park System

The watercraft is now allowed at 16 parks, pending further study.

In a partial victory for park advocates craving peaceful waterways, personal watercraft (PWC) have been permanently banned from all but 16 national park units. The 16 park units are conducting environmental assessments to determine how to manage PWC use. Critics of PWCs consider the machines excessively loud and polluting.

The following timeline highlights key developments in the PWC debate:

▲ May 1998: NPCA petitions the National Park Service (NPS) for an immediate ban on PWCs, which had been used in 87 park units.

▲ March 2000: The Park Service bans PWCs in 66 of the 87 parks but gives 21 seashores, lakeshores, and recreation areas two years to establish regulations for PWC use; any unit that wants to allow PWC use after the grace period must complete environmental assessments and make special rules.

▲ March 2002: House Republicans

introduce legislation to extend the grace period for the 21 units until the end of 2004, allowing for further study.

▲ April 2002: A federal court rejects the PWC industry's challenge to the Park Service bans.

▲ April 2002: On April 22, the Park Service announces permanent PWC bans for five of the 21 parks: Cape Cod and Cumberland Island national seashores, Delaware Water Gap and Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity national recreation areas, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

PWCs are banned at eight other parks effective April 22, pending further study: Gulf Islands, Assateague Island, Fire Island, Cape Lookout, and Padre Island national seashores, Big Thicket National Preserve, Gateway National Recreation Area, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

The remaining eight parks will ban PWCs on September 15, pending further study: Amistad, Bighorn Canyon, Lake Mead, Chickasaw, Curecanti, Glen Canyon, Lake Meredith, and Lake Roosevelt national recreation areas.

REGIONAL REPORT

DENVER—The Environmental Protection Agency in April endorsed a ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, reasoning that their continued use would breach air pollution standards and threaten other park resources. Instead, the agency advocated the use of snowcoaches. In 2000, the National Park Service (NPS) decided to ban snowmobile use in the parks by winter 2004. When snowmobile manufacturers challenged that decision in court, though, the Bush administration asked NPS to do a supplemental environmental impact statement that outlined options ranging from implementation of the ban by winter 2003 to continued snowmobile use with caps on numbers and emissions. The public comment period ended May 29, and NPS is expected to make its final decision in the fall.



DARRIEL GULIN/DEBINSKY PHOTO ASSOC

An American bald eagle in flight.

FALL/WINTER VACATION PLANNING GUIDE



GEORGE HUMPHRIES

View from Waterrock Knob along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Haywood County, North Carolina.

T E X A S

An Unforgettable Journey

It's fitting that Texas, known as the Lone Star State, has a singular history among the states of the Union. Once the Republic of Texas, the state now conjures, in the minds of starry-eyed travelers iconic images of the very core of what is the United

States of America. From its vastness and diversity of land and wildlife to its rich history filled with stories of trials and triumphs and heroes and villains, Texas, the largest of the contiguous states, still stands alone.

A journey through the state's 267,297 square miles of seemingly never-ending land and opportunities puts to rest any doubts of the Lone Star's claim to fame. Everywhere its vast uniqueness is evident.

Starting where the land meets the sea, Texas is filled with places to be explored



Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas.

and experiences that make up treasured moments in life. Texas' Gulf Coast stretches more than 600 miles that offer family-oriented fun, nationally renowned wildlife watching, water sports, deep-sea fishing, resort-style entertainment, and exciting nightlife.

At Galveston's Stewart Beach Park, families enjoy sunny days playing volleyball or building sandcastles. It's also a cul-

turally rich area, marked with well-preserved Victorian-era houses and more than 550 historical landmarks listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

At the middle of the state's Gulf Coast, Corpus Christi is best known for two

of the Lone Star's most popular attractions. Come aboard the USS *Lexington*, an acclaimed naval aircraft carrier that's now a first-class museum, or venture—literally—below the sea at the Texas State Aquarium for an up-close look at life below clear water.

Adjacent to Corpus Christi is the 110-mile-long Padre Island, home to a major resort town as well as 80 miles of undeveloped beaches. While pleasure-seeking students flock to South Padre Island during

spring break, nature and wildlife lovers experience as much temptation when visiting the island. The national seashore there features a two-mile paved Grasslands Nature Trail through native plants and wildflowers, and it showcases the last 34 miles of unspoiled beaches and sand dunes along the Gulf of Mexico. In stark contrast, bayside wetlands create an oasis for unusual plants, animals, and various waterfowl. In fact, more than 300 species of birds, including pelicans, spoonbills, and red-heads, can be found on the ecologically diverse isle.

Up the coast, bird-watching opportunities abound at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, winter home to the near-extinct whooping crane and a sanctuary named one of the top 12 bird-watching sites in the nation. Though the 500-mile-long Great Texas Birding Trail confirms the richness and diversity in wildlife along the Gulf Coast, all of Texas is a birding paradise. For the past five years, American Birding Association members have listed Texas as the most popular destination for birding tours.

Travel north from Texas' Gulf shores reveals a dramatic change in scenery. Sandy beaches and arid coastal terrain quickly turn to moist woodlands known as the Piney Woods, home to four national forests.

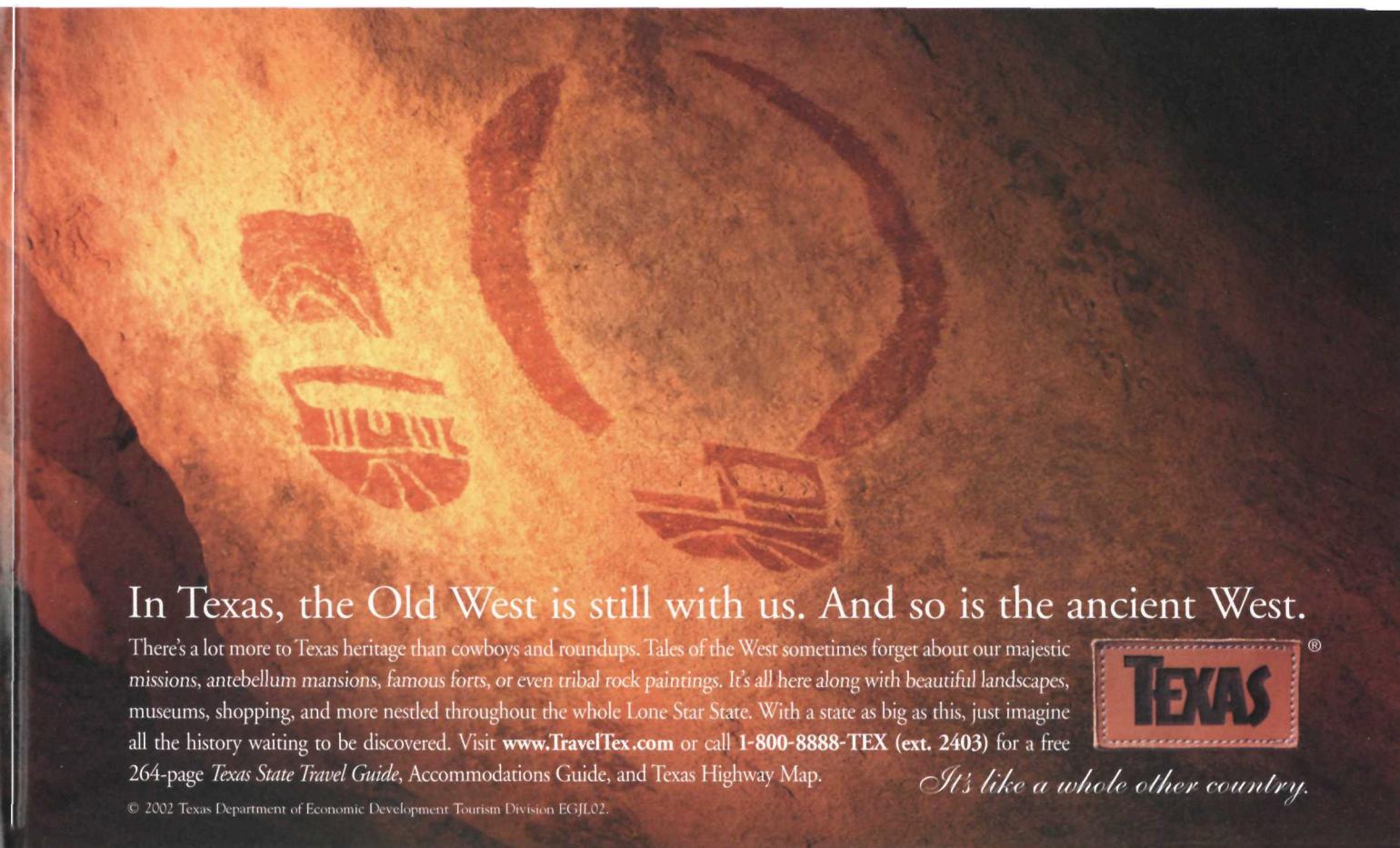
To the east, the land gradually changes from lowland forests to the rolling hills and spring-fed streams of the Hill Country and on to towering mountains. Between these regions lies a wealth of cultural and historical opportunities. The Metroplex, which includes Dallas and Fort Worth, offers exciting nightlife, arts, museums, a symphony, and more shopping centers per capita than any city in the United States. Fort Worth, also known as "Cow Town," provides a more authentic flavor of the Wild West situated in a big-city atmosphere.

The South Texas Plains region is deeply influenced by the state's rich Mexican heritage, evident in the area's missions, working ranches, and historic battle sites of Texas' fight for independence. Among the most famous is the Alamo in San Antonio.

Distinct in natural beauty, the Hill Country is home to the Texas capital, Austin. The surrounding area is also steeped in European tradition, evidenced by intriguing small communities like Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, and San Marcos, which are great sources for antique shopping, superb cuisine, and fine Texas wines.

Farther west, beyond the rugged cowboy territory of the Panhandle, lies Big Bend Country, a grand and fitting finale for a tour of the Lone Star state. The River Road in Big Bend National Park plunges over mountains and through canyons along the sun-drenched Rio Grande. A testament of Mexican and frontier heritage, El Paso, a 400-year-old town, marks the Lone Star's western border and the end of an unforgettable journey.

For more information on travel opportunities in Texas and to receive your FREE Texas State Travel Guide, call 1-800-888-TEX x2403, or visit www.TravelTex.com.



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escorted shore excursions to remote historical and cultural attractions, such as Annapolis, Maryland, or Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, or merely bask in the sun on the soft sands at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Authentic Southern hospitality and charm can be found at Savannah, Georgia, and the South's other fabled cities, along with first-class golfing at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

The spacious interiors of American Cruise Lines ships were designed to ensure guests the utmost in comfort and convenience. Shared with no more than 48 passengers, the ships offer an informal and intimate ambiance with personalized service. Large windows in oversized staterooms frame nature's great masterpieces, while sundecks and glass-enclosed lounges entice guests to enjoy

panoramic views and starry night skies. Staterooms with private balconies also are available. Discriminating palates can feast on delectable cuisine masterfully prepared by skilled chefs.

While on board, passengers are treated to informative lectures. The ships also offer a library stocked with books and videos highlighting local ports of call.

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SOUTH CAROLINA

Discovering Heritage Treasures

Beneath the moss-draped live oaks of South Carolina lies an immense wealth of patriotic heritage—a cache filled with an array of historical, natural, and cultural treasures that unfold in vignettes of time along the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor. Traversing more than 240 miles of nature's most beautiful landscapes and wildlife habitat, the Corridor traces colonial life and Revolutionary resistance going back 400 years. It stretches over 14 counties, from the misty Blue Ridge Mountain foothills on the state's western border to the coastal waters of historic Charleston.

Along the way, step back into the pages of Carolina's colonial past at Boone Hall Plantation or Middleton Place, home to the First Continental Congress president and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Discover how South Carolina, at the forefront of British military aggression, witnessed more skirmishes than any other colony (more than 300). Uncover the incredible facts surrounding the state's crucial role in determining the outcome of the American Revolutionary War at Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, a repository of information about Revolutionary sites located across South Carolina. From there retrace the steps of colonial heroes from the first decisive victory at Fort Moultrie to other nationally significant battle sites, including Kings Mountain National Military Park in Blacksburg.

Nearby, at Chesnee, Cowpens National Battlefield marks the brilliant victory of Daniel Morgan's army over Tarleton's force of British regulars. Relive the experience of military families in Revolutionary War Field Days, a two-day

re-enactment scheduled for November 2-3 at historic Camden, supply headquarters for Lord Cornwallis. In a Call to Arms—Ninety Six 1775, a living history program slated for November 18-19, witness the effects of Nathanael Greene's ill-fated siege in 1781. Or frame the sights of your camera to capture the struggle portrayed in one of numerous motion pictures produced in the state, including Mel Gibson's film, *The Patriot*, shot at Charleston and Brattonsville, which is also where the Revolutionary re-enactment "Huck's Defeat" takes place July 13-14.

Pay homage to your Patriotic Heritage; visit South Carolina's historic sites. Call the Heritage Development Office, 1-803-734-1770, or visit www.sc-heritagecorridor.org.

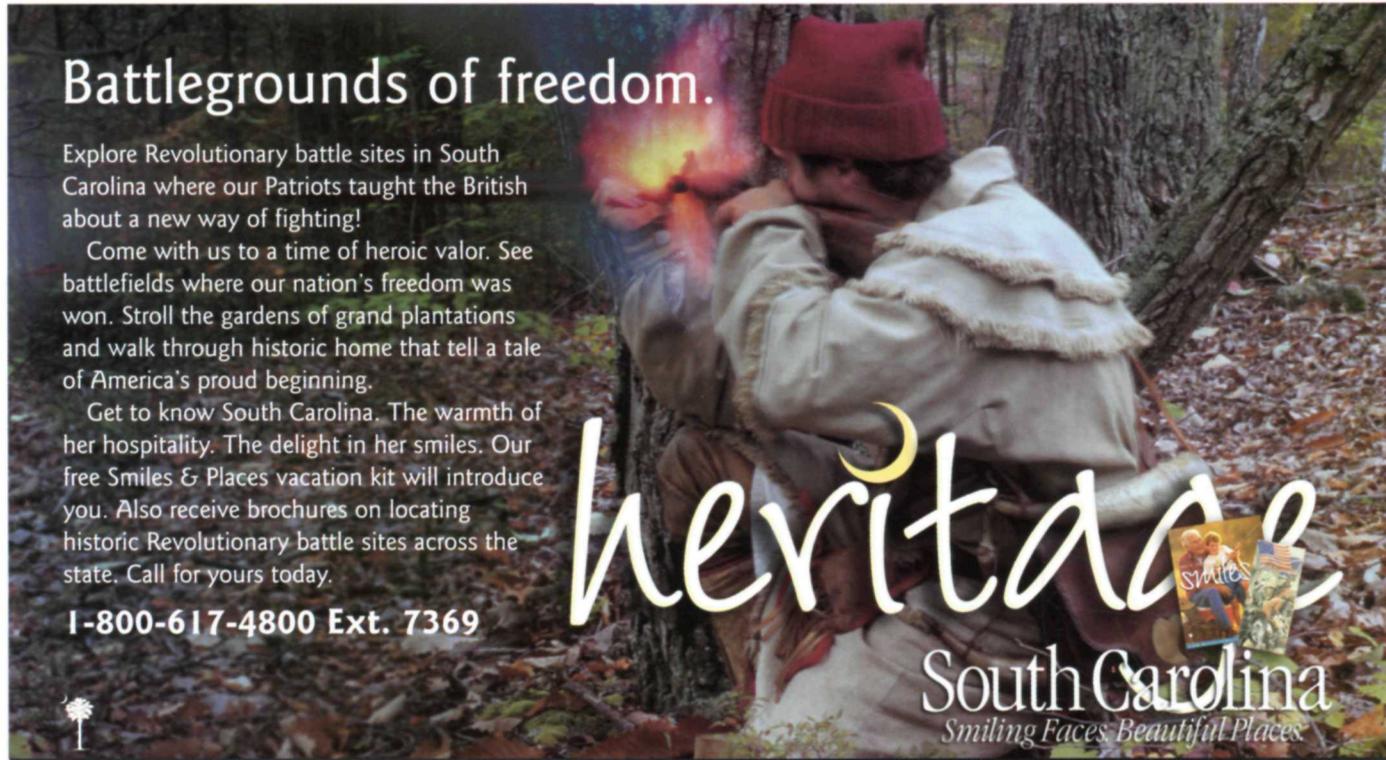
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For Bruce Fears, the allure of a \$1 billion-plus company was secondary to the chance to work in some of the most beautiful places on Earth...places similar to the one where he grew up. And places he believes many of his staff members are also passionate about, a reality that is key to understanding his vision as the new president of Delaware North Parks Services (DNPS).

Fears' leadership style combines a keen operational ability with an innate sense of what he thinks will continue to differentiate DNPS from its competitors well into the future.

"I want our guests to feel like they've come home whenever they arrive at our properties. And when they leave, I want them to be thinking about how soon they can get back," he often tells his management team.

The mantra grew out of what is very nearly a lifetime of experiences. Before he was born, his father was hired as the first concessions manager at Shenandoah National Park.

The senior Fears met his wife there and started a family, raising three sons against a backdrop of some of the world's most breathtaking scenery. The boys played there and served visitors as soon as they were old enough. Fears and one of his brothers met their wives there.

He left to pursue a college education but quickly found a way to make a living doing what he loved. His career brought him to DNPS in 1996 as vice president of operations. The subsidiary was just three years old then, but with major contracts at Yosemite National Park and Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in Florida, it was easily on its way to becoming an industry leader. Today, it is larger than its chief competitors and the fastest-growing business segment of its parent corporation, quickly approaching the level of its more established businesses.

The reasons are many, but Fears and DNPS associates throughout the organization are quick to point to their commitment to stewardship of their properties. Indeed, their sense of responsibility for the natural resources entrusted to their care has given rise to GreenPath, an environmental management pro-



Wawona Hotel: exterior view of the Washburn Cottage.



Interior view of the Ahwahnee Dining Room.

gram that has received accolades and earned registration for six locations—Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds, Grand Canyon, Sequoia, and Yosemite national parks, Tenaya Lodge at Yosemite, and the company's central reservations office in Fresno, California—under ISO's (International Organization for Standardization) environmental management standard. It is an achievement shared by no other U.S. hospitality company. Past DNPS president Dennis Szeffel explains the motivation for GreenPath and ISO registration matter-of-factly: "It is simply the right thing to do."

Reverence for the parks and a desire to share their beauty present DNPS with the challenge of mitigating the effects of millions of humans on fragile ecosystems. GreenPath, educational and interpretive programs, and capital projects are all helping to ensure that the parks are there for generations to come. Millions of dollars have been spent on

new and existing structures, including Sequoia's Wuksachi Lodge, where President George W. Bush stayed last summer. Delaware North is also investing heavily in Yosemite's Ahwahnee and Wawona hotels, legendary properties that captivate guests with their charm, ambiance, and world-class dining experiences.

Yet, Yosemite's most recent honor came as a result of stroller-accessible hiking trails and a program that helps preschoolers identify plants and insects. Small details in the larger scheme of things, but they help to welcome families after a long journey, giving them the unmistakable, irreplaceable feeling of being at home.

Delaware North Parks Services is waiting to welcome you home to many parks and attractions. Please see our advertisement on the inside cover of this issue. For overnight accommodations at Sequoia National Park, call 888-252-5757, 559-253-2199 or book online at www.VisitSequoia.com. For reservations at Yosemite National Park, call 559-252-4848 or log onto www.YosemitePark.com.

THE HEART OF APPALACHIA

Celebrating the Birth of Country Music

In the summer of 1927, a record producer from RCA Victor traveled to the mountains of Appalachia in southwest Virginia with a novel idea: to record traditional music for commercial sale. Today the Bristol Sessions recordings, which include such artists as the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers, are often hailed as the birth of country music.

To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Bristol Sessions, a week-long gala will begin at the Paramount Theater in Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia on July 25, followed by nightly performances throughout the surrounding mountains. The commemoration concludes with a two-day event August 2-3 at the Carter Family Festival in Hiltons, Virginia. Music from dozens of bluegrass bands and nationally known artists, such as Earl Scruggs and Loretta Lynn, promise to make this a not-to-be-missed celebration of traditional Appalachian music.

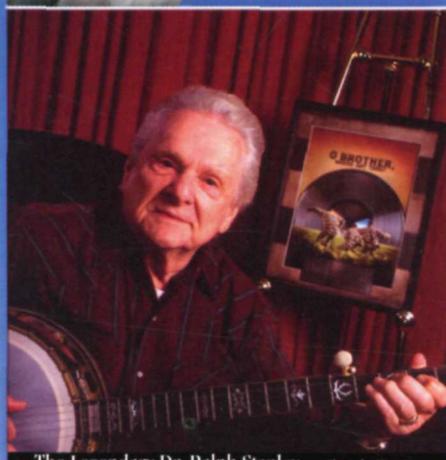
The Heart of Appalachia offers a warm welcome year-round. From the performances of native Ralph Stanley to the Tri-State Gospel Sing at Breaks Interstate Park on Labor Day weekend, mountain music and mountain beauty are always in harmony.

The scenic mountains of southwest Virginia offer a complete

getaway experience with more than 90,000 acres of national forest, hundreds of miles of stunning hiking and biking trails, white-water rafting for the entire family, and terrific bird watching, including 30 species of native warblers.

The town of Big Stone Gap reveals that good, old-fashioned southern hospitality and a sense of humor aren't simply the works of Adriana Trigiani's fiction. Stop by the Tourist Information Center for a map to the settings found in her best-selling novels. Nearby, the Russell Fork River flows through a magnificent gorge that has been dubbed "the Grand Canyon of the East." The river has gained a national reputation among whitewater paddlers. Or enjoy a driving tour that follows the Wilderness Trail forged by Daniel Boone to Cumberland Gap, one of the nation's largest national historical parks. It's no wonder the natural beauty of the Heart of Appalachia region of southwest Virginia inspired American Indians to call the area "Paradise." **For more information on the 75th Anniversary of the Bristol Sessions or a visitors guide to the Heart of Appalachia, call 800-SWVA-FUN or log on to www.heartofappalachia.com.**

OUR SONGBIRDS SING STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART.



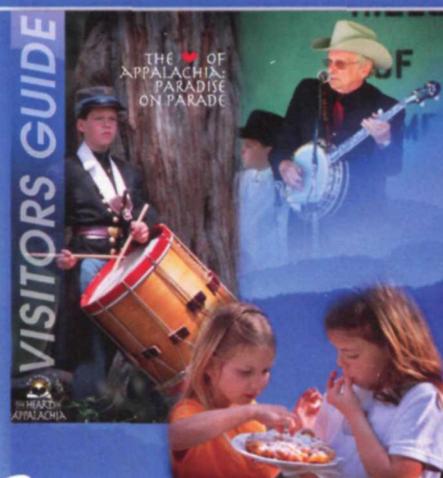
The Legendary Dr. Ralph Stanley Photo by Tim Cox

Our nature preserve, immense national forest, interstate park, wilderness area and historical parks offer endless opportunities to appreciate the outdoor splendor of the Appalachian mountains.



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It's in our nature to sing in the Heart of Appalachia! The glorious mountains inspire a wealth of traditional bluegrass and country performers, and serve to protect an amazing variety of birds – including 30 species of native warblers.

SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Alive with Unique Opportunities

From the Mexican heritage evident in architecture and cuisine, to the quaintness and quiriness found at the arts community of Bisbee, to the cowboy and mining traditions that can be experienced first-hand at Tombstone, Southern Arizona is a region steeped in a rich and varied culture. And the landscape is just as varied as the history.

Towering, thickly forested mountain ranges that are home to distinctive and rare ecosystems rise from the high desert. Some of these peaks in Southern Arizona reach more than 10,000 feet, offering cool breezes in the summer and a lush variety of flora and fauna for outdoor enthusiasts.

One of these mountains lies just 30 miles north of Tucson. The top of Mount Lemmon, where the air temperature can be 30 degrees cooler than the lower-elevation city, is replete with a charming resort town and ski slopes. Heading south of Tucson just 12 miles, you'll find the enchanting 1691 Mission San Xavier del Bac. Ansel Adams, known for his striking black and white photography, was so amazed by the surreal picture of the imposing white cathedral against a cobalt blue sky that he photographed it in color.

Even farther south is one of the most spectacular spots for nature lovers and birders. Madera Canyon offers excellent hiking

and camping and many chances to spot unusual birds such as the colorful trogon, broad-billed hummingbird, or sulphur-bellied flycatcher. Nearby Patagonia Lake State Park amazes visitors with spectacular views of the Santa Rita and Patagonia mountains and the azure lake on Sonoita Creek. To the east lies Chiricahua National Monument that features rock formations created millions of years ago by volcanic activity. Some of the great boulders are precariously balanced, defying gravity and mystifying explorers.

If the desert is more of a draw than the mountaintops and canyons, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is a likely stop. One of the region's most popular attractions, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is a naturalist's dream. A mecca for the curious, it's alive with native plants and animals, such as saguaro cacti, palo verdes, and mountain lions and Gila monsters. The museum is also home to unusual interpretive displays including a unique underground exhibit that features nocturnal desert dwellers.

Whether your taste runs to historical or natural expeditions, experience Southern Arizona. Call 888-520-3445. Or visit www.southern-arizona.com.



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NOVA SCOTIA

NOVA SCOTIA



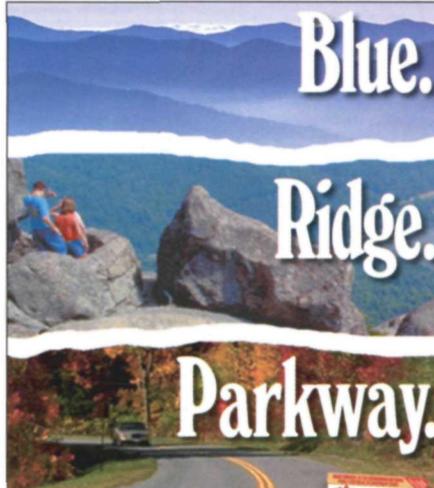
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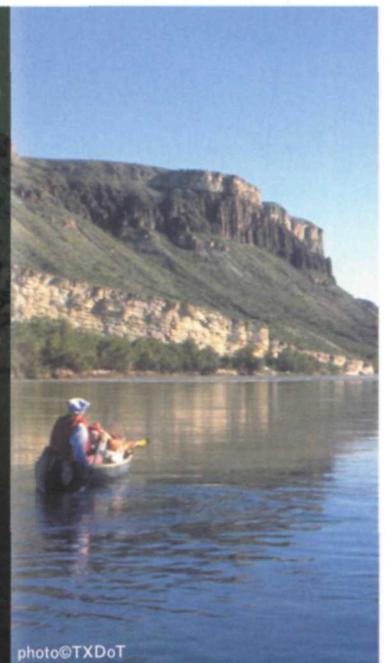


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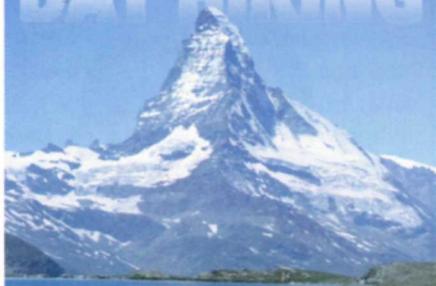


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An American Statesman

Roger Williams National Memorial in Rhode Island tells the story of a relentless champion of religious freedom and "soul liberty."

BY RYAN DOUGHERTY

Truth-seeker or troublemaker? Divine or dangerous? Some people didn't know what to think of Roger Williams as he crusaded for religious freedom and separation of church and state throughout the 17th century. But Williams' at-the-time "radical" beliefs would become central to modern democracy, earning him a lofty, indisputable place in history.

Born in London in about 1603, Williams studied law and theology at Cambridge University. While a young minister, he realized his search for spiritual truth clashed with the rigid views of the Church of England. "Men's consciences ought in no sort to be violated, urged, or constrained," Williams wrote.

Attempting reform in England at that time, however, was dangerous. By doing so, one risked imprisonment or worse. A group of Puritans fled England in 1629, founding the Massachusetts Bay Colony in America. The following year, they founded Boston and other settlements.

Williams' opposition to the church continued until he left for Boston in 1631. Settlers greeted Williams excitedly, proclaiming him "a godly minister."

It wasn't long, though, until Williams learned that the Puritans of the Bay Colony also valued religious conformity. He decried the union of church and state, advocating "soul liberty" instead.



This painting depicts Williams' arrival in America in 1631, after he fled England for religious freedom.

Williams became a separatist, trying to leave the Anglican Church. But the colony refused so radical a step.

Then, as Massachusetts Bay Colony struggled to retain its charter, Williams condemned the royal charter's sanctioning of taking American Indian lands. At that point, Boston's officials had seen and heard enough of Williams. In 1635, after brief stints of duty at Salem and Plymouth, Williams faced trial before the General Court and was convicted of "new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates." He was banished from the colony.

Williams avoided arrest and deportation to England by fleeing the colony during winter, through frozen wilderness. Members of the Wampanoag tribe aided his escape. In the spring of 1636, Williams and his followers settled at the Ten-Mile River. That summer, they moved across the river to an area they

named Providence, meaning "gift of God."

Williams sailed to England in 1643, seeking patents for the area. He secured a charter for the Providence Plantations in Narragansett Bay, granting Rhode Island, as the new colony was named, independence and "liberty of conscience." Rhode Island became a safe harbor amid religious oppression, a sanctuary for persecuted Quakers.

While in London, Williams published a pair of important books. The first, *A Key to the Language of America*, offered a sympathetic glimpse of American Indians.

Williams outlined his views on liberty of conscience and separation of church and state in his second work, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution*. Many historians assert that Williams' beliefs became a building block for England's Bill of Rights in 1689, and later the United States' Constitution and Bill of Rights.

National Park Service literature describes Williams as "an early American statesman and champion of the great ideals underlying modern democracy." The Williams memorial, located on a common lot of the original settlement of Providence, pays tribute to his life and his continuing impact on society.

"[Williams] is the most fascinating figure of America's formative 17th century," wrote biographer Cyclone Covey, "... a symbol of a critical turning point in American thought and institutions." 🐾

RYAN DOUGHERTY is news editor.

For decades, wildlife biologists and park rangers at Canyonlands and other Southwest parks have worked to restore desert bighorn.



COUNTING ON *Sheep*

By Jeffrey Cohn

These efforts represent a great success story, although the animals' continued recovery is far from ensured.

Jeffrey Cohn lives in Maryland and last wrote for *National Parks* about another species of the Southwest, peccaries.

Sitting atop a knoll in Canyonlands National Park in southeastern Utah, Bill Sloan glanced down the steep, rocky hillside. There, in a wash, stood a dozen bighorn sheep, gazing up at the human intruder. As Sloan mused on the bighorns and their remote wilderness, the animals quietly disappeared around a hillside—only to reappear a half-hour later on a ridge above him. Sloan, a wildlife technician at Canyonlands, says the normally skittish desert bighorns are curious creatures, and if they perceive no danger, may want to get a closer look.

For decades now, wildlife biologists and park rangers at Canyonlands and other national and state parks in the Southwest have taken a closer look at desert bighorns. Their efforts have led to programs to protect the species and their habitat and to restore these magnificent animals to places where few or none were left. The result has been a gradually increasing bighorn population in much of the desert Southwest. Although the desert bighorns' continued recovery is far from ensured, they now represent

a "great success story," says Paul Krausman, professor of wildlife sciences at the University of Arizona.

Preservation efforts have been aided by the appeal of the creatures themselves, because few wild animals capture our attention as dramatically as bighorn sheep. With their powerful bodies, huge horns, and an ability to quickly scale steep, rocky slopes and move nimbly along treacherous ledges and cliffs, their physical presence commands our respect. So, too, does their ability to survive and even thrive in dry mountain or rocky habitats. And the ritual banging of heads and horns by males during rutting season sparks the imagination and even fuels car ads.

Scientists once recognized seven subspecies or races of bighorns, but more recent DNA analyses and morphological studies have found few if any differences among them.

"There is no basis for distinguishing most of them," says Rob Roy Ramey, an evolutionary biologist and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science's

curator of zoology. As a result, most scientists now recognize three subspecies.

Rocky Mountain bighorns, the first subspecies, range from British Columbia and Alberta in Canada south into New Mexico and, at one time, east into the Dakotas and Nebraska. Desert bighorns, the second, occupy mountainous areas from southern California to Texas and from Utah and Nevada to Sonora and the Baja Peninsula in Mexico. They also once extended north into Oregon. And

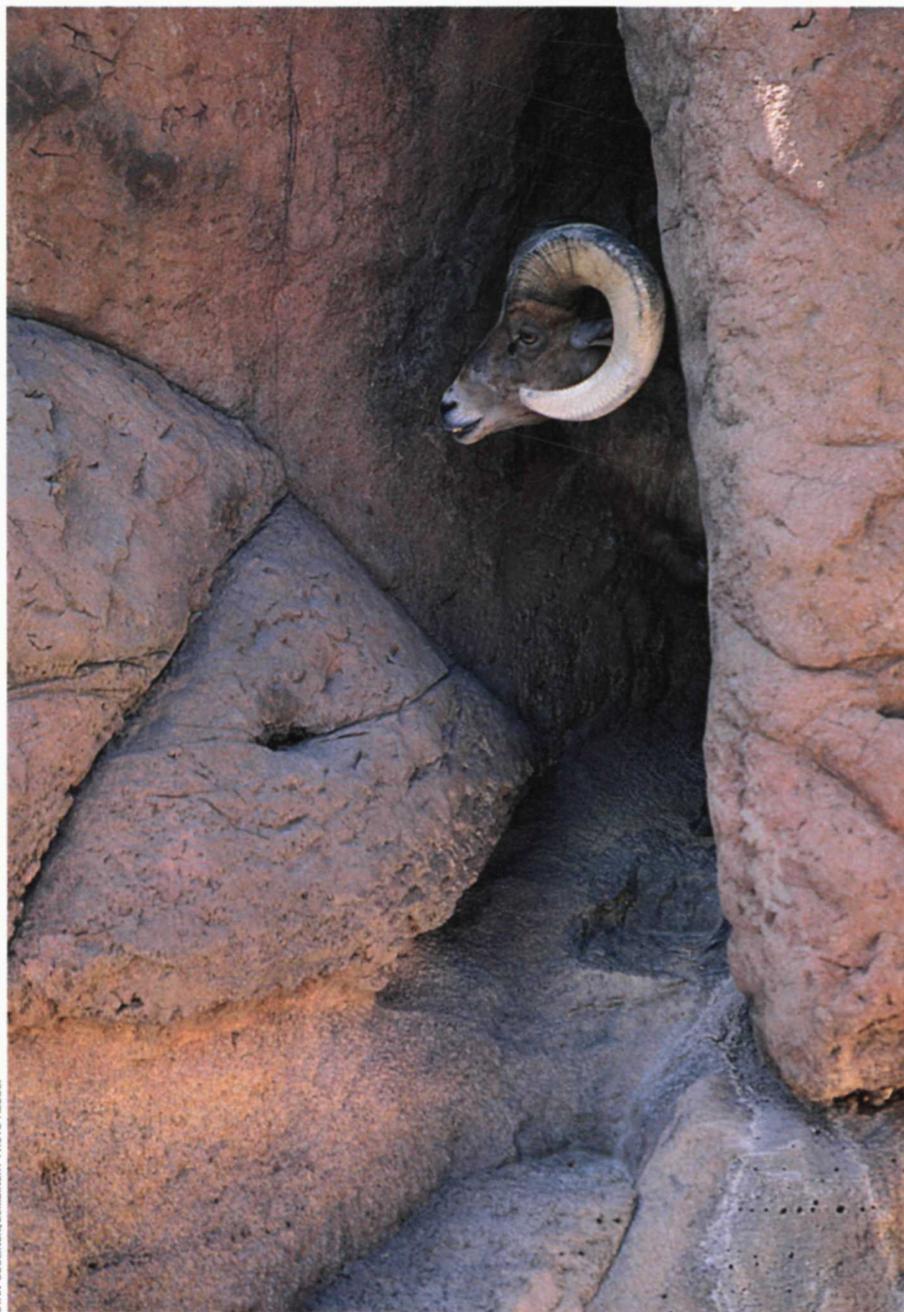
Preservation efforts have been aided by the appeal of the creatures themselves, because few wild animals capture our attention as dramatically as bighorn sheep

Sierra Nevada bighorns, the third, live in the mountains of eastern California in or adjacent to Yosemite, King's Canyon, and Sequoia national parks. Only scattered populations of all three remain.

For their part, desert bighorns are slightly smaller and lighter in color and have smaller horns than the better-known Rocky Mountain bighorns. Adult males can reach 200 pounds or more; females weigh up to 130 pounds. Desert bighorns also have a longer lambing season, which is tied to the winter rains that generate plant growth to feed newborn young.

Before Columbus' arrival, two million wild sheep (including Dall and Stone's sheep in Alaska and northwestern Canada) were believed to have inhabited North America, but more recent estimates put the number at about 500,000. The settlement of the West in the 19th century decimated bighorn sheep populations. Explorers, miners, and settlers killed the sheep for food, and trophy hunters shot them for their horns. Other miners, ranchers, and farmers introduced into the area domestic burros, cattle, and sheep, which often outcompeted bighorns for grazing sites and water holes. More important, domestic sheep carry diseases, such as some strains of *Pasteurella pneumonia*, that spread easily and fatally to bighorns. Even today, little or no progress has been made on vaccines to protect the animals.

By the 1950s, the number of all wild sheep in North America had dipped



Male bighorns often weigh more than 200 pounds.



A female bighorn is prepared for relocation.

STAN OSOLINSKI/DELMINSKY PHOTO ASSOC.

DENNIS FLAHERTY

below 100,000, says Ray Lee, executive director of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep. Bighorn sheep had "made the transition from relative abundance to one of the rarest ungulates in North America," Krausman adds. Desert bighorns, in particular, were gone from Texas and northeastern Mexico and later from New Mexico as well. They were also eliminated from or reduced to remnant populations in southern Utah, northern Arizona, Nevada, California, and Sonora, Mexico.

With efforts in a number of areas, that situation has happily changed. The numerous national and state parks and preserves throughout the Southwest protect bighorn habitat, while private groups have bought out grazing allotments from willing sellers, thus reducing competition from domestic animals. Park officials have banned livestock within their boundaries and created buffer zones between wild and domestic sheep. In some places, artificial water holes have been built to replace natural streams and seeps that had dried up or been fenced off as a result of human activity. In New Mexico and, particularly, California, captive breeding centers have bred desert bighorns or taken in sick or wounded animals and released them or their offspring back to the wild. Hunting bighorns has also been strictly controlled. Today, a once-in-a-lifetime hunting permit costs tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars, with proceeds devoted to bighorn conservation.

In 1964, when Canyonlands National Park was established, a remnant herd of 75-100 desert bighorns remained within the park's boundaries, Sloan says. An equal number of bighorns probably lived on adjacent federal and state lands, some of which moved in and out of Canyonlands depending on the season, number of human visitors, and availabili-

Beginning in the early 1980s, Park Service and Utah wildlife biologists began capturing desert bighorns at Canyonlands and translocating them to other parts of the park and elsewhere in the state.



Relocation efforts have helped bighorn numbers rebound.



Wildlife officials prepare to relocate a desert bighorn.

ty of food. With careful management, the herds in the park as well as on the adjacent federal and state lands increased to about 600 by 1990.

Beginning in the early 1980s, Park Service and Utah wildlife biologists began capturing desert bighorns at Canyonlands and relocating them to other parts of the park and elsewhere in the state. In all, nearly 200 bighorns have been moved to start new herds in nearby Arches and Capitol Reef national parks, and to augment a few remaining bighorn sheep in the San Raphael Swell, a badlands-like area northwest of Canyonlands. Animals have also been relocated from Lake Mead National Recreation Area to bolster the herds at Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area in southern Utah.

These and other relocations have helped desert bighorn numbers rebound in southern Utah. James Karpowitz, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' bighorn program coordinator, estimates there are 800-900 bighorns in the San Raphael Swell, now the state's largest herd, and 550 in Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. In all, Karpowitz thinks Utah now holds nearly 3,000 bighorns, up from maybe as few as 1,000 in 1975 and well on the way to the stated goal of 3,800 by 2005. Smaller gains have been made in New Mexico and Texas, where bighorns have been reintroduced after their extirpation.

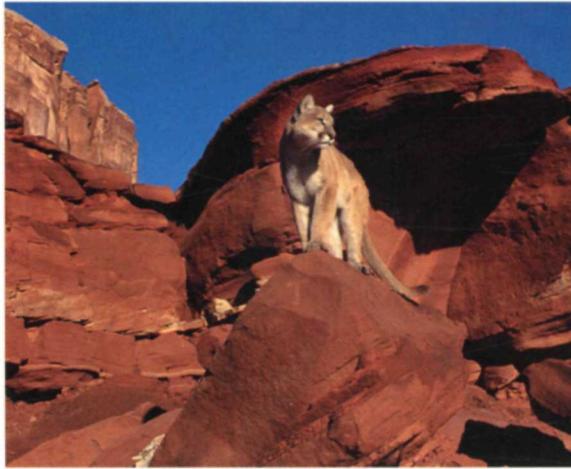
Nevertheless, the desert bighorn story is not one of unmitigated success. Bighorn numbers have dropped precipitously in some areas in recent years, and the animals have disappeared from others. Even where healthy populations still exist, wildlife biologists worry that human development prevents bighorn herds from using all of their traditional habitat and

individual sheep from moving from mountain to mountain, thus limiting gene flow between populations.

Indeed, a cyclic decline in population in southeastern Utah has negated some of the previous gains. Canyonlands supports about 350 bighorn sheep, with separate herds in each of the park's districts. Some of the herds have suffered losses. In the Needles section of the park and adjacent lands to the south, bighorn numbers dropped from 200 to 60. Nobody knows why the numbers declined, although Craig Hauke, the park's natural resources specialist, thinks global warming and drought may be at least partly to blame.

Others, however, suspect that increased tourism is forcing desert bighorns to abandon parts of their habitat. The number of visitors at Canyonlands alone has risen from 282,000 in 1990 to 401,000 in 2000. Brigham Young University wildlife biologist Jerran Flinders would like to work with scientists from the Bureau of Land Management and Utah state agencies on a two-year study of whether and to what extent bighorn habitat use is altered by human activities. The Park Service did its own recently published study on similar issues.

Although the bighorns in and near Canyonlands are doing fairly well, the animals are not faring so well in Arizona and California. No bighorns have been seen in the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson since 1998, Krausman says. In fact, the only bighorns remaining in the Tucson area are 35-50 animals in the Silverbell Mountains to the northwest. That herd is threatened by copper mining in the new Ironwood National Monument. Krausman blames the disappearance of the Santa Catalina bighorns on several factors: housing, road, and shopping mall developments built right up to the borders of Coronado National Forest;



Mountain lions prey on the smaller desert bighorns.



Grassy areas help bighorns spot predators from afar.

Although the bighorns in and near Canyonlands are doing fairly well, the animals are not faring so well in Arizona and California.

increased use of trails by hikers and their dogs; and U.S. Forest Service policies to put out forest fires. Lack of fire encourages the growth of woody shrubs and small trees, which provide hiding places for mountain lions and other predators. Bighorns prefer grassy areas where they can see long distances.

Increased human activity along with habitat fragmentation and a growing mountain lion population in southern California may also be causing a decline in desert bighorns in the San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and Vallecito Mountains. Listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1998 at the urging of NPCA and other groups, these desert bighorns living in the peninsular ranges number about 400, down from 1,200 in 1979, says James De Forge, executive director of the Bighorn Institute in Palm Desert, California.

Despite the challenges, gains have been made. Twenty bighorns were relocated from the San Raphael Swell in 2000 to start a new herd along the Dolores River in southwestern Colorado. Sierra Nevada bighorns now total 250, up from 100 in 1995. And a Center for Biological Diversity lawsuit forced the Forest Service to designate 850,000 acres of critical habitat for desert bighorns in southern California. These challenges underscore the importance of the work by the Park Service and other federal agencies in Canyonlands as well as other Southwestern parks.

For his part, the National Park Service's Sloan remains confident of the desert bighorn's future. "There's still a lot of unoccupied bighorn habitat in Utah and elsewhere," he says. "Our goal is to fill up those areas." Sloan points to the San Raphael Swell herd as a reservoir for further relocations and proudly states: "Those animals may be a step removed from here, but the genes of that herd came from Canyonlands."

NPCA's State of the Parks

program assesses the over-

all health of the national

parks by analyzing scientific

data on the condition of a

park's natural and historic

resources. The goal is to

provide information to poli-

cy-makers and the National

Park Service that will help

improve conditions.

A FINGER ON THE PULSE



Point Reyes protects 80 miles of natural coastline northwest of San Francisco. Sea lions are but one of the many animals that live in the park's rich diversity of habitats.

State of the Parks program will objectively and holistically quantify resource conditions and threats in selected national park units, with a focus on cultural and natural resources and "conservation capacity"—how well equipped the Park Service is to protect these resources. The program will do this by incorporating existing data and inventories into a user-friendly database created specifically for it. (Eventually, a resource information center will be established to collect the information.) In addition, these assessments will serve as the basis for recommendations for the future.

Once park resources have been assessed and screened through a scientific, peer-reviewed process, the findings will be transmitted to the public, park managers, and Congress. The goal is to provide information to policy-makers and NPS that will help improve conditions in the parks.

So far, four parks have been chosen as the first test cases: Point Reyes National Seashore, whose assessment was released this spring; Adams National Historical Park, whose assessment was released last October; Rocky Mountain National Park, whose assessment will likely be out this summer; and Glacier National Park, whose assessment should be completed later this year. Dozens of additional parks are expected to follow within the next few years.

"We don't use numbers very well to tell a story about what's happening at a

park; we talk anecdotally about problems," says Mark Peterson, director of the State of the Parks program. "We haven't stepped back and looked at the big picture. And as we look at more and more parks, we can start to get a sense of the problems facing the system. We really haven't connected those dots."

As the program progresses, Peterson says, patterns will naturally emerge. Eventually, thematic assessments will be performed, studying the state of California desert parks, for example, or Civil War battlefields.

Point Reyes was chosen to be among the first parks studied because of its rich diversity of habitats and its relatively recent addition to the park system. Established 40 years ago, Point Reyes National Seashore protects 80 miles of natural coastline northwest of San Francisco. The park serves as a sanctuary for 15 percent of California's native plant species, nearly 30 percent of the world's marine mammal species, 45 percent of North American bird species, and 23 federally listed endangered and threatened species. Cultural resources abound

By Kim A. O'Connell

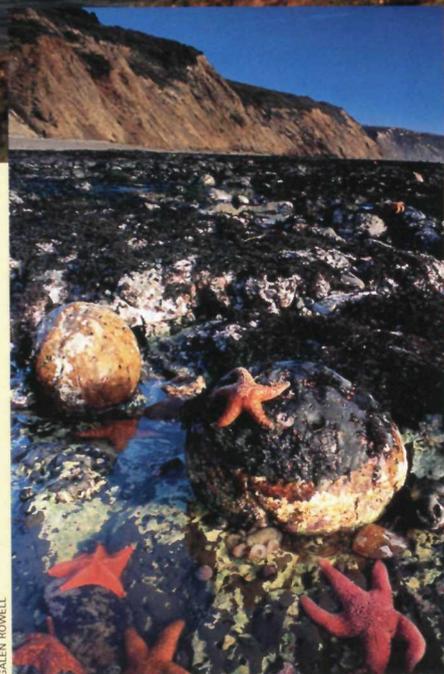
If you were standing at the crest of a windswept dune at Point Reyes National Seashore in California or hiking past its rocky outcroppings or thick stands of conifers, chances are you would not notice that this is a heavily altered and fragile landscape. With a rich variety of birds flying overhead and small mammals rustling in the brush, you, like most visitors, might not believe that the national seashore's native biodiversity is threatened. And if

you had come only to witness the seashore's natural wonders, you might not realize that the park has a rich human history that dates back thousands of years or that 35 of its historic structures are in poor condition.

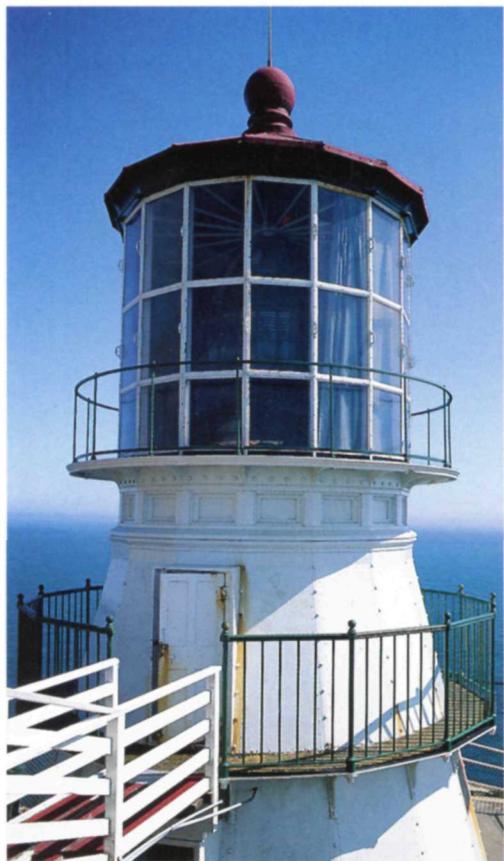
For many years, national park advocates have not been able to get their hands on this level of information on a larger scale, although not for lack of trying. Even though much has been said about the threats facing the national parks, such statements are often based on anecdotal evidence and rarely on science. Consistently inadequate funding

and staff levels have precluded the National Park Service (NPS) from a full-scale scientific evaluation of the National Park System.

Today, however, NPCA's State of the Parks program is poised to educate the public about some of the comprehensive issues challenging the Park Service and to identify some of the agency's priority projects by providing scientific assessments of national parks across the country. In cooperation with NPS, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Yale University, and Colorado State University, along with other entities, the



Kim O'Connell lives in Arlington, Virginia and last wrote for *National Parks* about parks with family ties.



LAURENCE PARENT

Historic lighthouse at Point Reyes.

here as well, including lighthouses, historic structures, and archaeological sites. The Nature Conservancy has listed Point Reyes and surrounding lands as one of the six most biologically significant areas in the United States. Conservation International describes Point Reyes and other lands within the Central California Coast Biosphere Reserve as one of the top 25 hotspots—the most threatened of all biologically rich terrestrial regions—in the world.

Yet, the Point Reyes story has been one of exploitation, fragmentation, and encroachment. “We’ve had 40 years of park stewardship to turn around 200 years of exploitation,” Peterson says. “We have a park that is 40 miles from San Francisco, gets 2.5 million visitors a year, and is a biodiversity hotspot. This was not the reason the seashore was set aside 40 years ago; back then, they wanted to protect the national seashore for its scenic values. But there is so much more to the story.”

Based on scientific research, each State of the Parks assessment rates critical

At Point Reyes, the State of the Parks assessment is serving as a much-needed guidepost for identifying stewardship needs.

resource indicators on a scale of one to 100, which then point to an overall resource rating. Point Reyes achieved an overall score of 60 for natural resources and 62 for cultural resources. But a deeper study of each indicator shows what a complicated management challenge exists at Point Reyes. The park scored a relatively good 78 rating for biodiversity, for example, but the ten-year forecast in this category suggests a downward trend because of the presence of nonnative species and changes in the natural fire and flooding cycles. Each of the 13 indicators chosen for assessment includes a ten-year forecast.

Similarly, protection of historic resources garnered a 79 rating, reflecting their overall good condition, but management of collections and archival materials from historic photographs and a herbarium to natural historic specimens rated only a 62. The park has 498,848 objects in its collection, only 35,291 of which are catalogued. The remaining items, most of which are recently acquired, are still being processed. The backlog increased considerably in 1997, when the Park Service acquired historic RCA receiving and transmitting stations from recording company MCI.

At Point Reyes, the State of the Parks assessment is serving as a much-needed guidepost for identifying stewardship needs. The assessment’s recommendations include completing inventories of the marine species, as well as a comprehensive study of archaeological resources. “The assessment consolidated a lot of our thinking about the status of the resource,” says Point Reyes Superintendent Don Neubacher. “It is good to take a few breaths, review your

status, and have that foundation to move forward. Then you can target your priorities.”

At Adams National Historical Park in Quincy, Massachusetts, progress has already been made on a couple of fronts since its assessment was released last fall. The park preserves the birthplace and estate of two U.S. presidents—John Adams and John Quincy Adams—as well as other historic structures. Yet the assessment found that the park’s collections and archives will likely deteriorate over the next decade if current management practices continue and funding remains static. The park received a 72 rating for cultural resources and a 64 rating for natural resources. Although visitation is soaring, a leased commercial storefront, some distance from the historic sites, serves as the visitor center, and more than 22,000 archival items are uncatalogued.

However, Fleet Bank has now offered to sell a historic building to the Park Service for use as a visitor center. And the Park Service has allocated \$200,000 toward curatorial activities at the park. But perhaps most important, the assessment has shed light on threats in a way that might never have happened otherwise. “Outside of any budgeting process or compliance process, there is now this in-depth discussion about the parks’ needs in a very integrated and holistic way,” says Eileen Woodford, NPCA’s Northeast regional director.

Farther west, the draft State of the Park assessments at Rocky Mountain and Glacier national parks are showing that they face similar threats from invasive species and external pressures.



A. BLAKE GARDNER

Iris are among flowers found at the park.

Rocky Mountain's most obvious threats are soaring visitation and the destruction of native vegetation by elk and wildfires. At Glacier, a nonnative disease is threatening to decimate the park's white bark pine population. Global warming is also causing the park's signature glaciers to disappear. When the park was established in 1910, it had about 175 glaciers; today it has only 54. Finally, although Glacier is part of the Glacier-Waterton International Peace Park, the United States and Canada could do more to manage their common resources holistically.

"The park's not an island, so we're focusing on the larger ecosystem, which will help maintain the overall integrity of wildlife, fish, and water quality," says Steve Thompson, NPCA's Glacier field

representative. "It's highly dependent on what happens outside the park's borders."

Underlying the problem at all these parks is the lack of funding to hire staff and adequately protect park resources. "Lack of funding is manifested in resource health in several ways," Peterson says. "We see it in invasive species on the loose, we see it in terms of natural processes that have been altered, and we find cultural resources that are forced lower down on the priority list."

Another challenge will be to perform follow-up assessments in the years ahead. The State of the Parks program is designed to evaluate information as it currently exists. Only recently has the Park Service begun to systematically collect scientific information, a labor-intensive and time-consuming process. Some of this work is made possible through the congressionally funded Natural Resource Challenge—a science-based research program.

"If you want trend data, you need to collect information for ten to 20 years," says Don Neubacher. "For example, the coho salmon has a three-year cycle. We need the long-term data sets to conduct science-based management. The challenge is providing us with the financial aid and staffing and methodology to attract researchers into the park."

The State of the Parks program has already proven to be an important tool in



Axis deer, shown here in its native India, were introduced to the park in the 1940s.

pointing out the necessity of a methodical approach to park science. "This program will hopefully shine a light on the potential promise and the potential pitfalls of these parks," says Courtney Cuff, NPCA's Pacific regional director. "If we are able to invest more dollars efficiently and effectively, we can find out even more. We hope the federal government recognizes the opportunities to make a positive difference for the future."



Point Reyes is a refuge for common murre.

THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

NPCA's State of the Parks program is just one piece of an ambitious three-part plan that combines good science with good business and advocacy to preserve the national parks. In the same way that the State of the Parks program examines baseline scientific data about the resources of the National Park System, the pioneering National Parks Business Plan Initiative (BPI), begun four years ago by NPCA and the National Park Service, revealed just how deeply the decades of funding shortfalls had eroded the National Park Service's capacity to protect the parks.

NPCA's analysis of the collected results has shown that, on average, each participating national park receives 32 percent less funding than the amount needed. BPI is also identifying ways of improving management efficiencies in the parks and of garnering financial support from sources other than Congress.

For more than two decades, national parks have not received the support they deserve, creating a nearly \$5 billion backlog that has delayed natural and cultural resource protection projects, stalled restoration and infrastructure repair programs, and put on hold efforts to update and improve educational displays.

To address the backlog and the diverse needs of the National Park System, NPCA and a coalition of other groups launched the Americans for National Parks campaign. The campaign seeks to secure full funding for the park system within the next five years and aims to educate the public and key decision-makers about the importance of allocating money to support park conservation, resource protection, and visitor education—including \$600 million of annual, recurring needs.

Preserving the Peace and Quiet

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sounds of nature in the
parks and harming wildlife
in the process. The Park
Service and environmental
groups are working to restore
the soundscape, as important
to an ecosystem—and
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as clean air and water.*



By Brian Lavendel

In Biscayne National Park just off the coast of Southern Florida lies Elliott Key, a seven-mile long tangle of sea grape, West Indian mahogany, and gumbo-limbo. Practically deserted, the island is inhabited by several species of birds and rodents, a gang of curious raccoons, and an occasional park ranger.

Visitors to the island are likely to see pelicans dive-bombing a school of mullet, an osprey peering from a snag near the rocky shoreline, or a parrotfish gliding along in the clear water offshore.

All in all, the island would appear to be a good candidate for escaping the “hustle and bustle,” as Doug Hamilton puts it. Hamilton went camping on the island recently with a friend. “Looking to get away from the crowds,” he says.

Unfortunately for Hamilton and other park visitors, one can't escape civilization on Elliott Key—the noise of progress has invaded the park. Hamilton's idyllic island stay was intruded upon by the low rumble of a power generator and the steady hum of an air conditioner. During the day, motorboats droned in and out of the small harbor. The racket, he says, was enough to drown out the soft sound of crickets chirping, waves lapping against the shore, or the whisper of palm fronds in the sea breeze.

Hamilton is not alone in having his natural peace disturbed by the sounds of civilization. In recent years, visitors to Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Rocky Mountain national parks have been confronted by the noise of air tour flyovers, jet-powered boats, snowmobiles, and the steady hum of tourist traffic. You name the noisemaker—chances are the sound of it is invading our national parks.

Brian Lavendel, Ph.D., is a

freelance environmental journalist

based in Madison, Wisconsin.



RICK POLEY

Biscayne National Park's serenity has been invaded by an unwelcomed dissonance.

The dull roar has grown to the point that officials with the National Park Service are worried. Park officials consider the soundscape crucial to their stated mission, set down in 1916 as part of the National Organic Act, calling for parks to be kept “unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” They say the cacophony is overwhelming the ambient sounds of nature—spoiling the natural sound experience for visitors and perhaps harming wildlife in the process.

When it comes to the sounds of nature, no one knows them better than Bernie Krause, who has spent much of his life recording natural “soundscapes” on high-fidelity, digital recording equipment.

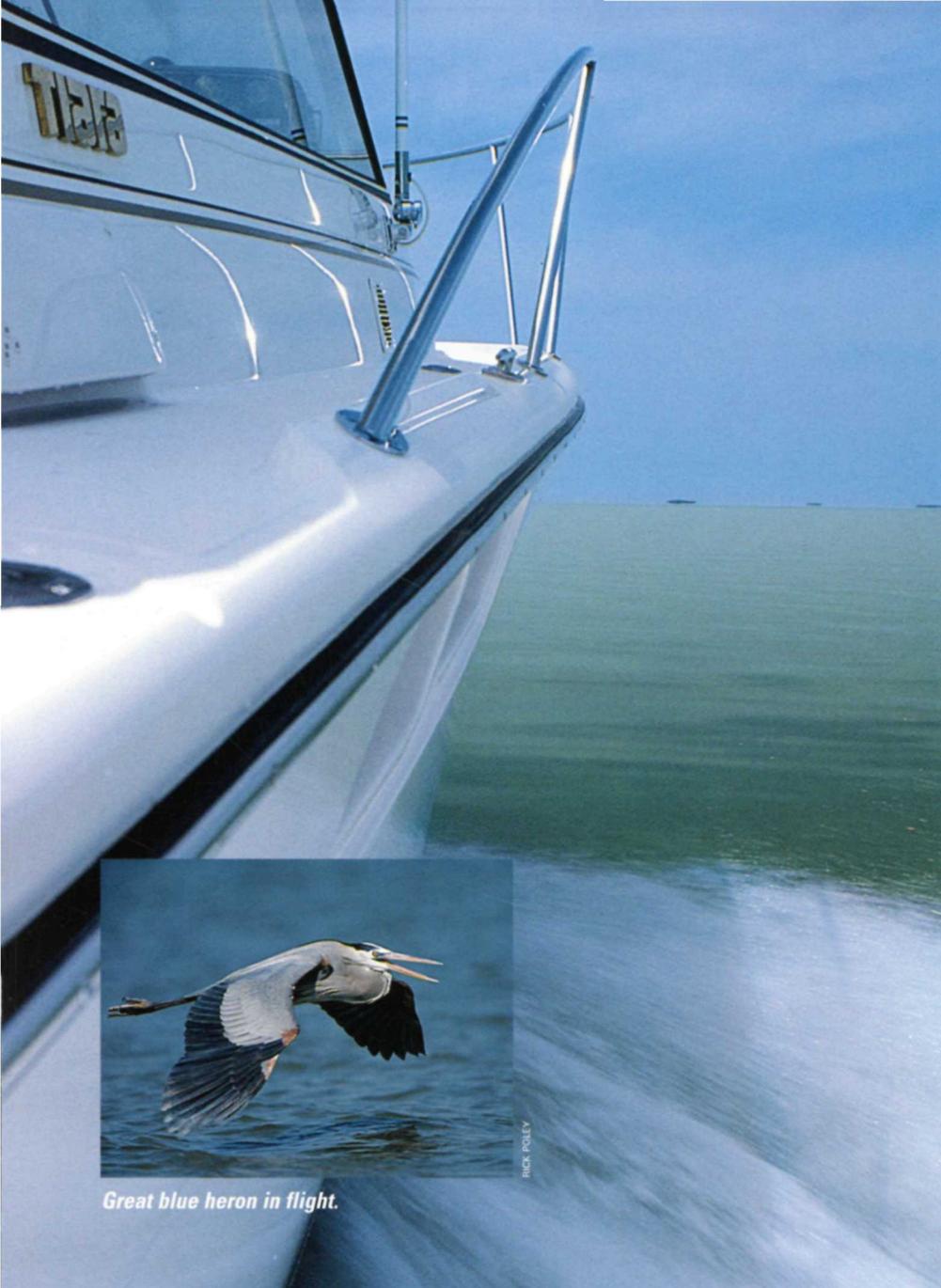
“When I first started, I could record for 15 hours and get one hour of usable material. Now it takes me 2,000 hours to record one hour [without human-made sounds],” says Krause, who has produced 50 environmental albums and creates sound exhibits for zoos and museums. In one famous incident in 1985, Krause played a recording to lure a stranded humpback whale back down the Sacramento Delta to the ocean.

*You name the noisemaker—
chances are the sound of it is
invading our national parks.*



FRED MERTZ

Bernie Krause works to get natural sound.



“Fully 25 percent of my North American library is from extinct habitats,” estimates Krause. “That soundscape is gone, only 33 years later.”

Where does Krause turn to find solace from a noisy world? “Parks are the only places in the country where it is possible to show people what the world can really be in terms of pristine quiet,” he says.

Lots of people share Krause’s sentiment. Asked how important national parks are as places to experience natural peace and the sounds of nature, 72 percent of those who responded to a national survey conducted in 1998 by Colorado State University rated parks “very important.”

Now, however, Krause is having trouble finding the natural quiet he needs for recording sessions. What is more, some of the soundscapes he seeks no longer exist. “Fully 25 percent of my North American library is from extinct habitats,” estimates Krause. “That soundscape is gone, only 33 years later.”

The deterioration in the natural soundscape is a serious concern, says Krause, because it may be an indication of general ecosystem decline. When the soundscape is damaged, the ecosystem too suffers, he explains. He calls the natural soundscape a “biophony,” in which creatures in a given habitat use sounds to mark territory, find mates, or communicate danger. When creatures can’t communicate, their ecosystem is disrupted.

Krause cites the example of the threatened Western spadefoot toad, which can be found in California’s Mono Lake basin. “When a jet plane flew over, it disturbed the cycle of vocalization,” he explains. The disruption silenced most of the toads, but a few continued singing. The opening in the soundscape



Great blue heron in flight.

RICK POLCY



Krause says only parks are able to accurately depict pristine quiet.

ROB & ANN SIMPSON

MARK ALLEN STACK/TOM STACK & ASSOC.

provided a chance for coyotes and owls to move in and pinpoint the creatures' locations—leading to predation. "It's a matter of life and death," explains Krause. "They're not going to live if they can't be heard."

Marv Jensen, manager of the soundscapes program center for the National Park Service, agrees. "I believe we're going to find that there are quite a lot more impacts and adverse effects on wildlife from sound intrusions on natural systems than we realize," he says.

Soundscapes are "one of the resources parks need to protect and preserve," emphasizes Steve Bosak, director of motorized use programs for NPCA. "Being able to hear warblers when they're migrating, wind rushing through trees, water trickling in a stream—all of that is part of the experience of visiting a national park," he says. "Most city dwellers don't get to experience that on a daily basis."

Bosak realizes that it won't be possible to draw a bubble of silence around the parks, but he'd like to see the parks address the loss of soundscapes. "We'd like to see the Park Service take a more active role in educating people about what they should be listening for in the park," he says, "and about the challenges the Park Service has in keeping those sound environments pure." Raising people's awareness and educating visitors about the harmful effects of noise, he believes, will be the first step in turning down the volume.

Back at Biscayne National Park, officials are doing just that. When state authorities tried to turn Homestead Air Reserve Base—located just two miles away—into a major commercial airport, park staff grew concerned that the noise would overwhelm the park's natural ambient sounds.

Although that development is no longer going forward, thanks in part to grassroots opposition from NPCA members, it sparked a plan by park officials to proactively protect Biscayne's soundscape. They began by encouraging visitors to pay close attention to the natural soundscape and their own impact on it. "Find a place to appreciate natural

sounds on your visit and try to understand how your presence affects natural sound environments," reads a park brochure.

Now the park is gearing up to incorporate a soundscape management plan into its general plan. The plan will be ready for public comment this summer and put in place in the next 12-18 months, according to Assistant Superintendent Monica Mayr.

The soundscape management plan acknowledges that in some areas of the park, such as the visitor service area, human-made sounds will "supplant the sights and sounds of nature." But in other locations, the plan calls for natural sounds to prevail. NPCA's Mary Munson, director of South Florida and marine programs, welcomes this approach.

"We had great success stopping the Homestead airport last year, but we cannot keep fighting these problems incrementally," she says. "A plan will ensure that natural sound—and the serenity and contemplation it inspires—becomes permanently protected."

Soon, other national parks may follow. Park Service soundscape manager Jensen predicts that we will develop the technology as well as the political will to protect our park soundscapes. He says personal watercraft and aircraft will be made quieter and some portions of parks will be set aside for "natural quiet."

Soundscape aficionado Bernie Krause hopes park managers take the necessary steps to protect soundscapes before it's too late. Soundscapes, says Krause, are as important to an ecosystem—and to our own well-being—as clean air and water. "We are beginning to understand late in the game that unimpeded natural soundscapes are a resource critical to our enjoyment and awareness of the natural wild.... Without them, a fundamental piece of the fabric of life will be sadly compromised."

MARK ALLEN STACK/TOM STACK & ASSOC



Silence Is Golden

The National Park Service offers the following tips to reduce visitor noise and enhance the sound quality of parks:

- ◆ **Be aware of campground quiet hours noted in park information. Keep voices low and vehicle engines turned off in the parking lots.**
- ◆ **Be considerate of other park visitors when talking, starting vehicle engines, idling engines, or using audio devices.**
- ◆ **Remember that human-made sounds can disrupt wildlife behavior, especially in biologically sensitive areas. Speak softly and turn off vehicle engines when observing wildlife.**
- ◆ **Use alternative transportation such as park shuttles, bicycles, or walking whenever possible.**



A TOUR THROUGH TIME

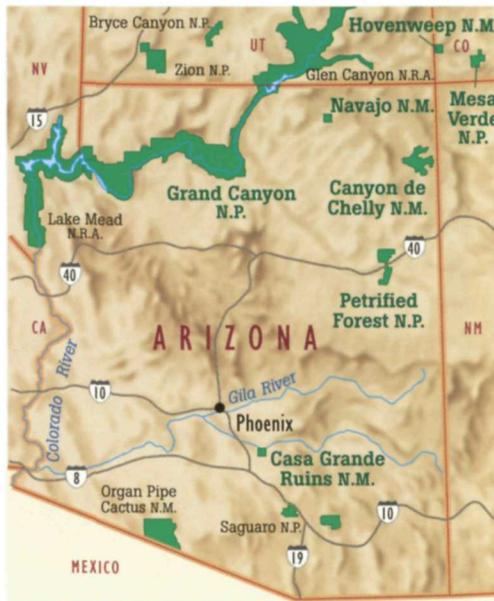
A sampling of the historical parks along the 900-mile Grand Circle Tour provides an excellent introduction to the history of American Indian cultures.

By William A. Updike

In an area of the United States famous for its geological and biological diversity, another tale of diversity is told—the multifaceted history of American Indians in the Southwest. Indeed, there are as many stories about the early inhabitants of this country as there are colors in the sheer rock walls of the Grand Canyon.

The history of American Indians has often fallen prey to oversimplification. Representations of American Indians as scalp hunters or “noble savages” have dominated and hidden the multihued history of native people. The Park Service is attempting to debunk the mythology surrounding American Indians and show, first-hand, the variegated and wondrous cultures that existed and still exist in the Southwest and elsewhere.

The historical parks along the 900-mile Grand Circle Tour provide an



MATT GANNA

the region. Although the park is named after the Navajo, they are not the direct descendants of the ancient people who built the park’s well-preserved cliff dwellings. The Navajo are descendants of the ancient Athabaskan people and moved into the area after emigrating from northern Canada in the late 1500s.

The monument sits in red rock canyon country, and its cliff dwellings and the scenery surrounding them are astonishing. More than 700 years ago, ancient farmers moved from flatlands in the area into the canyons. As with much of the story of American Indians in the region, the exact motivation remains a mystery. It may have been a combination of the depletion of natural resources, the search for protection from the elements, and warfare with other cultures.

The visitor center for the park sits near the Betatakin (Navajo meaning “ledge house”) site, which can be viewed by taking a one-mile round-trip trail to an overlook. Tours to the ruin are offered from May through September. A second cliff dwelling, Keet Seel (from an altered Navajo word meaning “many broken pieces of pottery shard”), is accessible via a strenuous 8.5-mile trail that takes a full day to hike. To hike here, visitors must make reservations at least two months in advance. Tours are available from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends.

excellent jumping-off point for the serious or casual student of history. This tour, reported to include the highest concentration of national parks anywhere in the world, includes 14 managed by the National Park Service. Those featured here provide a taste of the riches to be found.

Navajo National Monument

According to the Park Service, Navajo National Monument is one of the best understood of the American Indian sites, which makes it a great place to begin your historical journey. It is also a good place to learn about the diverse and complicated past of native habitation in

William Updike is a former staff member of *National Parks* and is currently traveling to visit national parks throughout the country.



Cliff dwellings at Canyon de Chelly.

The park has a campground available on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional accommodations can be found in nearby Kayenta. For more information about the park, call 928-672-2700, or go to www.nps.gov/nava.

Mesa Verde National Park

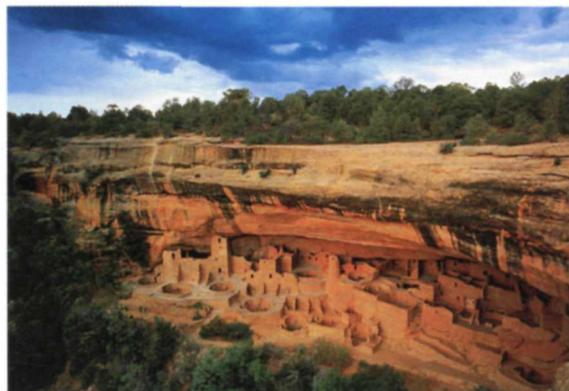
Perhaps the most famous of all the historical sites on the Grand Circle, Mesa Verde National Park is named for the beautiful green mesa that rises above the surrounding high desert. The Park Service has done an excellent job of charting the long history of habitation at Mesa Verde. On the Mesa Top Loop Drive, visitors can learn about the progression of ancient Puebloan architecture from the pithouses and above-ground dwellings of the Basketmaker Period—named for the ancient settlers who first moved from hunting and gathering to farming and learned the craft of basketmaking—to the cliff dwellings and advanced architecture and artistry of the Pueblo Period.

Through Park Service excavations, visitors can trace the development of the religious kivas. The most important site for religious observations, kivas developed into round structures built deep below

the courtyards. The sites include a fire pit, ventilator shaft with an air deflector for fresh air, benches for sitting, and a sipapu, a small hole dug into the middle. Ancient Puebloans believed that their ancestors had come from another world, and the sipapu represents the original hole through which they entered.

The loop drive provides views of the iconic Cliff Palace dwelling. During the spring, summer, and fall, visitors can also travel the Cliff Palace Loop, which provides access via a .75-mile hike to an overlook of the impressive Balcony House site. Also available in those seasons is the Wetherill Mesa road, from which visitors can view the Step House and Long House dwellings and other sites.

Services and accommodations are



Examples of Puebloan architecture at Mesa Verde.

available in nearby Cortez. Inside the park, a campground is available from mid-April to mid-October on a first-come, first-served basis, and a lodge is also available seasonally. Call 800-449-2288 for more information about the campground and the lodge. For more information about the park, call 970-529-4465, or go to www.nps.gov/meve.

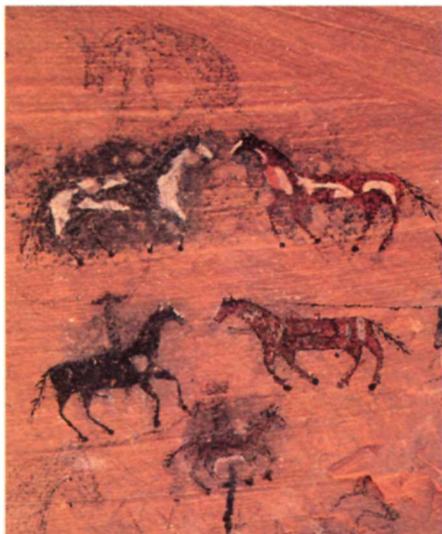
Canyon de Chelly National Monument

Evidence of continual habitation for thousands of years makes Canyon de Chelly (pronounced SHAY) National Monument a great place to learn about the ancestral Puebloan sites. The park's dwellings rest within a backdrop of astonishing red rock canyon walls that range from 30 feet at the park entrance to more than 1,000 feet elsewhere.

The Navajo arrived in the area about 300 years ago after the Hopi, the modern-day ancestors of the ancient Puebloans, had mostly migrated from the area because of drought, disease, conflict, and possibly the allure of religious ideas from the southern Puebloans.

Early conflicts between the Navajo and nonnative settlers continued after the United States took control of the Southwest from Mexico in the middle 1800s. In 1863, Colonel Kit Carson began a "scorched earth campaign," destroying livestock, homes, and crops. The Navajo retreated into Canyon de Chelly, but were eventually defeated and forced to travel 300 miles to Bosque Redondo, New Mexico. More than 9,000 Navajos surrendered, but only 4,000 survived the journey and internment at Bosque Redondo before the last peace treaty between the Navajo and the United States was signed on June 1, 1868, allowing them to return to their homeland.

Today, park visitors can join tours led by direct descendants of the ancient Navajo. Those unable to take a guided tour are permitted to hike the fairly arduous 2.5-mile round-trip trail to the White House, a spectacular example of an early ancestral Puebloan cliff dwelling named for a long wall covered in white plaster. Visitors



FRED HIRSCHMANN

Pictographs offer evidence of habitation.

can also take the north and south rim drives to view the scenery and cliff dwellings in the canyon.

Services and accommodations can be found in nearby Chinle, Arizona. Both the Thunderbird Lodge (800-679-2473, www.tbirdlodge.com, located within the park) and a Holiday Inn (800-HOLIDAY, www.holiday-inn.com, on the park's border) incorporate remnants of historic trading posts from the early 1900s. A first-come, first-served campground within the park is available free of charge. For more information about the park, call 928-674-5500, or go to www.nps.gov/cach.

Grand Canyon National Park

No visit to the area would be complete without a stop at the Grand Canyon. The park's famous multicolored towering cliffs and deep canyons retain the power to amaze even the most jaded traveler.

As with other parks along the Grand Circle Tour, extensive evidence of American Indian habitation exists in and near the Grand Canyon, dating back at least 8,000 to 10,000 years. Archaeologists have found pictographs in the canyon as well as animal effigies made from willow or cottonwood twigs that date from 3,000 to 4,000 years ago.

The Grand Canyon is an important

site to many American Indian tribes.

Most tribes of the Puebloan culture, including the Hopi and Zuni, believe they lived in three previous worlds before emerging into this one at a point within the Grand Canyon. Other nations, including the Hualapai, Havasupai, Southern Paiute, and Navajo, live on reservations that either border or are very near to the national park and consider the canyon a sacred place.

Opportunities for recreation in the park are nearly limitless. To avoid crowds, the best times to visit are in the fall or spring, although some weeks in spring, when schools are on break, can be just as busy as the summer months. If you don't mind colder temperatures, the winter is also a good time, although the North Rim is closed.

On the South Rim, visitors can hike the Rim Trail from Kaibab Trailhead west to Hermits Rest, a distance of 13 to 14 miles. Many portions of the trail are near park roads and can be reached by private vehicle or free shuttle bus. Explore the Tusayan site located near Desert View Drive near the East Entrance. The Bright Angel Trail, 9.3 miles one way, leads visitors to Phantom Ranch in the bottom of the canyon. Nearby is the Bright Angel site, which should not be missed. Most hikers take at least two days to go to Phantom Ranch and re-

turn. A backcountry permit is required for all overnight stays away from developed areas.

On the North Rim, generally the less crowded of the two rims, consider the following trails: Widforss, 9.8 miles round-trip; the Ken Patrick, ten miles one way to Point Imperial; and the Uncle Jim, five miles round-trip. The Walhalla Glades site is located along the road to Cape Royal. Backpacking adventures into the core of the park are plentiful and varied; ask a park ranger at one of the visitor centers for suggestions.

Reservations for camping are required from April through November (800-365-2267, www.reservations.nps.gov). Contact the Chambers of Commerce for accommodations and services in nearby Williams (www.thegrandcanyon.com, 928-635-4061) and Flagstaff (www.flagstaffchamber.com, 928-774-4505). For information on lodging in Tusayan near the South Rim, Jacob Lake near the North Rim, and other lodging options, go to www.kaibab.org.

In addition, the Grand Canyon has a number of beautiful historic lodges (www.grandcanyonlodges.com, 303-297-2757) which range from the rustic to the luxurious. For more information about the park, call 928-638-7888, or go to www.nps.gov/grca. 



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A Tree's Tribulations

Rats and other nonnative creatures imperil the existence of the Hibiscadelphus giffardianus in the state most plagued by endangered species.

BY JENELL TALLEY

Mention Hawaii and one conjures up images of luaus, flat-tummied hula dancers in grass skirts, beautiful beaches, clear blue water, and palm trees swaying in the wind. But there's another image not so striking: *Hibiscadelphus giffardianus*, a tree species not nearly as plentiful as the palm, facing the threat of extinction.

Hibiscadelphus giffardianus, also called hau kuahiwi, is endemic to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The species was first described in 1911 by Austrian botanist Joseph Rock. Before the original tree died in 1930, cuttings were collected and at least one tree was propagated on land adjacent to what is now Hawaii Volcanoes. This tree died in 1940, but one cutting remained, keeping the species alive. The plant survived in cultivation and was replanted in the park in the 1950s. The species has been reduced to a single tree at least three times. Each tree is derived from the 1911 original.

H. giffardianus is one of seven *Hibiscadelphus* species, each endangered or extinct. Only ten adult trees remain in Hawaii Volcanoes, each at least 40 years old, and only 11 young plants survived plantings that occurred in 1995 and 1997. The trees look much like a large hibiscus, not surprising since *Hibiscadelphus* means "brother of hibiscus." They typically grow 30 to 50 feet tall and have multiple trunks. The tree has



KEN BRIDGES

Though produced mostly during the spring and summer, some flowers linger year round.

rounded leaves that are large and rough. During the spring and summer, dull maroon flowers cover the tree. The curving flowers are narrow, reaching two to three inches in length. The tree produces yellowish-green seedpods, or dry fruit, about an inch long, most commonly during the summer and fall.

The Kamehameha butterfly has been observed feeding on the trees' flowers, and native birds were once known to feast on the nectar, though this is seldom seen today. Alien insects, such as the two-spotted leafhopper and the Japanese rose beetle, feed on the leaves. The insects may be contributing to the trees' demise, but rats are a bigger culprit, says Thomas Belfield, a rare and endangered species propagation specialist at Hawaii Volcanoes. "Rats are the biggest threat facing the trees," Belfield says. "Rats eat seeds and girdle branches." For *H. giffardianus*, which propagates from its seeds, this causes a serious problem. In

addition to the threat posed by alien species, the trees suffer from the loss of a native bird species. The long-billed honeycreeper, likely the flowers' original pollinator, is rare—if present at all—in the park.

Steps are being taken to increase the tree population, although currently Belfield, Linda Pratt, a botanist working for the U.S. Geological Survey Pacific Islands Ecosystems Research Center, and Tim Tunison, chief of resources management at Hawaii Volcanoes, are the only scientists

dedicated to the recovery effort. The tree has no specific recovery program, but Belfield is working on the park's Rare Plants Stabilization Project, which began last year. The project focuses on examining the status of rare and endangered plant species, including the *H. giffardianus*, in four ecological zones in the park. Seeds, fruit, and cuttings are collected and raised in the park's greenhouse, then planted in the park.

More than 200 trees have been planted in the last few years as part of an experiment conducted by U.S. Geological Survey researchers to study damage caused by rats. Despite these efforts, more work remains before the trees can make it off the endangered list. "It is unrealistic to imagine that this species will ever be delisted unless it goes extinct," Pratt says, adding, that reintroducing the species to its natural habitat and having it be self-sustaining is the park's goal.

JENELL TALLEY is publications coordinator.

Terry Redlin

"Quiet of the Evening"

The first-ever die-cast truck replica featuring the timeless artistry of Terry Redlin.

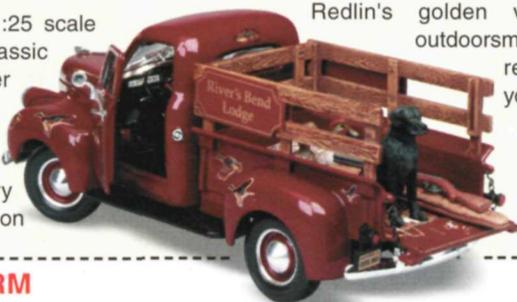


Actual length of replica 7.5"

As the last rays of sunlight sparkle on the lake and the crisp chill of evening settles in, the aroma of woodsmoke and the call of the loon welcome a sportsman back from his day's quest. Famed artist and outdoorsman Terry Redlin knows this time and place well, and has taken us there time and time again with his golden images of tranquil northwoods scenes. Now for the first time ever, one of his best loved works is showcased on a new "canvas" as the premier issue in Terry Redlin's *Golden Retreats* collection of die-cast truck replicas.



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A Vision Sustained

Yosemite Valley provides a perfect place to study the National Park Service's challenge to maintain a balance between enjoyment and preservation.

BY BOB R. O'BRIEN

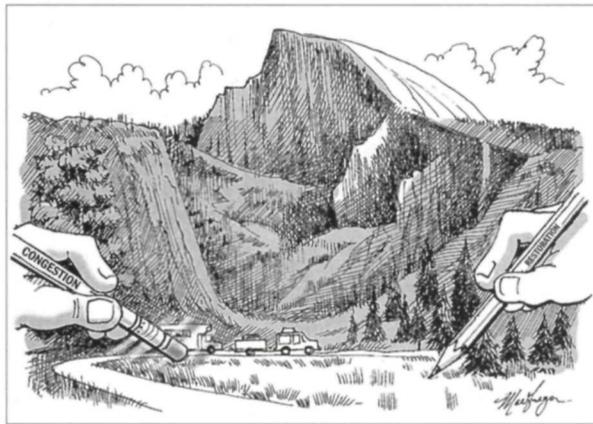
For anyone who cares about the planet's future, sustainability is the key. It may have been possible at one time to live off the capital of the land, to leave the world a little less able to support those who came afterward. But the planet cannot maintain this level of use forever. We have to find a sustainable lifestyle to have any hope at all for the future. The same is true for national parks.

The basic idea for the parks from the beginning was to preserve them for the people's enjoyment. It became obvious, however, that this was not going to work as a stand-alone guide if a person's enjoyment consisted of breaking off pieces of Yellowstone's geyser cones for souvenirs.

As stated in the act establishing the National Park System, the National Park Service seeks "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The problem is that we have gone overboard in accommodating the visiting public.

Early Park Service directors Stephen Mather and Horace Albright believed any development that would enhance a visitor's enjoyment was necessary. With

an increase in environmental consciousness after the mid-20th century, the primary pressure in park planning has been to remove excessive development, but closing a road or tearing down a building has proven much more difficult than building them in the first place.



DOUGLAS MACGREGOR

BOB R. O'BRIEN is emeritus professor of geography at San Diego State University and has recently published a book: *Our National Parks and the Search for Sustainability*.

In October 2000, I attended a hearing on the Yosemite Valley Plan in Pasadena, California. When I suggested that too many people and too many cars crowded into Yosemite Valley during the summer months, I was heartily booed by an audience made up largely of RV owners and campers. In January, while showing slides on Yosemite and talking about the plan to a Sierra Club audience, I was admonished by a member for supporting a plan that was too user friendly. This is business as usual for the National Park Service, which is often forced to walk a fine line among various special interests.

Yosemite Valley seems the perfect place to study the Park Service's eternal search for balance. With its awe-inspir-

ing beauty, its fabulous weather, its perfect "living space" in a flat-bottomed valley with a river flowing through it, Yosemite has attracted a seemingly endless number of people. It has also, thankfully, attracted more than its share of environmentalists fighting the degradation that excessive numbers can cause, starting with John Muir.

Although Yosemite was the first federal area set aside for protection in 1864, the early caretakers of the valley felt the environmental battle had been won by protecting it from commercial exploitation, and just about anything was allowed. Eventually farming in the valley was eliminated, and no new hotels were being built, but by the late 1960s, the unofficial motto "parks are for people" was in full swing. Many protested against tourist overuse, but not until 1970 was a strong attempt made to curb that overuse.

The first time I saw Yosemite Valley in 1947, I was blinded by its beauty and couldn't wait to return. Just 20 years later, the valley had become "Yosemite City." As former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt put it years later: "the area is equivalent in size to Central Park in New York City but with more roads, more automobiles, and more development." Over a thousand buildings stood in the valley, the campgrounds contained wall-to-wall tents, and visitors without "sites" slept in their cars or in the meadows. There was crime and smog. It ended, appropriately enough, with a riot in the

heart of Yosemite Valley on July 4, 1970, when a motorcycle club's members tried to set up camp in Stoneman's Meadow and the Park Service tried to remove them. The Park Service admitted that use in the valley had a limit and would spend the next three decades trying to restore Yosemite's natural environment.

Initially the restoration went smoothly. The Park Service established a fixed number of campsites and stopped overflow camping. It closed roads and initiated a shuttle bus system. It stopped the firefall (a nightly event during which hot coals were pushed over the cliff at Glacier Point) and closed the golf course in the valley, all with little protest.

By 1980, a general plan had been created that would remove most of the auto traffic in the park and reduce the number of buildings. Implementation of the 1980 General Management Plan almost came to a halt, however, under Interior Secretary James Watt, who served under President Reagan in the 1980s and shifted the agency's focus from resource protection to visitor enhancement.

Then came the flood. On January 1, 1997, a freak winter storm flooded

Yosemite Valley. By the time it receded two days later, the flood had caused \$176 million worth of damage to highways, sewer systems, campgrounds, and housing. Reeling from the damage, the Park Service nevertheless saw an opportunity to accomplish long-sought goals, especially when money to fix the damage was appropriated by Congress. Much of the infrastructure of the valley, located in the floodplains or rockslide areas, would be relocated or simply removed from these areas. The Park Service started to create the Yosemite Valley Implementation Plan.

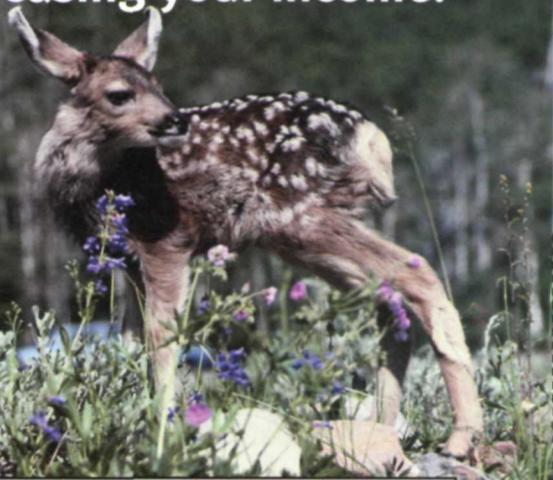
The key point in the plan was the restoration of some 200 acres between Camp Curry and Yosemite Village. These two campgrounds and part of a third one, all of which were washed away in the flood, would not be reopened, and roads through two of the meadows would be closed. This caused an uproar from campers and helped lead to two more planning efforts: the Merced River and the Yosemite Valley plans.

The final version of the Yosemite Valley Plan was completed by November 2000, and the "record of decision" was

signed December 29, ending the planning process. The "new" plan added some campsites (including more walk-in sites) and retained some parking in the central areas while removing a controversial new parking area near El Capitan. It restored the central area between Yosemite Village and Camp Curry, required many visitors to use shuttle buses during the most crowded part of the season, and converted the northside road into a bicycling and walking path.

Opposition still exists. Many would like to see the campgrounds rebuilt in the floodplain, no roads closed, and a constantly rising visitation. The plan's full implementation will depend on people continuing to push for it, supporting environmentally conscious candidates for office, and ensuring good financial support for all parks. If so, visitors may not find the Yosemite Valley of the future quite as "convenient" as in the past, but the valley they do find should represent what national parks are all about: one of the most beautiful places in the world cared for so lovingly that future generations can expect to see it in its exquisite natural perfection, forever. 

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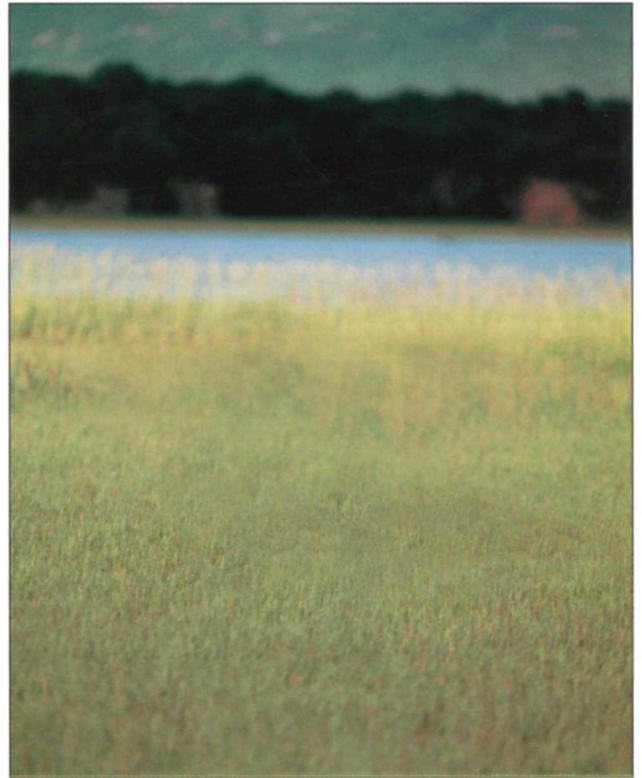
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