

National Parks

The Magazine of
The National Parks
Conservation
Association

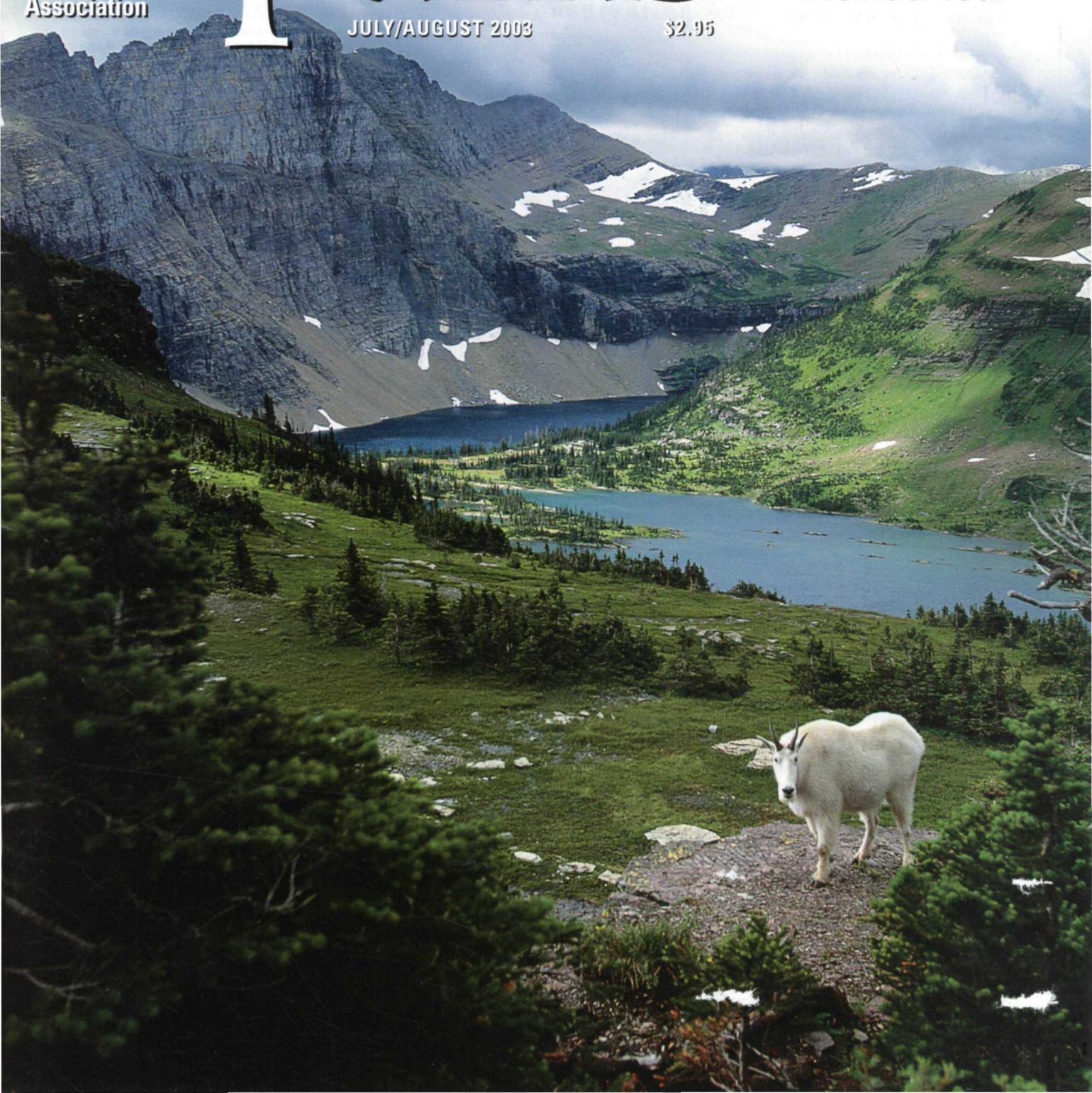
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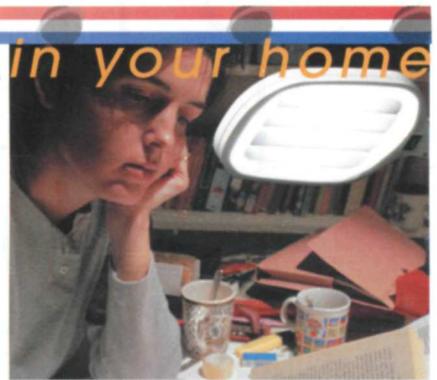
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National parks

Vol. 77, No. 7-8
July/August 2003

The Magazine of the National Parks
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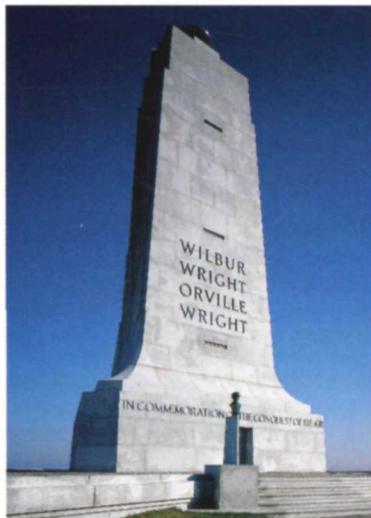
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Cover: A mountain goat near Hidden Lake at Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park.
Photo by Art Wolfe.



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OUTLOOK

Upholding a Pledge

NPCA rates the Bush administration on how well it is upholding a pledge to restore and renew the parks.

During an early spring trip to Shenandoah National Park, my sons and I got caught in an unexpected snowstorm. Over the last year, we have been hiking portions of the Appalachian Trail, and this particular weekend we had chosen to hike into Shenandoah. By the time we reached Skyline Drive and were to catch a ride back to our car [18 miles away], the snow had closed the road, leaving us stranded.

Fortunately, Park Service rangers found us and drove us through the snow back to our car. We were only three of who knows how many people who were rescued that day, and it was only one day out of 365. What struck me most about this experience is that no matter what the "normal" job of these rangers was—providing education, clearing trails, enforcing the law—both of them stopped what they had been doing to help visitors.

The Park Service's staff is one of its key strengths. Nearly all rangers are Jacks and Jills of many trades and can be counted on to fill in as needed. The Park Service is considered one of the most admired federal agencies by the public, and its staff has an esprit de corps that is referenced by management experts.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration is implementing a plan that may change this. The administration is considering outsourcing up to 70 percent of the Park Service's positions, including archaeologists, biologists, museum cura-



CHAD EVANS WYATT

tors, and maintenance workers. This move could have a devastating effect on an already understaffed agency.

Privatization is just one of a number of issues that NPCA has reviewed to determine how the Bush

administration is performing on its pledge to protect the national parks. Our Report Card, see page 15, demonstrates that although there have been several bright spots for parks in the past two years, the administration is in aggregate failing in its pledge to "restore and renew" our national parks.

As a Republican and an environmentalist, I am disappointed in this administration's performance. Our analysis looks at scores of decisions over the past three years, and a majority of the actions taken by the administration have been harmful. For example, the administration's Clear Skies initiative and the plan to continue snowmobile use in Grand Teton and Yellowstone, despite evidence and public comments to support a ban, will only exacerbate pollution in the parks. We encourage the administration to strengthen the Clean Air Act, rather than weaken it; reconsider outsourcing so many park jobs; and uphold the ban on snowmobiles in the parks.

Please visit our web site to look at the full 29-page report and let your legislators know how you feel about some of these key issues.

Thomas C. Kiernan
President



EDITOR'S NOTE

Power of Place

July and August are usually times when we can get away and enjoy traveling to the national parks, in addition to reading about them.



CHAD EVANS WYATT

Whether we choose the mountains or the seashore for our escape, the National Park System offers a variety of landscapes, many of which can be found in the pages of this issue.

We can admire beautiful pictures of the parks, we can share an experience through words, but nothing takes the place of actually being there. I think at least one person who had visited each of the parks contained in the system would agree. This issue marks the passing of Robin W. Winks, who died in April (see tribute, page 21).

NPCA has lost a friend and a mentor as well as a life-long member. Four years ago, during the association's 80th anniversary celebration, NPCA recognized Robin's contributions to the National Park System by naming an award for him. The Robin W. Winks Award is given each year to an individual who has worked to educate the public about and enhance the understanding of the National Park System.

At the time, Robin shared an experience from his childhood. As a youngster, he visited Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, and in experiencing the place, had an appreciation of their importance in conveying and preserving history.

Experiencing the parks is appreciating both the landscapes and the history contained there as well as the people who protect them. I think Robin would agree, and I hope you take the time this summer to experience some of the beautiful and historic places you've been dreaming about this year.

Linda M. Rancourt
Editor-in-Chief

National parks

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WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT WE DO

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

WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

EDITORIAL MISSION

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.

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Marshes, Mountains, History



A Mountain's Majesty

The May/June 2003 cover is the most scenically beautiful since March/April 1999's Yosemite's El Capitan. Few covers portray the scenic magnificence of our parks.

National Parks magazine continues to feature interesting, significant, and well-written articles. The quality of color photographs continues to be excellent, and the layout and design are both

professional and pleasing. My only criticism is that the magazine no longer provides space for brief news highlights from NPCA's regional offices. There is great value in letting NPCA's membership know what park-protection issues the regional directors are focused on, striving for, and accomplishing.

Congratulations on an excellent magazine. Great job!

*Russ Butcher
Tucson, AZ*

Readers Erupt Over Rainier

I found your cover story on Mount Rainier [May/June 2003] interesting and the accompanying photos dramatic. However, the statement, "at 14,411 feet, the peak's enormous size dwarfs any other mountain in the lower 48 states," is wrong. In fact, four other mountains in the contiguous 48 states are higher:

Mount Whitney, 14,494 feet in California; Mount Elbert, 14,433 feet, Mont Massive, 14,421 feet, and Mount Harvard, 14,420 feet, all in Colorado. I know; I have climbed all five.

*Gerald Neff
Pleasant Valley, IA*

I'm no doubt the billionth person to note that Mt. Rainier is not the tallest mountain in the lower 48 states. I'm guessing the error stemmed from the author's statement on page 23 that "the peak's enormous size dwarfs any other mountain in the lower 48 states," in which he was referring to the bulk of the mountain, not its height. As a climber of Mount Rainier, I can attest to its great size, and having been in such downstream towns as Orting, Ashford, and Sumner, I also hope that it will stay better behaved than its geological cousin 40



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J/A 03

miles to the south. Unfortunately, history suggests we cannot depend on that.

*Philip R. Pryde
Department of Geography
San Diego State University*

Editorial Reply: Our readers are indeed correct. Mount Rainier is the fifth tallest in the lower 48, but, as with many things, the answer becomes more complicated with nuance. As reader Philip Pryde and a Park Service employee at Mount Rainier suggest, the bulk of the mountain is what the writer was referring to. The four mountains listed above are taller, but Rainier rises to 14,411 feet from a base at less than 2,000 feet, whereas the other mountains rise from higher foundations. Mount Rainier is also an active volcano, the tallest in the lower 48, and could, with another mountain-building eruption, surpass its shorter brethren in height. Thankfully, this has yet to happen.

Experience History Firsthand

"Experience History Firsthand" [May/June 2003] missed an opportunity to highlight two of the region's pre-

mier Civil War sites that will be featured next year in the nation's commemoration of the 140th anniversary of the conflict. Monocacy National Battlefield and Fort Stevens, part of the National Capital Parks System, were highpoints of Confederate Gen. Jubal Early's 1864 raid that nearly captured the nation's capital and ended Abraham Lincoln's administration. Monocacy is a tribute to a recent land acquisition that preserves both cultural and natural resources as well as a pivotal Civil War battlefield. Fort Stevens, along with Battleground National Cemetery, features the restored parapet and marker where Lincoln came under enemy fire, and attests to an earlier effort to preserve historic ground in the face of urban sprawl. Quite possibly, without these two battles, Americans today might be living in two separate nations.

*B. Franklin Cooling
Chevy Chase, MD*

Jamaica Bay's Marshes

After reading "Marshes Vanishing at Jamaica Bay" [May/June 2003], I realize how angry I am that our government

spends billions on war and can't spare a few million for our underfunded parks. It is painful to know that my government is willing to neglect the basic needs of its citizens and its land and not see how the two are critically linked. We need to vote new, environmentally conscious candidates in to office.

*Sue Chase
Batesville, VA*

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

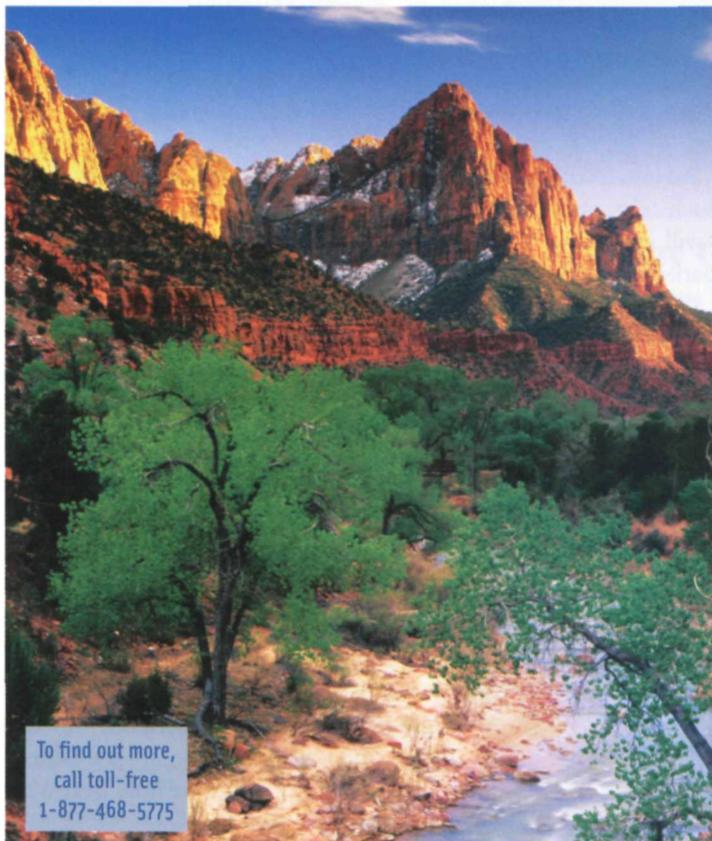
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J/A 03

ParkScope

News and Notes

BY RYAN DOUGHERTY

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Overflight Noise at Hawaii Volcanoes

Guidelines being developed to protect park visitor experience.

HAWAII VOLCANOES N.P.—At Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, visitors enjoying moments of solitude can experience a unique assortment of ambient sound—from warbling birds and whistling winds to flowing, crackling lava. Unfortunately, they often also hear much more.

More than 30,000 air tours, in helicopters or small planes, fly over Hawaii Volcanoes each year, giving the park one of the highest levels of overflights in the National Park System. In response to these intrusions to natural quiet and park wilderness areas, the National Park Service (NPS) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) are creating legal guidelines to help protect the experience of park visitors.

“We have some significant concerns about preserving the park’s natural sounds,” said Aleta Knight, management assistant at the park. “We want to make sure visitors can experience the natural soundscape, but without excluding visitors from having encounters in the park through alternative means,” such as air tours. “It’s about finding that balance.”

The agencies’ process of creating air tour guidelines follows the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of



More than 30,000 air tours fly over Hawaii Volcanoes each year, intruding on natural quiet.

2000, which sought to lessen “significant adverse impacts,” such as excessive noise. Similar guidelines will eventually be set at more than 100 park sites, according to the FAA.

Sound levels have been measured at several areas inside the park since the fall. The guidelines are expected to specify the amount of air tours that can go over the park, as well as where they can go and how high they can fly. The guidelines are necessary, said Courtney Cuff, NPCA’s Pacific regional director, because not all of the air tour operators have been cooperating with the park.

“All of the air tours make some level of noise and intrusion,” she said. “But the bad air tour operators jeopardize the progress that’s being made by the operators interested in doing the right thing.”

The park’s guideline process could be

lengthy, because an environmental assessment or impact study will need to be done, said Knight. One public meeting has already occurred and more are on the way. Park officials said that the guidelines must be flexible to adjust for changes to the park caused by volcano eruptions, which draw air tour visitors to new areas of the park over time.

“The guidelines are necessary to protect the experience of park visitors,” said Cuff. “Air tours can be very intrusive on a visitor’s enjoyment of natural quiet, which is an increasingly endangered experience in our parks.”

“We hope that this air tour management process will allow us to ensure remarkable visitor experience in the years and decades to come,” she added. “It is one of the values we hold dear with national park visitation.”

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PARK PLANNING

Plan for Yosemite Valley Heating Up

Some local businesses criticize plan to restore Yosemite Valley.

YOSEMITE N.P., CALIF.—A plan to help restore the Yosemite Valley’s natural beauty by reducing the number of campsites and parking spaces there is coming under fire.

The Yosemite Valley plan, released three years ago, was designed to improve visitor experience in the valley and allow natural processes to occur. It would reduce the number of campsites to about 500 and day-use parking spaces to 550, to help the effects of park crowding and traffic congestion. The plan was shaped after 20 public meetings and more than 11,000 citizen comments.

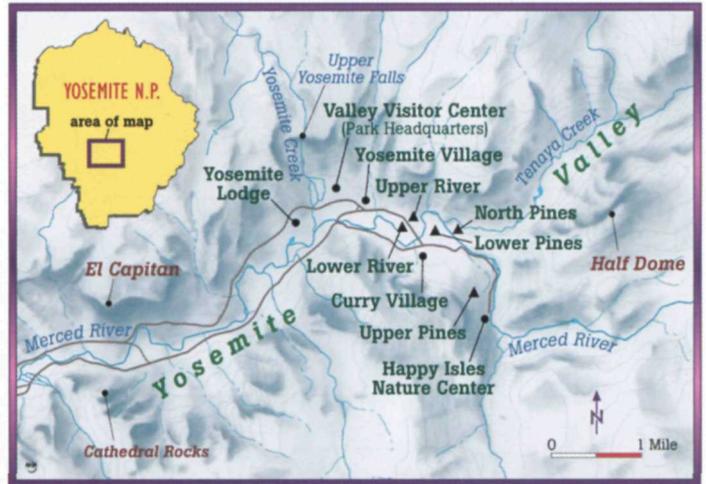
At a recent congressional hearing, however, U.S. Rep. George Radanovich (R-Calif.) criticized the plan.

“There’s a concern about locking people out of the park,” said Radanovich, echoing the opinions of some local business owners who fear a drop in park visitation that could hurt their bottom line. Backers of the plan, however, insist that it is crucial to protect the natural conditions of the valley—which ultimately could attract more visitors.

“We’re not looking to keep people out of the park but rather to reduce activity in this very sensitive ecosystem,” said Courtney Cuff, NPCA’s Pacific regional

director. “We see it as a win-win, because we can restore the health of the valley, which in the long run will provide visitors with the richer experiences that really draw people to the park.”

Although overpowered by the vocal cries of some, not all business owners around Yosemite feel that the plan will hurt park visitation. A group of them



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recently sent a letter to Radanovich asking him to support the plan.

"We believe [it] is integral to the long-term health of the park," they wrote. "We are convinced that the plan would sustain the integrity of the valley's natural and cultural resources, improve the quality of visitor experience without denying access, and enhance the local economy."

The valley plan, expected to cost about \$440 million over a decade, would return 176 acres along the Merced River to natural habitat and restore its floodplain. Because of parking space cuts, most visitors would be bused into the valley after leaving their cars in lots near park entrances.

"During the most crowded summer months, the valley is very popular to hikers and campers," said Cuff, "and it's important to provide people with an alternative mode of transportation."

About 300 campsites in the valley are already gone, washed away by a flood in

1997 and never rebuilt. Many argue that rebuilding them in the floodplain would be a waste of money because of the possibility of another flood.

"It would be much more cost-efficient to balance the removal of some of these campsites with introducing some new ones in areas more appropriate for campgrounds," said Cuff. "It's about improving the park for visitors and working more and more toward being true to the vision of what this park should be."

Take Action

For further information, visit the Park Service's web site: www.nps.gov/yose/planning/yvp. California residents are encouraged to take action by contacting Radanovich and urging him to support the plan: U.S. House of Representatives, 19th District, 123 Canon Building, Washington, DC 20515.

NPCA Notes



PSA Launched

Veteran journalist Cristina Saralegui, host of the nation's top-ranked Spanish-language talk show, has recorded three radio Public Service Announcements on behalf of NPCA and the national parks. The PSAs encourage listeners to appreciate the historical and cultural heritage associated with national park units. Two of the 30-second spots direct listeners to call NPCA; the third encourages people to get involved with Americans for National Parks. The PSAs were recorded in both English and Spanish and will be distributed in the near future. A television PSA, to be recorded only in English, currently is being developed.

—Jenell Talley



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NATIONAL ICONS

Underground Center for Mall Decried

Park Service pushes plan to build beneath Washington Monument.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Approaching the Washington Monument can be a powerful, moving experience. A visitor ascending grassy hills to the monument's front door can relish a spectacular view of all that the National Mall has to offer—its unique blend of things historic and natural.

That treasured experience is threatened, however, by a National Park Service (NPS) proposal to build an underground visitor center (with a 500-foot-long tunnel leading up to it) and walled walkways around the monument. Critics say the proposal, which the Park Service touts in the name of security, will



waste money, harm the area, fail to protect visitors, and short-circuit opportunities for citizen involvement in the process.

“The National Park Service is rushing

headlong with an ill-conceived plan that will do nothing to improve security and will deface rather than enhance the monument,” said Judy Feldman, Chairman of the Coalition to Save Our Mall.

Said Joy Oakes, NPCA's Mid-Atlantic regional director: “The monument is a site rich in beauty and meaning, deserving the highest level of scrutiny and care, not a hastily adopted proposal.”

The plan would expand the monument lodge at 15th Street—currently a souvenir and snack shop with restrooms—and link it to the 500-foot-long tunnel through which visitors would enter the monument and go through security screenings. A walled walkway about 30 inches high would encircle the monument, replacing concrete barriers that were placed there to bolster security.

John Parsons, associate director of the Park Service's National Capital Region, said that screenings in an underground visitor center and walled walkways are now necessary because the monument could be a terrorist target.

“The potential for a takeover of the monument is very real,” he said. “After several discussions, we concluded that the only way to really protect the monument without impeding visitors' freedom to walk around the monument is to

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AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Walled walkways around the monument would replace Jersey barriers that have been used since 1998 to bolster security.

have a structure underground.”

Critics, however, contend that the walkways, 800-feet wide, would impede the ability of people to move freely on the Mall, and that congregating in an underground visitor center and tunnel could actually pose greater risks to visitors in the hypothetical event of a bombing or armed attack.

In April, the Coalition sent a letter to Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton that asked her to block consideration of the plan. Weeks later, the National Capital Planning Commission gave preliminary approval to the expansion of the stone lodge that would become the entrance to an underground visitor center. NPS hopes to gain final approval and begin construction by August.

Of particular concern to some is the Park Service’s failure to consider alternative proposals or give the public a chance to comment. In a recent letter to the Coalition, NPS wrote, “the details are security-sensitive and will not be available for public review.”

“If the goal is to secure and protect the

monument, there must be real alternatives,” said Oakes, “but so far the Park Service is not looking at them.

“Any project related to the Mall should be done thoroughly,” she added, “with more care and with more public involvement than is evident so far.”

The idea of an underground visitor center has been one advocated by the Park Service for more than 30 years. Ironically, the engineers working on the current project for the Park Service also examined similar plans in 1973. Then, they said that proposal was “expensive and oppressive” and would rob visitors of the experience of viewing the Mall while waiting to enter the monument.

“This proposal is a 30-year-old plan for a visitor center that Congress never funded,” said Feldman. “Now the Park Service is trying to retrofit it as a security measure and ram it through.”

The cost of the Park Service’s proposal is estimated at more than \$30 million, not including the cost of the tunnel. If the project is approved, the Park Service will still need to address some logistical concerns, such as whether the monument’s foundation, with its uneven soils, can support an underground facility.

Critics have advocated screening visitors at the monument’s entrance or at another nearby location, a plan that could provide immediate protection with less cost and harm to the area. Others see a tunnel as one more project for a National Mall that they say has become increasingly cluttered.

“Where does it stop?” said Oakes. “Part of the power of the memorials on the Mall is the surrounding open space and the visual connections among them. Making the Mall as cluttered as grand-ma’s attic diminishes its power.”

Take Action

For more information on this and other projects proposed for the National Mall, visit the Coalition’s web site at www.savethemall.org and NPCA’s online Take Action center at www.npca.org/action.

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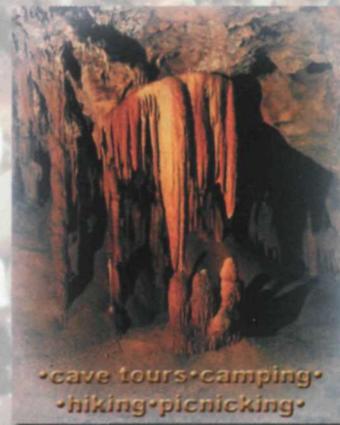


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 NPCA Notes

Healthy Parks

Healthy parks are vital to the long-term well-being of gateway communities and the health of their economies. That's the conclusion of three studies commissioned by NPCA's Northern Rockies office. The studies examined the roots of economic vitality in Montana's Flathead County, the primary gateway to Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. NPCA's report, *Gateway to Glacier*, summarizes the studies' findings, documenting similar trends in other western national park gateway communities. The report cites proximity to national parks as an economic advantage for gateway communities, and illustrates the importance of protecting the clean water, wildlife, scenic beauty, small-town character, and overall quality of life associated with such communities.

NPCA Scrapbook

NPCA members are invited to share their photos and park memories in the National Parks Scrapbook. If you have visited a national park or are planning a trip to one of the country's testaments to natural beauty this summer, then share your photos and your park experience with others. Log on to www.americansfornationalparks.org/scrapbook to view the scrapbook and post photos of recent national park trips. Americans for National Parks (ANP) hopes the scrapbook, launched in 2002, will inspire people to help preserve these national treasures. In an effort to get the parks' funding needs addressed, and as evidence of public concern, ANP will forward selected scrapbook entries to Congress.

—Jenell Talley

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Petroglyphs Found By Volunteer Crew

Crew of retirees works to preserve park's cultural resources.

PETROGLYPH N.M., N.MEX.—The meanings of the images carved by American Indians and early Spanish settlers onto the thick volcanic rock of Petroglyph National Monument may never be fully understood. But thanks to the persistence of a crew of volunteers at the monument, these petroglyphs—thousands of which park officials would not have known existed—will be better preserved for future generations.

For seven years, the 15-member Volunteer Petroglyph Inventory Crew, with an average member age of 70, has scoured the monument's grounds for petroglyphs. They meet each Wednesday morning—as long as it isn't too hot or cold outside—armed with two-way radios, first-aid kits, global positioning systems, cameras, art supplies, and a collective passion for discovery.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Diane Souder, chief of interpretation and outreach at the site. "They have dedicated years of their lives, thousands of hours, to the project. We are very, very lucky to have them. They're a team, each with special skills."

The crew usually works in teams of three or more, each volunteer filling a role. One draws pictures of the art and records how it was placed into the rock—whether it was etched or scraped, for example. Another photographs the petroglyphs, while someone else maps their locations.

The crew notes any vandalism to or near the image and, because each image was once covered with volcanic ash, the crew can determine how old a petroglyph is by examining weathering effects on the rock surface.

Legislation designating the monument as a park site in 1990 estimated

that there were 15,000 petroglyphs in its boundaries. Before the crew began its work, park officials had documented about 10,000 but were certain that there were many more. That led the park to seek the volunteers. The known total now stands at more than 20,000, and there is hope that another 10,000 will be discovered.

Images on the rocks include recognizable renderings of animals, people, brands, and crosses, but many are more complex. Together, the petroglyphs are key to the site's cultural landscape.

"This takes us a big step further in understanding these resources," said Souder. "It helps us to not only understand the resources but also protect them. Now if there are cases of vandalism, theft, or erosion, we can go back and see what the image looked like and have a better chance of preserving it."

In assembling the crew, park officials realized they were fortunate to draw from the talented, retirement-age professionals that live near the monument. Many had basic archaeological, photography, or drawing experience.

Jack Francis, a retired business executive who had recently moved to New Mexico, was enlisted for his management skills and now volunteers with his wife, Anne.

"We live across the street from the monument and said 'Let's get involved,'" he said.

"I know how to manage people, and I always did love history. I can't walk down a street past a historical plaque without reading it. Working with this [crew] fulfills that interest for me.

"It is just a tremendous group of people who love to teach, and we all love to learn," he added. "It's like being inside a classroom with your friends and having a lot of fun."

Like all good things, however, the crew's main survey work will soon end. They recently completed the 17-mile length of escarpment marking the site's boundaries.

"The only thing they're wondering now is what they will do when they are finished," said Souder.

Bush Administration Failing the Parks

NPCA's mid-term report card gives administration a "D-" grade.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In response to its poor performance as steward of the national parks, the Bush administration has received a “D-” in a mid-term report card issued by NPCA.

Among the criticisms raised in NPCA's extensive, fact-based assessment are administration proposals to privatize much of the National Park Service's workforce, roll back clean air regulations, and default on President Bush's promise to fully fund the parks.

“The president made strong commitments to the American people about protecting our national parks, and he has failed to keep them,” said NPCA President Thomas C. Kiernan. “Instead, our national parks have become victims to the administration's failure to commit to a strong conservation agenda.”

NPCA gave the administration an overall grade of “D-” for its performance since January 2001 in five broad categories: protection of resources such as air quality, wildlife, and historic places; visitor use; funding; park administration and management; and the growth of the National Park System. The administration received a “C+” for park funding, a “D” for park administration, and an “F” for the other three categories.

The report card lauds several accomplishments of the administration, such as its allocation of \$205 million to buy out mineral rights in Big Cypress National Preserve and proposed funding increases for the National Resource Challenge and park transportation systems. However, the report card reveals a series of alarming administration initiatives, such as:

▲ Its proposal to privatize up to 70 percent of the National Park Service's workforce, including archaeologists, biolo-

gists, and entrance station staff, at the expense of the quality of visitor experience and protection of park resources.

▲ Its policies on air quality, which favor allowing dirty coal-fired power plants and other industrial polluters to avoid clean up, endangering the health of visitors and the condition of resources.

▲ Its failure to provide significant funding to the parks to follow through on the president's campaign promise to eliminate a long-standing backlog of park maintenance projects.

▲ Its decision at the urging of snowmobile manufacturers to allow noisy, polluting snowmobiles to continue operation in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, reversing a previous ban approved by the Park Service.

▲ Its interpretation of a provision in a 137-year-old mining law, RS 2477, that puts major sections of 68 national parks at risk to new roads and other development, including Mojave National Preserve and Death Valley National Park in California, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in Alaska, and Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado.

The report card also grades the administration on its actions affecting individual parks, such as permitting new natural gas exploration and drilling on the shores of Padre Island National Seashore in Texas and reducing the instream water flow through Black Canyon of Gunnison National Park in Colorado.

“Our national heritage is at stake,” said Kiernan. “The administration can easily earn a better grade by ceasing the assault on our national parks and exempting the National Park Service from wholesale privatization, strengthening rather than weakening clean air protections, fully funding the needs of our national parks, and upholding the Park Service's ban on snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park.”

In May 2001, NPCA issued a preliminary report card that gave the administration a “D.” For a copy of this year's report card and the full assessment, including the methodology used please visit www.npca.org/reportcard.

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NPCA Notes



Gardening Trends

Sowing native plants has become increasingly popular in the world of modern gardening, and NPCA's new web page highlights the trend. Gardeners nationwide have begun to take an interest in using plants native to their region, in part, because they are more resistant to disease and pests and require less care. Native plants also provide food and shelter to a variety of bird and beneficial insect species. They are far less damaging than non-native invasive species, which have become a leading threat to national parks, including Shenandoah National Park in Virginia. The influx of invasive plants is a leading problem at Shenandoah, identified by a recently released State of the Parks® report. Learn more about native gardening, including how to plant in your own backyard, at www.npca.org.

Students Lend a Hand

The Los Angeles Community Partners (LACP) received two Public Land Corps grants that will enable students affiliated with the outreach program to work on backlog maintenance projects at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and Manzanar National Historic Site. At Manzanar, 20 students, along with an educational coordinator and two team leaders, will use global positioning systems to develop several Geographic Information System layers needed by park staff to create an effective cyclic maintenance program. LACP member organizations, including, Expo Neighbors and Earth Science System Inc., also are working with the project.

—Jenell Talley

PARK SCIENCE

Frog Die-offs at Acadia Examined

Scientists searching for answers to plight of park's frog species.

ACADIA N.P., MAINE—A major three-year study under way at Acadia National Park seeks to solve the mystery of what has been killing the young age classes of four frog species in the park.

Scientists at the National Wildlife Health Center have diagnosed several diseases after dissecting specimens of frog species that have been dying off in the last four years at park wetlands. These diseases, including a fungus, viruses, and protozoans, have caused complete or high mortality rates for wood frogs, green frogs, bullfrogs, and spring peepers. Park staff and scientists hope to learn whether these die-offs are natural occurrences or the result of a combination of environmental changes, such as air and water pollution, ultraviolet radiation, or toxins.

"The preliminary investigations have documented diseases at some wetland sites," said Bruce Connery, a park biologist. "Current information suggests that younger-aged groups of frogs are more susceptible, perhaps because of their less developed immune systems at specific stages of development.

"It is unclear whether shifts in environmental conditions could create additional physiological stresses for these young frogs," he added.

A full research effort began this spring. Researchers are tracking day-to-day environmental conditions and the development of frogs at various park wetland sites, hoping to detect the onset of disease.

Among the questions being asked is whether the diseases will go away on their own in a year or two—allowing the species to recover—or spread elsewhere. Scientists also hope to learn whether the disease can spread via researchers' boots



The green frog is one of the species in Acadia that has been dying off rapidly.

or on birds or ducks. Ultimately, the plan is to reproduce in healthy frogs the diseases affecting the Acadia frogs, to learn more about how the diseases begin and progress.

"The more events we look at and the more opportunities we have to examine healthy [frog] populations, the greater the chance that we'll be able to put together the pieces of the puzzle," Dr. David Green, a veterinarian who is also working closely with the park study, told the Associated Press.

Scientists investigating the dynamics of Acadia's wetlands first reported the die-offs of young frogs, which coincided with reports of declining frog populations or high occurrences of malformed frogs from 42 states. Connery said that the study coincides with similar research efforts under way in the Appalachian mountain states and the West.

Researchers are unsure of the direction the Acadia study will take in year two, but they are confident that it will yield results. "If nothing else, it will answer some questions and point us toward areas of other research," said Connery.

"The days of us expecting to find one root cause are long past," he added. "We're looking at a complex situation with many events and factors that may have been there all along but is now pushing the [frogs'] stress levels or immune systems to the breaking point."

RESOURCE THREATS

Plan for Jetties at Oregon Inlet Nixed

Critics said jetties could have led to erosion at Cape Hatteras.

OUTER BANKS, N.C.—A decades-old, controversial plan to build concrete jetties in Oregon Inlet on North Carolina's Outer Banks has been scrapped.

The proposal was pitched in 1970 as a way to make fragile Oregon Inlet more navigable for deep-draft fishing vessels and recreational boats. It would have involved dredging a 20-by-400 foot channel and building large jetties to divert sand from the channel, at a cost of more than \$114 million. The plan eventually collapsed under the weight of its own cost and faulty science.

"It is a boondoggle and always has been," said Don Barger, NPCA's Southeast regional director, adding that

NPCA has for 20 years opposed the plan as destructive and unnecessary.

"What happened is that the scientific evidence against this plan just became overwhelming," he said.

Critics have long said that jetties would cause erosion at Cape Hatteras and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge by blocking natural sand movement that replenishes the Outer Banks' shorelines; the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shared that concern. Others believed that jetties would reduce the number of fish that breed in the inlet fishery, which provides habitat to more than 75 species, such as sharks, flounder, bluefish, and white shrimp.

Instead of building jetties, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will work to improve the inlet's 14-foot navigation channel and provide to fishers more precise data on the area's sand conditions.

"This was a difficult decision to reach, but ultimately it was the right decision," said Department of Interior Secretary Gale Norton. "We have a mandate to protect and conserve our nation's parks and refuges for the benefit of the American people."

Then-senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) strongly backed the jetties in 1970, at the urging of fishermen who had complained of treacherous seas. Controversy ensued, stalling the project. The debate has centered on how to protect the inlet, Cape Hatteras, and Pea Island, while also providing a safer haven for fishers. Oregon Inlet is the only barrier island breach in the northern part of the Outer Banks that provides boat access.

Scientists have long said that barrier islands are dynamic systems that humans should not try to control. They move, regardless of jetties designed to contain them. Opponents to the plan also point to the Cape Hatteras lighthouse, which had to be moved sooner than scheduled because of erosion to the shoreline caused by four jetties.

"Regular dredging, on the other hand, allows the island to move naturally," said Barger. "Jetties do not. They are inconsistent with the basic dynamic nature of the island. They are doomed to fail."



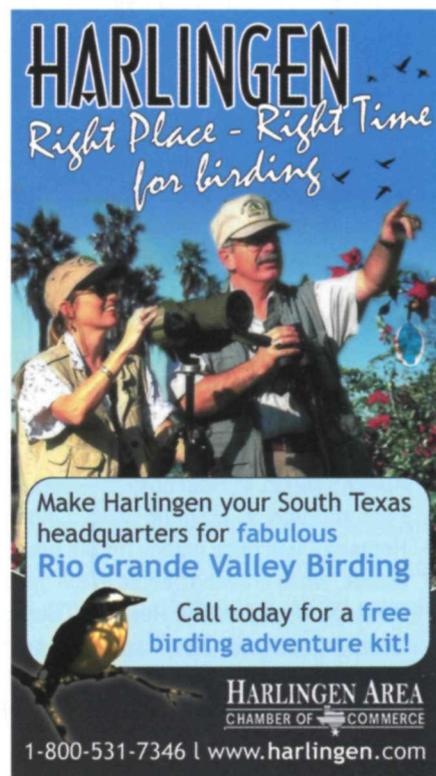
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Did You Know?

The site of the first homestead now also features the National Park System's first distance learning center, bringing the park to the people. Homestead National Monument of America in Nebraska uses fiber-optic technology to reach out to students who may not have otherwise known about or visited the park unit. The main aspect of the program is interactive equipment that allows students to experience almost all of the features of the park site, which tells the story of ramifications of the Homestead Act of 1862. In mid-May, rangers linked the equipment from the park to a high school 12 miles away and gave an interactive video presentation about a park prairie fire, including a question-and-answer session.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

WASHINGTON, D.C.—NPCA recently praised Washington, D.C., Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton for introducing and shepherding the passage of legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives to include the home of African-American scholar Carter G. Woodson in the National Park System. The legislation, H.R. 1012, authorizes the Park Service to take ownership of Dr. Woodson's home in Washington, D.C., currently a national historic landmark, and re-designate it the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site. "We encourage the U.S. Senate to pass, and the president to sign, this legislation to preserve the home of Carter G. Woodson for the benefit of future generations," said NPCA President Thomas Kiernan. The son of former enslaved blacks, Woodson has been called "the father of black history." In 1915, he founded the organization that became The Association for the Study of African American Life and History. The house at 1538 Ninth Street, N.W., where he lived from 1915 to 1950, has fallen into severe disrepair.

SAN FRANCISCO, California—Conservationists recently hailed the ruling of a U.S. district judge that halted a proposal to expand Mammoth-Yosemite Airport in Mammoth Lakes, California. District Judge Bernard Zimmerman ruled that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) illegally approved the proposal without fully considering the potentially devastating impact it would have on the local environment. He ordered the agency to prepare a full environmental impact statement (EIS) before the expansion can commence. "A full-blown EIS is needed to address all impacts resulting from the airport expansion," said Michelle Jespersion, associate director of NPCA's Pacific region. A coalition of conservation groups, including NPCA, filed a lawsuit to delay the expansion, which would have converted a small, private airplane facility into a major regional airport, affecting nearby areas such as Yosemite National Park and the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness Areas. The coalition argues that the expansion proposal must account for and mitigate the increased development, traffic congestion, and air, noise, and water pollution that would result from higher visitation to the area.

MOJAVE N.P., California—The National Park Service recently covered up a controversial desert cross at Mojave National Preserve (News, July/August 2001), responding to a judge's ruling that the structure violates constitutional separation of church and state. The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California in 2001 filed a lawsuit seeking the removal of the cross. The Department of Justice is appealing the judge's ruling, but for now the Park Service covered the cross with a tarp. A wooden predecessor to the current metal cross was placed in the park atop Sunrise Rock in 1934 by the local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter, to honor World War I veterans. Proponents of the cross argue that it should stay because of its historic value.

ADAMS N.H.P., Massachusetts—Donations will be made to Adams National Historical Park through a program with Colombo yogurt. The program, "Preserving Our Heritage," will raise money for the preservation of historic artifacts in the Adams collection, while drawing people to the park. Printed on all Colombo yogurt lids will be the message "Preserve Our Heritage." Consumers who send the lids to Colombo from July through September 30 will spur a 20-cent donation to the site, up to \$100,000. Coupons in newspapers will give information on the program as well. A similar program run by Colombo last year raised \$50,000 for the Paul Revere House in Boston.

NATIONAL ICONS

Flags in Demand at Pearl Harbor Site

Flags that have flown over the USS Arizona coveted since 9/11.

HONOLULU, HAWAII—In the wake of September 11, 2001, American flags sprouted everywhere—on hats and T-shirts, car windows, front porches, and freeway overpasses. The surge of patriotism also fueled a demand for flags associated with a previous Day of Infamy, December 7, 1941.

The 17-by-11-foot garrison flags that fly over the USS *Arizona* Memorial at Pearl Harbor, tattered by the trade winds after six weeks of 24-hour duty, were routinely given to a local Boy Scout troop for proper disposal by burning. But the inevitable comparison between the terrorist attacks and the assault on Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier prompted the Navy and the National Park Service to send New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani the flag that flew over the *Arizona* on September 11.

"It suddenly dawned on me that these old flags had an emotional value that went far beyond most flags," said Skip Wheeler, park ranger at the USS *Arizona* Memorial. He created a certificate of authenticity signed by the park superintendent that verifies the dates a particular flag flew over the USS *Arizona*.

When a group of California firefighters presented one of the flags to the lone survivor of a unit of New York firefighters who had been at the World Trade Center on September 11, news of the flags spread quickly and requests began pouring in, said Wheeler. So far, he has donated 24 flags, and six more are promised.

They have been sent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to the New York City Police Museum in honor of 23 officers who died during the attacks, and to the *Staten Island Advance* to help raise money to buy Christmas presents for



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Officials at the USS Arizona National Memorial have seen a surge of post-9/11 patriotism that has increased visitation to the site and boosted interest in the flags hoisted above it.

Staten Island children who lost parents on September 11. Other recipients include several World War II veterans groups, including two units of Japanese-Americans from Hawaii, Pearl Harbor survivors in Georgia and South Dakota who hope to raise funds to create World War II memorials, the captain and crew

of the USS *Pearl Harbor* in San Diego, and the firefighters of the State of Ohio. Among those slated to receive flags are the team that rebuilt the Pentagon after the September 11 attack, the planned National Park Service memorial to Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania that fateful day, and the Oklahoma City

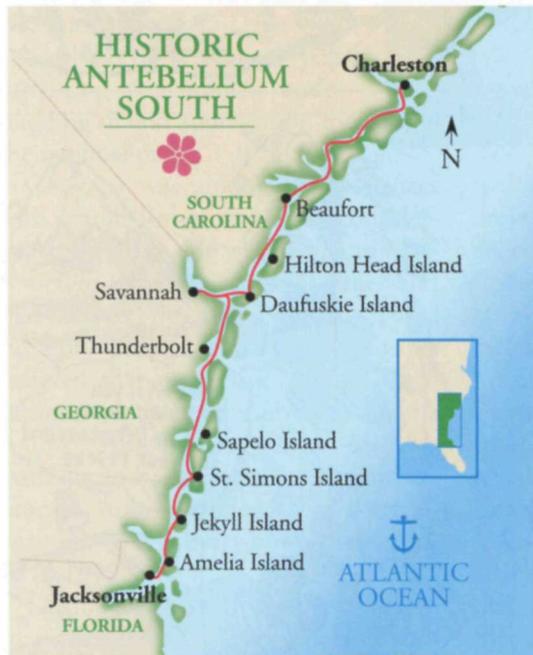
National Memorial, dedicated to the victims of the Oklahoma City bombing. The flag that flies over the USS *Arizona* on December 7, 2003, will likely go to the new World War II Memorial on the National Mall, said Wheeler.

“These flags have given the crew of the *Arizona* [who remain entombed in the hulk of the ship at Pearl Harbor] the ability to reach out to the country in its time of need,” said Wheeler.

Since September 11, he added, Americans have clearly felt the need to connect with the men of the *Arizona*. Though travel to Hawaii has declined, 2002 visitation to the USS *Arizona* Memorial was the third highest ever, and the pace continues this year.

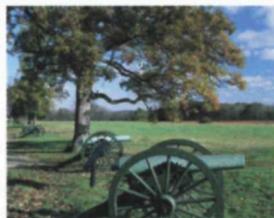
“September 11 has given younger people a whole new perspective on Pearl Harbor,” said Wheeler. “Now they can understand what their grandparents experienced on December 7, 1941. That was their grandparents’ 9/11.”

—Phyllis McIntosh



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A View on Privatization

Carlton Stoiber, a free-lance cartoonist, shares his interpretation of the Bush administration's plan to privatize Park Service positions. He lives in Washington, D.C., and is also a consultant on international and nuclear law. A former federal employee at both the State and Justice Departments, Stoiber has been an NPCA member for five years and frequently contributes cartoons to the magazine.





Parks Expert Dies

Considered one of the country's foremost experts on the National Park System, Robin W. Winks had a life-long love affair with our nation's parks

BY LINDA RANCOURT

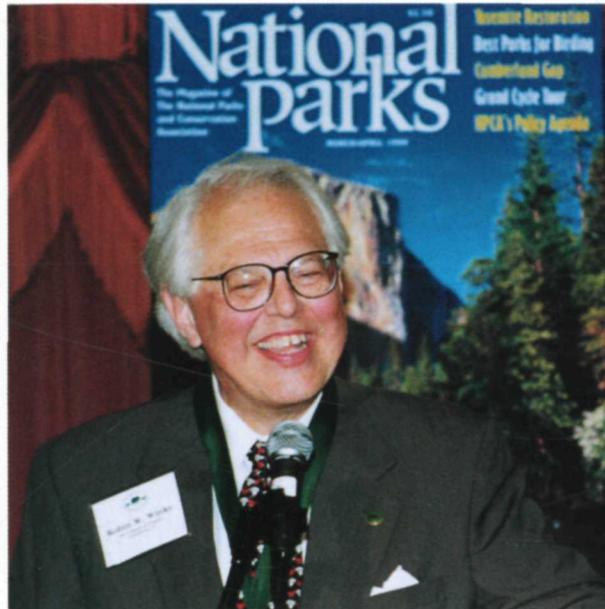
When he was 16 years old, Robin W. Winks walked through the library of a Colorado university where he and his teammates had come for a track meet. On a break from his competition as a quarter-miler, Robin found a copy of *National Parks* magazine, picked it up, and read it, beginning what would become a keen interest in the National Parks Conservation Association and the work that we do.

Robin W. Winks died April 7, 2003, at the age of 72. He spent a good portion of those years furthering the public's understanding of and appreciation for the national parks.

Congress was among the audiences with whom Robin shared his considerable knowledge. He was invited to testify before Congress scores of times and had served on the National Parks Advisory Council, twice as its chair. He believed that each park was a branch campus of the best university in the country. And both to further his own learning and to have some fun in the process, Robin decided more than 20 years ago to visit every one. He succeeded in 1999.

During an interview four years ago to mark NPCA's 80th anniversary, Robin shared the story of his introduction to NPCA along with many others.

Born December 5, 1930, in Lafayette, Indiana, he grew up during the Depression and World War II, the son of



two teachers. The hard economic times drove the family to move more than a dozen times in as many years. For Robin, who was introduced to the parks at a young age, the one constant throughout these moves was the arrowhead symbol of the National Park Service. He had at one point in his life considered becoming a park ranger, but joked that he couldn't stand the sound of "buzzing mosquitoes."

Instead, he applied his considerable talents and intellect to a variety of interests that included the National Park System.

A history professor at Yale University for 46 years, he was an expert on U.S. as well as British history. He was fascinated with counterintelligence and wrote reviews of mystery stories for the *Boston*

Globe. Robin was a prolific author, penning more than 17 books and hundreds of articles and essays. His book titles speak to a wide range of interests: *A History of Malaysia*, *Laurance S. Rockefeller: Catalyst for Conservation*, and *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in America's Secret War*. He also, until recently, typed most of those works on a Hermes 3000 manual typewriter and continued to pride himself on holding the highest recorded speed typing scores in Colorado.

Robin had served multiple terms on NPCA's Board of Trustees over the past two decades and chaired the advisory council on NPCA's State of the Parks program. During his tenure on the council, Robin played a crucial role in developing the criteria that NPCA would use to analyze each park.

"We will miss his wisdom and his guidance," said Thomas C. Kiernan, NPCA president. "He was an inspired teacher both in and out of the classroom, stretching our thinking, asking just the right questions to help us reach the right conclusions for the right reasons—all for the lasting benefit of the National Park System he loved so much."

Several years ago during a tribute among friends, Robin offered what may best describe what for him had been a "magnificent obsession." "Those of you who know me," he said, "know that the national parks are the closest thing to religion that I have." 

Beyond BOUNDARIES

By Benjamin Long

Our tent shook and billowed, suffering from a tantrum of the weather as the brief, alpine autumn came crashing to a violent end against the Continental Divide. My wife and I were camped at timberline in Glacier National Park, just one more day's trek from our destination in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. But as the weather soured, we wondered if we would beat the winter's first blizzard to Canada.

Backpacking that late in the season had been a gamble all along, but it had paid off in a jackpot of solitude and wildlife. With so few other hikers around, we'd thrilled to the wilderness spectacular. A southward parade of

migrating golden eagles soared along the jagged spine of the Rockies. Mountain goats, dressed to survive the next Ice Age, peered over limestone cliffs. Bighorn rams posed like statues of machismo on a scree field near Granite Park. A bull moose sauntered past, his right antler shorn near the base from a seasonal battle. When a fuzzy, brown creature appeared in the trail on Swiftcurrent Mountain, we automatically thought grizzly cub! The reality was even more rare: a wolverine that glared briefly at us before bounding for the rimrock. Finally, we did see grizzlies as we cooked over our camp stove and three silvertips scrounged their own dinner from the tundra flank of Fifty Mountain.



Mountain goats perched on the rocky mountainsides at Glacier.

Waterton-Glacier

International Peace Park

presents management

challenges for both the

United States and

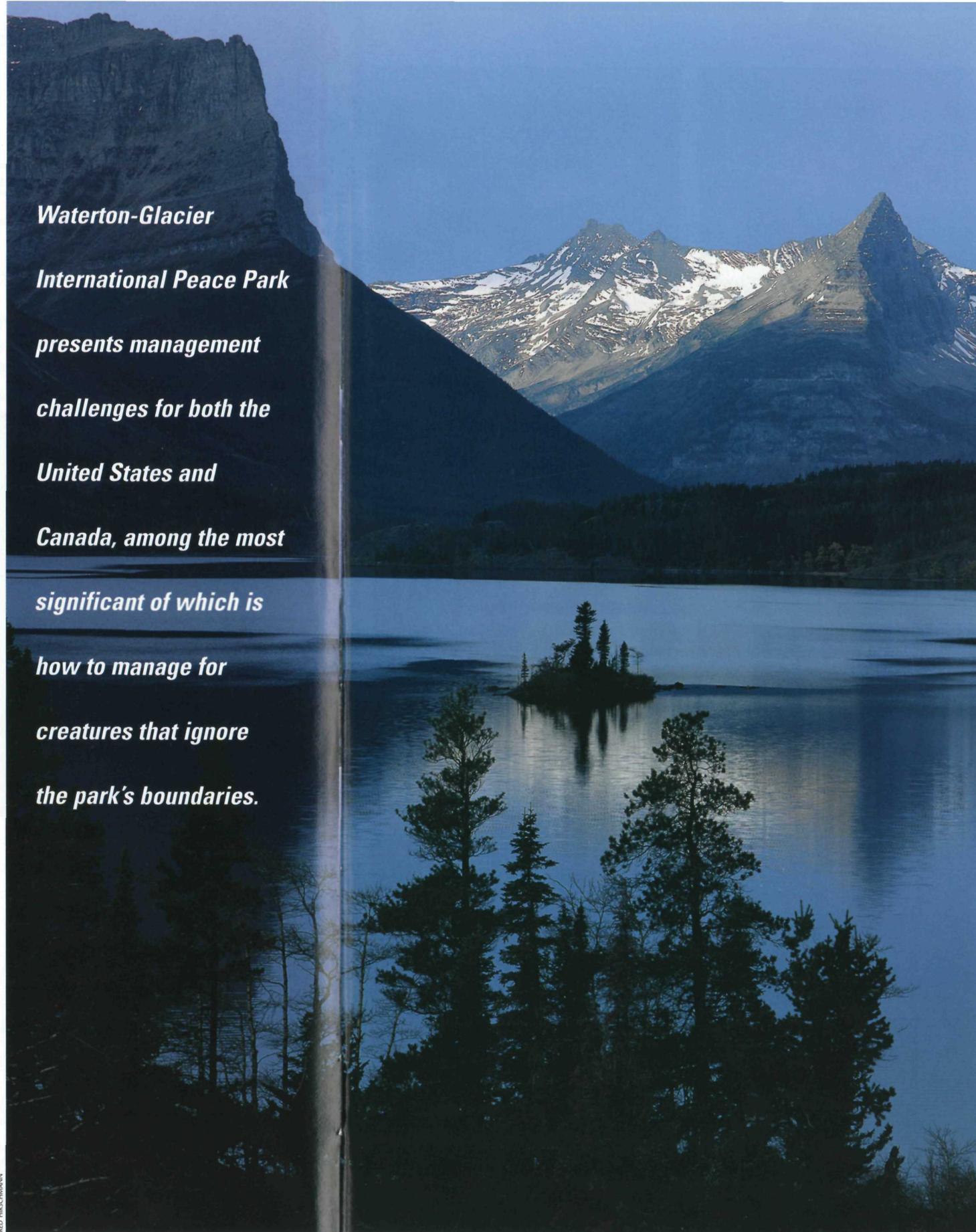
Canada, among the most

significant of which is

how to manage for

creatures that ignore

the park's boundaries.



Waterton-Glacier is recognized globally as one of the world's most intact ecological areas.



A bull moose feeds at the park.



Glacier's historic red buses carry visitors along Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The presence of such wildlife separates true wilderness from mere scenery, and Glacier's full theater of wildlife separates it from most national parks in the system. But the intact ecosystem of which Glacier is a part—with all of its large predatory animals—both benefits from and is challenged by the peculiar international dimension of its political geography.

Glacier National Park was founded in 1910, not long after the creation in 1895 of its northern sister, Alberta's Waterton Lakes National Park. At slightly more than one million acres, Glacier straddles both sides of the Continental Divide; Waterton, at 130,000 acres, falls on the eastern side of the divide. In the Pikuni (Blackfeet) language, this dramatic landscape where the Rockies meet the Great Plains is "Miistakis," or "The Backbone of the World." A century ago, conservationist George Bird Grinnell dubbed the region the "Crown of the Continent."

In 1932, at the lobbying of American and Canadian Rotary Clubs, the sister parks became Waterton-Glacier Inter-

national Peace Park. This was the first international peace park on Earth—designed to celebrate friendship and improve cooperation between nations. The peace park is recognized globally as one of the most intact ecological areas anywhere: The United Nations ranks it as a World Heritage Site alongside the Great Barrier Reef and the Serengeti Plain.

But what seems like oceans of space to a human is cramped quarters for many animals. Glacier is 1,500 square miles, yet one local grizzly has a home range of 1,200 square miles. A moose may travel 50 miles between summer and winter range. Local wolves have roamed 300 miles in a single fit of wanderlust.

“We’re learning that these animals roam the entire ecosystem,” said Glacier Park biologist John Waller. “One bear may travel from one side of the ecosystem to another, from north to south and east to west. It’s a function of the nature of the animal.”

With the Crown of the Continent made up of two nations (the United States and Canada), two native tribal territories (the Kootenay and Pikuni), and two provinces and one state (British



An elk and fawn.



Grizzly bears are among top predators.

Columbia, Alberta, and Montana), it is managed by a hodgepodge of government agencies, corporations, and small landowners. This multifaceted ownership forces many challenging questions. Among the most vexing is this: How do

we manage far-ranging creatures that disregard our borders?

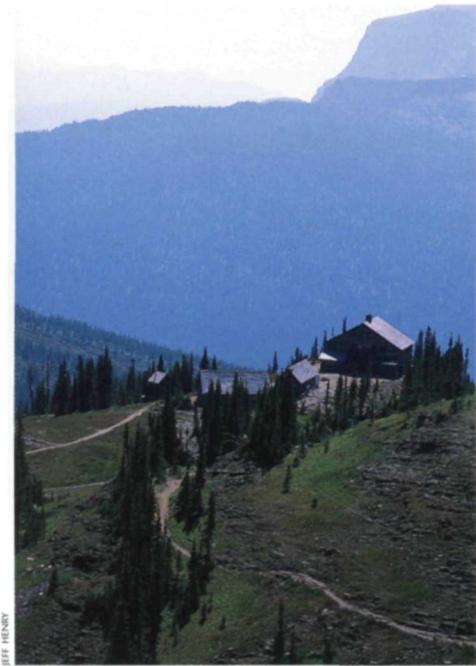
Contradictions abound. A wolf in Montana is a protected endangered species. When that animal steps over the British Columbia border, it becomes a game animal, a trophy on legs during open season. Should the wolf cross the Continental Divide into Alberta, it becomes an agricultural pest, eligible to be shot anytime on private property. The Belly River wolf pack has safe haven in Waterton-Glacier, but was promptly exterminated on the prairies of Alberta. The second-leading cause of death for “endangered” wolves radio-collared in western Montana is perfectly legal bullets and traps in Canada.

Likewise, Montana’s legendary Giefer grizzly was a threatened species but ended up a hunter’s trophy in British Columbia. And it’s not just about mammals. The splendid North Fork of the Flathead River, which forms Glacier’s western border, has “wild and scenic” protection from the U.S. Congress, but in Canada the headwaters are open for development. Pollution from proposed Canadian coal mines has long frightened boaters and lakeshore homeowners downstream in Montana.

Meanwhile, misguided fisheries management in Montana’s waters has damaged the cutthroat and bull trout fishing upstream in Canada’s portion of the Flathead Drainage. (Exotic fish are the major threat to native life in Glacier’s streams and lakes.) And forest fires that restore the ecosystem of Glacier make foresters and loggers in British Columbia worry, at the same time a fungus inadvertently imported to a British Columbia tree nursery has all but wiped out Glacier’s white pine and whitebark pine trees, an important food source for grizzlies.

The natural world nearly shouts this fact: Political borders mean nothing. If we want to protect rare, wide-ranging, and persecuted species like grizzlies and wolves, the best thing we can do is pro-





Trail to Swiftcurrent Pass.

tect wilderness habitat. In this case, that is particularly along the international border in the North Fork of the Flathead—an area *The New York Times* has called “the wildest valley in America.”

John Weaver, a large mammal biologist for the Wildlife Conservation Society, has identified the North Fork of the Flathead as perhaps the most important habitat in the Rocky Mountains for rare, beautiful, and precious forest carnivores. The British Columbia Flathead includes a dozen “at risk” species identified by Canada’s version of the Endangered Species List. Kenton Miller, of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, calls the British Columbia portion a “missing link in the overall integrity of this internationally designated site.” (Last fall, NPCA released an assessment of Glacier and Waterton Lakes national parks that addresses some of these contradictions. A full State of the Parks® report is available at www.npca.org.)

More and more, efforts to ensure the future protection of this area have focused on the need to expand the Waterton part of the ecosystem. “It has always been obvious to anyone who has visited Waterton-Glacier that there is a missing piece,” says Harvey Locke,

New Help for Wild Places

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien knows the value of parks—for both people and wildlife. At a 2002 global summit on the environment in South Africa, Chrétien pledged to expand Canada’s national park system, and Waterton was on his list for expansion.

Conservationists who have worked for decades to expand Waterton-Glacier are cheered by Chrétien’s support; with it, the proposal has more momentum than at any time since the expansion was first proposed 70 years ago. (NPCA has also acknowledged the prime minister’s actions, giving him a special award at its Annual Dinner for his pledge to expand his country’s park system.) Harvey Locke notes that Chrétien began his public life as head of Parks Canada in the 1960s and has a sincere connection with the land. “When Prime Minister Chrétien made his announcement about expanding the park system, he said, ‘I love Nature; Canadians love Nature,’” said Locke. “You could tell this matters a great deal to him.”

Chrétien’s pledge at the global summit was the result of years of work by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association and the East Kootenay Environmental Society. The pledge broke new ground, in particular, because besides creating parkland, it creates financial incentives for the Canadian timber company that would give up logging rights in the new parks. The agreement was a “win-win” for both jobs and the environment.

This is a dramatic break from the historic pattern in both Canada and the United States. When the U.S. Congress created Glacier in 1910, for instance, locals in Montana were hostile to the idea, fearing a park would “lock up” natural resources. Since then, however, Glacier has emerged as the economic engine of northwestern Montana, now the most economically vibrant and stable part of the state.

So it’s new, but not illogical, that some business groups have rallied on behalf of expanding Waterton. As the Missoula, Montana, newspaper, editorialized: “In a relatively new way of thinking, business interests are embracing preservation as economically important.”

The provincial government of British Columbia will also have a big say over park expansion. British Columbia towns like Fernie have traditionally depended on coal and timber, and community members threatened to fall into predictable “conservation” v. “development” factions. But, encouraged by NPCA’s Glacier program manager Steve Thompson, political and business leaders from Montana met with their northern neighbors in British Columbia to discuss the common ground between commerce and conservation.

As a result, more than 50 Fernie business owners have supported expanding Waterton. Fernie electrical contractor Mike Bowick put it this way: “A big part of this community and this economy is here because of the park and wildlife. Logging and mining are important, but they’re only going to maintain the status quo. I’m for growth, and growth means preservation. This economy is intimately tied to preservation, like it or not.”

—BL



JEFF HENRY/ROCHE JAUNE PICTURES

A hotel at Waterton-Glacier stands before a backdrop of breathtaking mountain scenery.

Throughout the Crown of the Continent, people flock to enjoy this beautiful landscape, and not just as seasonal visitors. Surrounding towns are growing exponentially and, too often, haphazardly.

vice president for conservation in the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association. “Glacier includes both sides of the Continental Divide, but Waterton does not. It just doesn’t make any sense. Over history, it has bothered a lot of people. There have been attempts to fix this in the 1930s and again in the 1970s, but it has never been fixed. It’s high time to get it fixed.”

Conservationists, business leaders, and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (*see sidebar*) are now pushing to double the size of Waterton by lining up its western border with the western edge of Glacier National Park.

Aside from doubling this wilderness area, the move would protect much of the headwaters of the North Fork of the Flathead River.

The North Fork happens to be the richest grizzly bear habitat in the entire Rockies, from Yellowstone to the Yukon. Perched precariously on the top of the food chain, big meat eaters are the first to disappear when human activities place stress on an ecosystem. Grizzlies, for example, once roamed Mount Rainier, Yosemite, Zion, and Grand Canyon national parks, among others, but those parks proved too small to support grizzly populations alone. If Waterton-Glacier’s grizzlies are to remain viable in the long term, they will be most secure if the parklands remain connected to surrounding wild lands, both to the north and south. Cut off those connections, isolate the parks, and large carnivores are gradually doomed.

Though Americans tend to think of Canada as a vast reservoir of wildlife habitat, in the Crown of the Continent, that’s an illusion. In the land surrounding Waterton, sprawling clearcuts dice up the western, forested side of the park. Road and gas line development along Alberta’s Rocky Mountain Front give poachers easier opportunities to kill

wildlife. Alberta researcher Gord Stenhouse was stunned to discover just how many bears were being gunned down near Jasper National Park, in backwoods versions of drive-by shootings. After discovering 26 bullet-ridden grizzly carcasses over four years, he told the Canadian Broadcast Service, “At this rate, the species just can’t survive.” Although Stenhouse’s research was done north of the Crown of the Continent, there’s no reason to believe much is different farther south in Alberta.

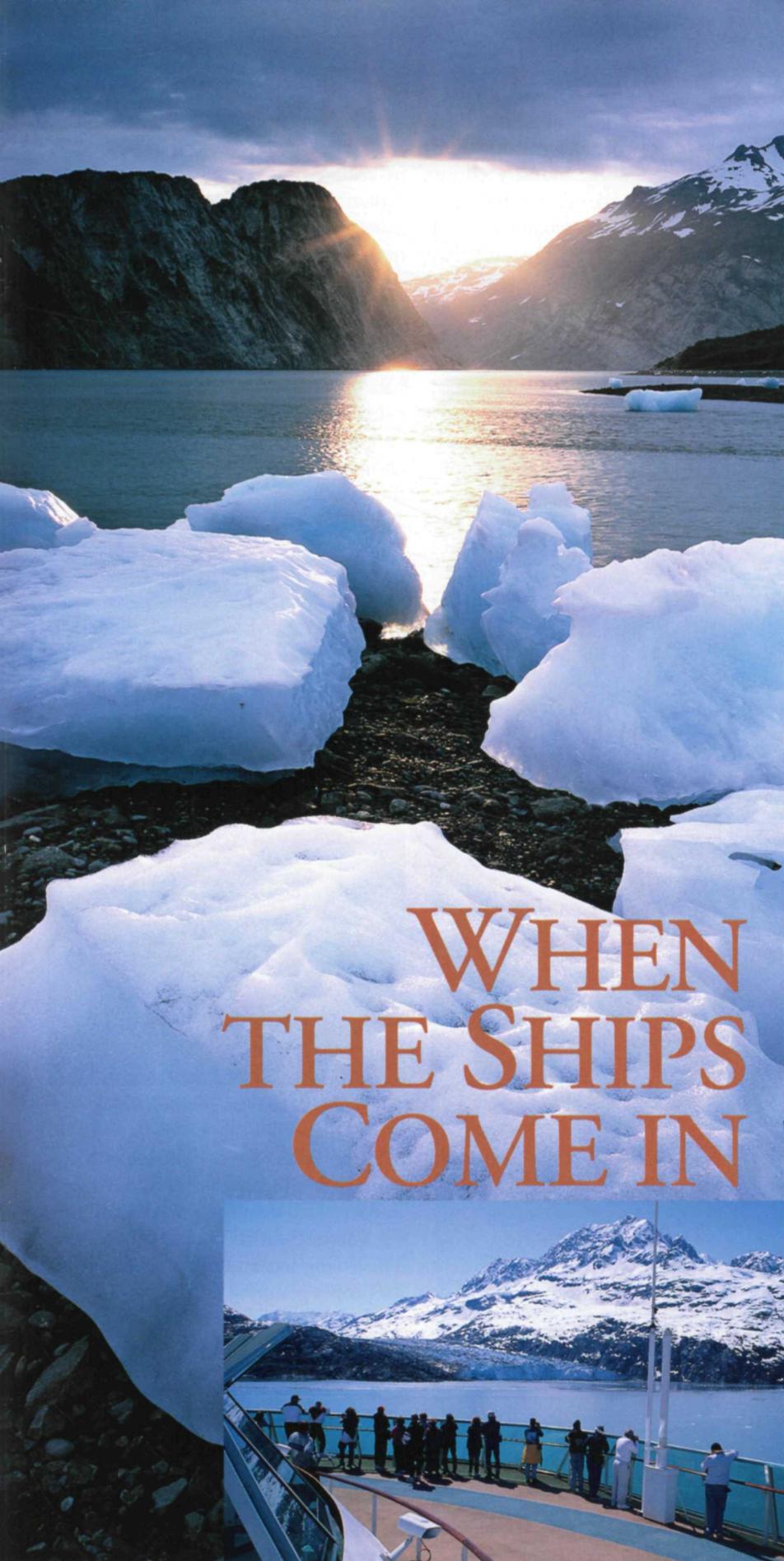
Calgary, Alberta, the largest city near Waterton-Glacier, has a population larger than all Montana’s. Throughout the Crown of the Continent, people flock to enjoy this beautiful landscape, and not just as seasonal visitors. Towns like Whitefish, Montana, and Fernie, British Columbia, are growing exponentially and, too often, haphazardly.

Biologist John Waller puts it this way: “We’re seeing increased habitat fragmentation due to subdivisions and just more and more people. More people mean higher mortality rates for wildlife. We’re worried that we will basically fracture the spine of the Continental Divide.”

Savoring the rare pleasure of our wildlife experience along the divide, my wife and I broke our frigid camp at dawn and hiked out wearing parkas, gloves, and stocking caps. Switchbacks dropped us out of the alpine and into the forests above the Waterton River where banks of clouds shrouded Mount Cleveland. Stretching out ten miles before us was Waterton Lake, which Blackfeet nicknamed “Lake Cut-in-Half” after the border was established that divides it. As we crossed the border into Canada on a shuttle boat, storms over the mountains brewed over this Land Cut-in-Half; with human wisdom, we can guarantee safe passage.



Benjamin Long is a freelance writer who lives in Kalispell, Montana. He last wrote for *National Parks* about snowmobiles in Yellowstone.



CARR CLIFTON

Park managers at Glacier Bay in Alaska are grappling with how to protect the world-class preserve and its wildlife while providing access to the creatures and landscape that thousands come to see each season.

Jeffrey R. Richardson

WHEN THE SHIPS COME IN

Exploring the broad bay that makes up just a portion of the 3.3-million-acre Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in Alaska is like traveling back to the Ice Age, when ice and snow dominated the North American landscape. “It’s geology happening right before you,” says Ken Leghorn, a long-time guide in the park. “The story of glaciation and how it forms the landscapes, the colonization of new plant and animal species—that’s all happening in Glacier Bay. And the marine shoreline is where a lot of the biological significance of the park is.”

This, the nation’s largest protected marine ecosystem, is best known for its 17 tidewater glaciers and whale-watching opportunities. “What makes Glacier Bay special is the proximity of a vibrant marine ecosystem right next to some of the most rugged, panoramic mountains in the world, with glaciers connecting the two,” says Jim Stratton, Alaska regional director for the National Parks Conservation Association.

That fabulous view—along with the hope of seeing minke, humpback, or orca whales, Dall and harbor porpoises, Steller sea lions, harbor seals, and a host



MARK E. GIBSON/DANIMARK PHOTO ASSOC.

Glaciers and whale-watching draw visitors to Glacier Bay.

More than 100 cruise ships are allowed in the bay each season, but that number has been the focus of more than a decade of wrangling between Alaska's congressional delegation and conservationists.

of birds, including the endangered marbled and Kittlitz's murrelets, nesting bald eagles, and tufted puffins—draws hundreds of thousands of people each year.

And nearly every one of those visitors arrives by water, most often aboard cruise ships that can carry thousands of people. More than 100 cruise ships are allowed in the bay each season, but that number has been the focus of more than a decade of wrangling between Alaska's congressional delegation and conservationists. On one side are the politicians who would like to boost the number of cruise ships allowed in the bay; on the



Tufted puffin are often seen at Glacier Bay.

other are conservationists who fear too great an increase will harm the very creatures visitors come to see.

This point was brought home in July 2001, when a cruise ship carrying hundreds of passengers accidentally rammed and killed a pregnant humpback whale.

With fears that increased vessel traffic

might be disrupting movements of whales in the area, the event underscored the difficulty of managing cruise ship traffic, given aggressive industry efforts to increase access to Glacier Bay and reduce oversight of its operations. It was also a forceful reminder of the potentially high costs of tourism: At what point do the impacts of visitors on priceless natural areas create a cost-benefit nightmare that degrades the ecosystem, the visitor experience, and, ultimately, tourism's bottom line?

Visits by cruise ships and smaller vessels to Glacier Bay had begun to climb dramatically in the 1970s, at the same time whale sightings inexplicably declined. Although no definitive link between the two trends has been established, the National Park Service (NPS) has stepped up research and worked to strengthen vessel regulation. This spring, the agency issued an environmental impact statement for a revised Vessel Management Plan.

"The most significant point to come



Orca whales are seen in the park's waters.

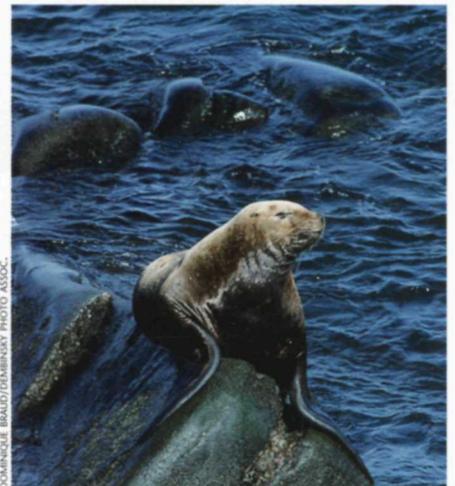
away with for the Vessel Management Plan will be this: What are we going to do at the end of this plan to make whale deaths less likely," says Elizabeth Fayad, NPCA's counsel. "We must have more stringent standards of protection for places like Glacier Bay. We can't expect the same Coast Guard standards that regulate New York harbor to serve as a standard for a pristine world-class resource like Glacier Bay."

Whether the park's Vessel Manage-

ment Plan can protect the park's creatures remains to be seen. It's a tall order, because the plan's reach extends not only to cruise ships but to the smaller day tour and charter vessels operating out of nearby Juneau and Gustavus, whose numbers have also been burgeoning in recent years.

Since the mid-1990s, cruise lines have been pushing to increase the number of ships allowed in the bay, with strong backing from the Alaska congressional delegation. More than six years ago, the Park Service issued a plan that called for an increase of 72 percent. That number dropped to 30 percent, an increase from 107 to 139 vessels per season—even though the agency acknowledged that it had no scientific basis for such an increase.

Last year, NPCA won a significant victory in the U.S. Court of Appeals that



A Steller sea lion sits atop a rock.

required NPS to roll back vessel numbers and prepare an environmental impact statement before determining any increases in the number of vessels. This ruling sets an important precedent for proper planning in parks.

However, politics intervened even before the study could begin. Alaska Senator Ted Stevens (R) shot down the roll-back with a rider on the Interior Department appropriations bill voiding the court decisions and returning the cruise ship numbers to 139 entries per season.

The Stevens rider was not the first of its kind affecting Glacier Bay. In 1996, Alaska's other Republican senator, Frank



Studies have shown that kayaks can be disturbing to wildlife because they can get in close to shore.

Murkowski (now the governor of the state), had pushed through a rider blocking tighter operating conditions on cruise vessels to reduce pollution and noise.

What makes these end runs of the public process so egregious to many is the litany of water and air quality violations, in Alaska and around the world, racked up by the cruise industry. Some companies have gone to great lengths to hide illegal dumping of oily bilge water, chemicals (such as photo processing and dry cleaning solvents), and barely treated sewage—including lying to investigators about such practices.

“We’re also concerned about the noise generated by ships entering the bay,” says NPCA’s Stratton. “And just the level of general disturbance created by increasing traffic. The kind of disturbance that creates stress on animals also disrupts their movements and feeding cycles, causing them to burn critical energy in responding to vessels.”



An increase in the number of cruise ships entering the bay could harm park wildlife.

Leghorn says cruise ships affect the bay in other ways as well, resulting in air quality violations. "Visually and aesthetically, cruise ships leave a huge plume of smoke that can be seen for miles and last for hours," he says. "A ship can lay a smoke layer that's still visible when it comes back out."

Tomie Lee, superintendent at Glacier Bay, shares all of these concerns, although she notes that some companies have demonstrated a willingness to change their approach to environmental issues. Holland America, for example, has voluntarily raised a number of environmental standards in its operations.

For all vessels, park managers are grappling with two parameters for defining use and impacts: limits on both daily entries and the overall season. For cruise ships, a daily limit of two per day may be workable ecologically and also about right for cruise passengers, many of whom do not want to see other cruise ships during their sojourn.

"The urgency is that if the agency doesn't establish a scientifically defensible vessel limit, Congress will set an arbitrary one," says NPCA's Stratton. "We need to provide the opportunity to the



Dwarf fireweed and paintbrush at Glacier Bay.

Park Service to do the science. There should not be any increase in the number of vessels until we have conclusive proof that there will not be detrimental impacts to the park. However, if you don't provide some opportunity for growth, it will be done for you." He adds, "Alaska's congressional delegation is very powerful.

They've never been reluctant to legislate park management."

Leghorn believes the integrity of the Glacier Bay ecosystem has not suffered dramatically from vessel traffic, but agrees the risk is there. He is especially concerned about the fragile shoreline where cruise ships can't go, but smaller vessels can virtually swarm.

"Every commercial concession inside the park has grown dramatically," says Leghorn. "There have been huge increases in commercial uses and a steady rise in personal uses."

Greg Streveler, formerly a research scientist for the park and now a consulting ecologist and geologist based in Gustavus, agrees. "I worry considerably more about the smaller vessels that can get in close to shore and make more contact with wildlife. The shoreline is where the action is around here, and that's where most people want to go when they visit," he says. "It's amazing where some of those mid-sized boats can get into—almost as close as a skiff—and that's where they get into trouble. They're under a lot of competitive pressure to find wildlife and get in close to it."

Even kayaks can pose risks, says Judy Brakel, anthropologist and wilderness guide for Alaska Discovery, a Juneau-based ecotourism firm. Brakel says studies have shown that kayaks are more dis-



Grizzly bear tracks along the shoreline at Glacier Bay.

CARR CLIFTON/MINDEN PICTURES (2)

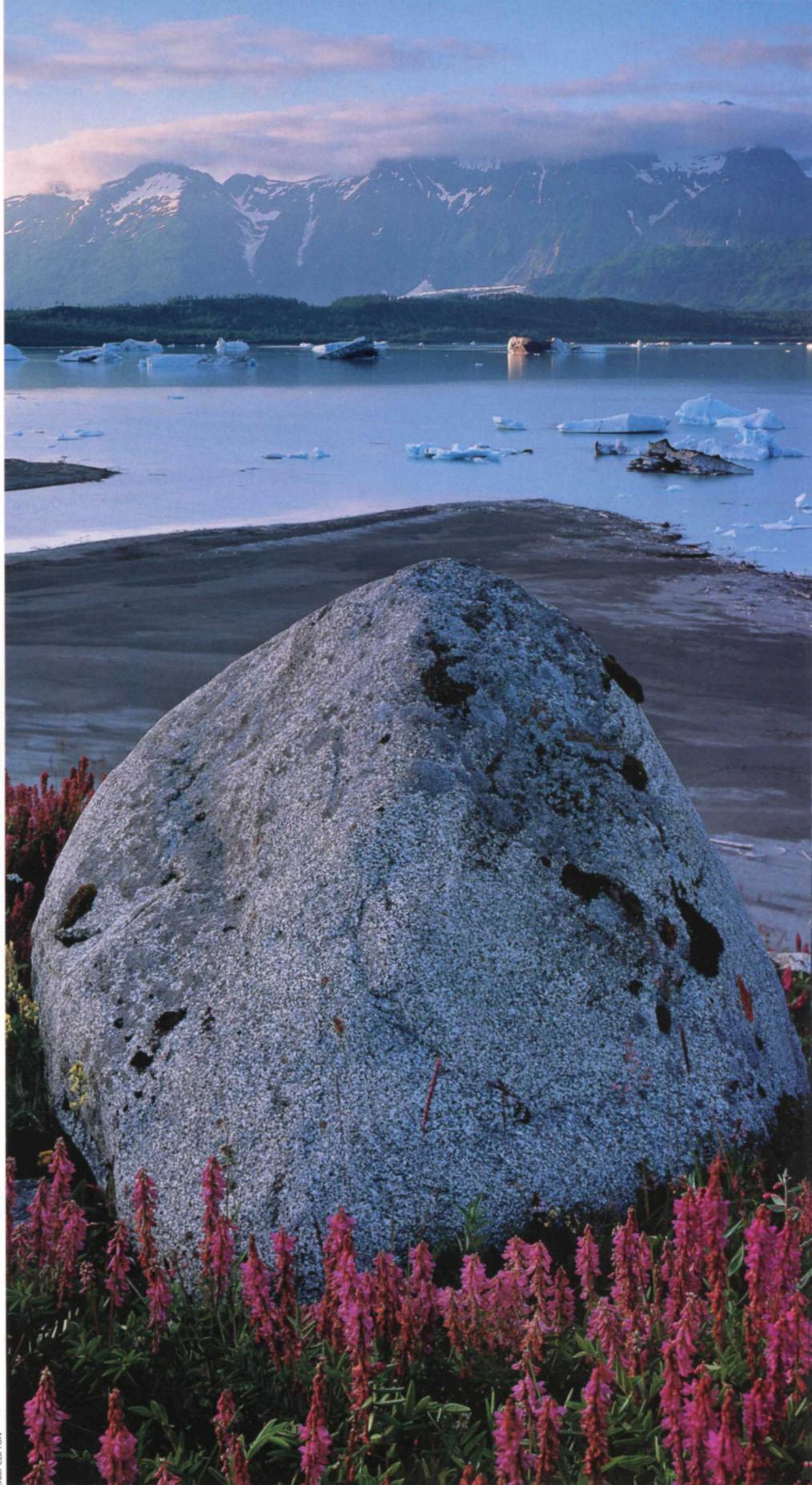
A price must be paid to protect the scenic and ecological splendor that draws increasing numbers of visitors, even if that price involves limits through increased regulation.

turbing to wildlife than motor boats at the same distance. Some tour boats with overnight trips are dropping dozens of kayakers at a time in coves and inlets for several hours of paddling.

For Brakel and others, access and transit in fragile ecosystems pose difficult, painful challenges. A price must be paid to protect the scenic and ecological splendor that draws increasing numbers of visitors, even if that price involves limits through increased regulation. Glen Nelson, owner and operator of Wolf Track Expeditions of Gustavus and a veteran whale watcher, agrees. “There has to be give and take; you can’t have unlimited access,” he says. “And both a healthy ecosystem and quality visitor experience have a direct and equal influence on the value of the tourism industry.”

Part of this equation includes ensuring that the Park Service has the policies, the resources, and the latitude to manage vessel traffic with scientific objectivity. “Cruise ships are a great way to handle 2,000 visitors if done right. And I genuinely think the larger companies want to do it right,” says Stratton. “But there’s a limit to how much visitation this ecosystem can stand and still be a healthy, functioning ecosystem.” 🐻

Jeffrey Richardson is a freelance writer who lives in Alaska. He last wrote for *National Parks* about subsistence hunting.



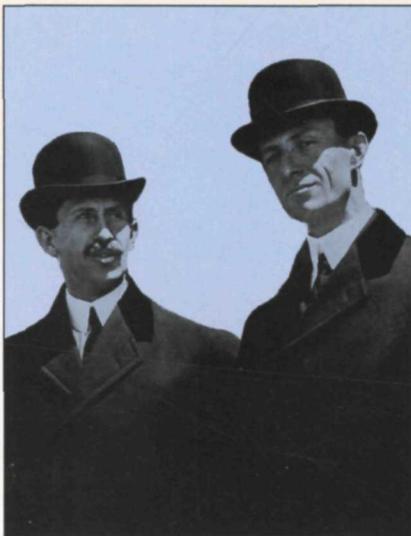
Sweet vetch frames a boulder at the perimeter of Aslek Lake's icy waters at Glacier Bay.

CARR CLIFTON

Two national park sites tell the story of the Wright brothers and their invention of a heavier-than-air machine nearly 100 years ago, arguably one of the most significant achievements of the 20th century.

Celebrating Flight

By Douglas Gantenbein



CORBIS STOCK PHOTO (2)

Orville and Wilbur Wright were both tenacious inventors.

Wilbur and Orville Wright were creative and tenacious individuals who were likely to have thrived no matter where they lived. But in the manufacturing community of Dayton, Ohio, and the wind-swept dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, they found sites to support the efforts that would make them two of history's most celebrated Americans. "In Kitty Hawk they had the perfect place to test their gliders and airplanes, with wind and no trees and open spaces. And in Dayton they had a place where they could find everything they needed as they built their aircraft," says Tom Crouch, a curator with the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and a noted Wright scholar.

Today, visitors to the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park and the Wright Brothers National Memorial at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, can walk in the footsteps of these two brilliant inventors and see where they developed one of the machines that transformed the 20th century. The Wrights' designs solved the basic problems of mechanical flight—lift, propulsion, and control—and continue today in every aircraft to take to the skies, whether a humble Cessna 150 or a giant Boeing 747. Their invention changed the world from a two-dimensional grid to a three-dimensional space in which conventional boundaries disappeared.

As December 17, 2003, nears—the 100th anniversary of the Wrights' first sustained powered flight in a heavier-than-air machine—the Dayton and

Kitty Hawk parks will be the destination of hundreds of visitors who want to learn more about the brothers' achievements.

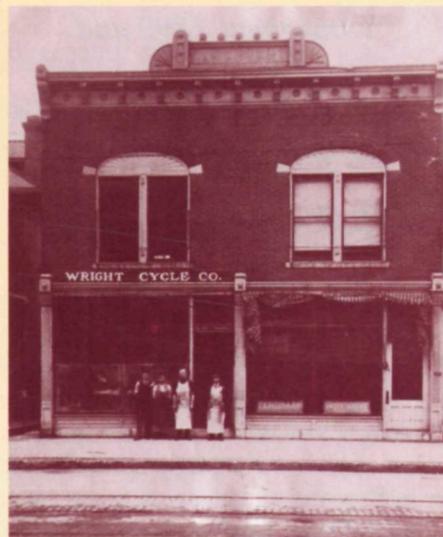
The Wrights were raised in Dayton after their father, Milton, a United Brethren Church minister, moved his family there in 1869. After the boys' mother died, they started a printing business and later a bicycle shop. Dayton was known for bicycle production, as well as being home to the American cash-register industry. "Dayton was at the center of all sorts of precision manufacturing," says Crouch. "It was a town where they could walk down the street and find a foundry that could cast an aluminum block for an engine, this at a time when casting aluminum was a fairly rare thing."

Bicycle manufacturing had many advantages for two brothers interested in flight. It was profitable, giving them the

financial means to pursue other dreams. It was seasonal, allowing them time to conduct extensive research, make models, and then spend time elsewhere testing their equipment. And it was machinery-intensive, requiring them to buy equipment that they would use to build their first airplane.

Today, visitors to Dayton can see the Wrights' fourth bicycle shop at 22 South Williams Street. This is the only one of their five shops that remains intact at its original location. The shop was recreated to match the workplace as it looked in 1896—about the time the brothers appear to have become seriously interested in flight.

Near the bicycle shop in Dayton, a new exhibit in the renovated three-story Hoover Building occupies the site where the Wrights ran their print shop. At its scheduled completion in June, the



CORBIS STOCK PHOTO

The Wrights' Dayton, Ohio, bicycle shop provided the money to build their first plane, a replica of which is housed in the visitor center at the Wright memorial, below.



KRISTA SCHULTZ/WANTABER PHOTOGRAPHY

Throughout 1899 and 1900, the brothers experimented with creating a glider capable of carrying the weight of a man.

Hoover facility will feature exhibits depicting the Wrights' print shop work, contain a replica of an 1895 grocery store, and detail the Wright family history in Dayton.

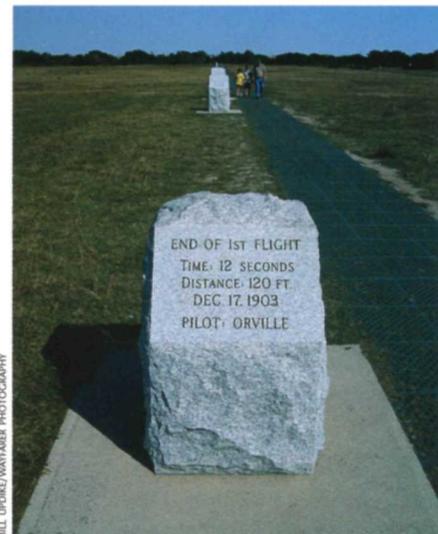
In 1899 the Wrights moved to a larger shop, where they began to make wing and engine prototypes (that shop was bought by auto magnate Henry Ford and moved to his Greenfield Village historical museum). That year was also pivotal because it was then that Wilbur wrote a letter of inquiry to the Smithsonian Institution and received back suggestions for further literature to consult. Though self-taught, Wilbur and

Orville demonstrated considerable creativity and engineering expertise. Wilbur, four years older, was a dreamer who loved to read, especially the increasing scientific literature on flight; Orville was more outgoing, known for being a snappy dresser. Together, they devoted themselves to the goal of human flight—more directly so after one of their heroes, glider experimenter Otto Lilienthal, died in a flying accident.

Throughout 1899 and 1900, the brothers experimented with creating a glider capable of carrying the weight of a man. They had already rejected the principle of inherent stability, which was the conventional wisdom, when Wilbur—his creativity sparked by observing birds and idly twisting a box—saw that control and stability were related and hit on the idea of “wing warping” to stabilize flight. Now they realized they needed a wide-open space with steady, brisk winds to conduct their experiments. After corresponding with other experimenters and the U.S. Weather Bureau, they considered several sites but eventually

settled on Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, largely because it was the closest to their Dayton home.

They went back and forth between Dayton and Kitty Hawk over the next years, conducting tests and perfecting designs. Throughout the fall of 1903, camped at Kill Devil Hills, the dunes to the south of Kitty Hawk, the brothers conducted additional tests and made repairs to their new aircraft, the Flyer, while waiting for favorable winds. Finally, on December 14, they decided it was time for a test. They recruited men from the nearby life-saving station to help them move the Flyer



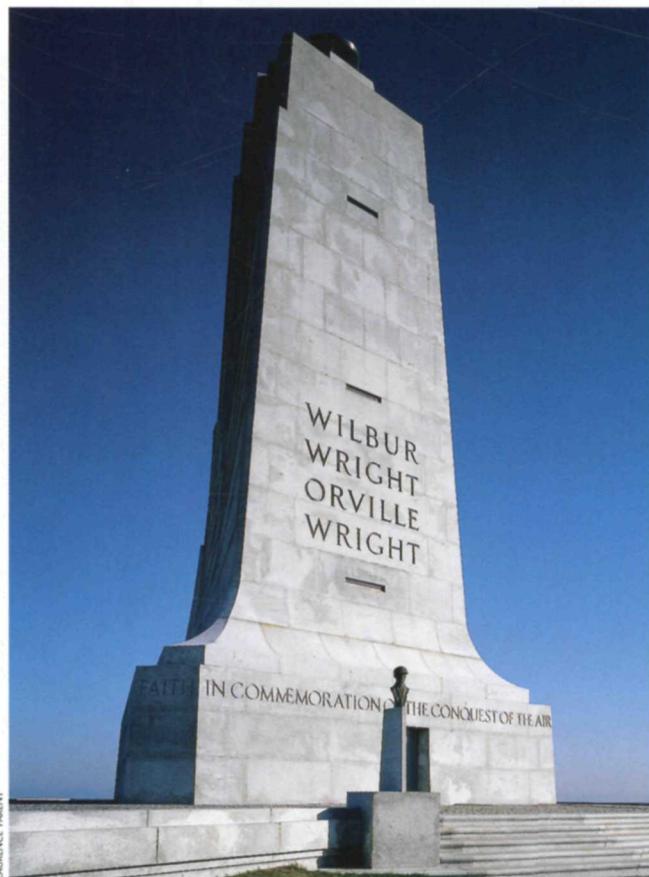
The boulder marks the end of the first flight.

up the hill to improve the wind velocity, and the brothers tossed a coin to see who would make the first try. Wilbur won, but the machine clipped the sand with its wing and fell to the ground after only 3.5 seconds—not considered a successful first flight. It took two days for the Wrights to repair the damage.

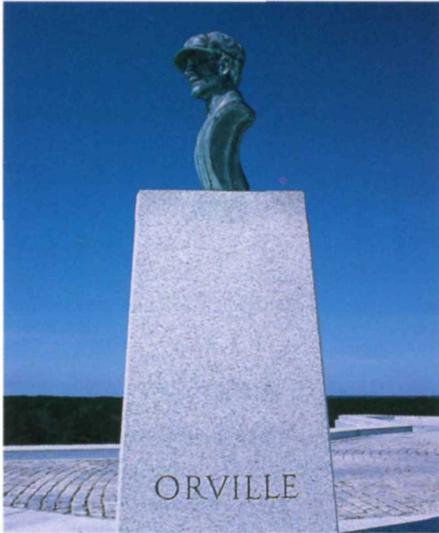
On December 17, they decided to try again. After raising a flag to indicate they needed the help of the life-saving crew, the men moved the Flyer onto its 60-foot wooden track. At about 10:30 a.m., Orville, taking his turn at the control, started the engine. Five minutes later, the Wright Flyer rolled down the track and into history.

It reached an elevation of ten feet, covered a total distance of 120 feet, and stayed aloft for 12 seconds. A photograph, taken by one of the life-savers, captured the moment of lift-off, with Wilbur running alongside. The brothers made four flights that day, the last traversing 852 feet and lasting 59 seconds before a gust of wind tore the Flyer apart, damaging it beyond repair.

Today, at the Wright Brothers National Memorial at Kill Devil Hills, a 60-foot granite pylon stands atop a hill near where the Wright machine first flew. Numbered markers indicate the length of those four successful flights. Near the grass-covered dunes, visitors can tour a structure identical to the Wrights' camp building. Another building duplicates the hangar where the



The Wrights' memorial stands atop a hill at Kill Devil Hills.



LAURENCE PEREOT

A bust pays homage to Orville Wright.

Wrights stored the fragile Flyer I.

Nearby, a newly refurbished visitor center contains a wealth of Wright exhibits, including a reconstruction of the glider the brothers built in 1902. "That's a significant piece," says Darrell Collins, a Park Service historian who has worked at the Kitty Hawk site for 24 years. "It was built in the 1940s when Orville was still alive, and he helped assemble the blueprints for it and may have even helped build it." A reconstruction of the 1903 Flyer I also is on display. The original is on display at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

For the Wright brothers, that initial flight was followed by many more years of experimentation and testing, as well as demonstration flights that wowed audiences in both the United States and Europe. In 1904 and 1905, they tested their machine at Huffman Prairie, Ohio, one of the most evocative of the Wright sites, according to Crouch. The prairie itself is largely unchanged from when the brothers flew there. "It's easy to picture what it was like in 1904 and 1905 when the Wrights used it, and in 1910 when they opened the first flying school there," Crouch says.

Today, visitors to Huffman Prairie also can see a replica of the hangar the Wrights used in 1905 and tour a new visitor center created in a partnership among the National Park Service, the state of Ohio, and the U.S. Air Force.

TELLING THE WRIGHT STORY

In 1977, Darrell Collins was a seasonal ranger spending his first summer with the National Park Service at the Wright Brothers National Memorial at Kill Devil Hills, on North Carolina's windy Outer Banks. Almost at once he was smitten with the dramatic story of the Wrights and their famous 1903 flight. "I just fell in love with their story," says Collins, now 48, in his soft southern accent. "I decided it was something I wanted to pursue."

Pursue it he has. For nearly 25 years now, Collins has been a mainstay at the memorial, learning more and more about the Wrights and now working as the memorial's official historian. In the process, he has become one of the nation's foremost authorities on the brothers, often asked to speak on or write about their achievements. "The thing that I find most compelling about the Wrights is their perseverance and their belief in hard work and dedication," he says. "They were working against all odds on what was probably one of the greatest challenges of the 20th century. But they had a dream, and they made that dream a reality."

Achieving the brothers' dream of the first successful powered flights has had tremendous consequences for the United States and the world. Still, Collins believes the Wrights have yet to receive full recognition for their accomplishments. True, the Air Force named its Dayton, Ohio, base after the Wrights—but they share billing with Lt. Frank Stuart Patterson, a test pilot who lost his life on June 19, 1918, in the crash of his DH-4 aircraft at what was then called Wilbur Wright Field. But no major aeronautical research facility is named for the Wrights, and history books don't always give them their due. "The fourth-grade social studies text in North Carolina devotes less than a page to them," Collins notes, with chagrin. "But I'm hoping the anniversary of their flight really brings them the recognition that they deserve."

—DG

The center explains what took place at Huffman Prairie and details how the site surrounding the prairie evolved into Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Dayton's Carillon Historical Park has the plane perfected on Huffman Prairie, the first practical aircraft and the only one in the country designated a National Historic Landmark. This plane, the Wright Flyer III, was restored in the 1940s with the help of Orville.

It's worth noting that a tour of Wright-related sites in Dayton reveals aspects of American history beyond the work of these aviation pioneers. Dayton also was the home of Paul Laurence Dunbar, a high school classmate of Orville Wright, who made his own place in American history as the first African American to gain wide acceptance in literary circles. The Wrights printed Dunbar's weekly newspaper, *The Tatler*, from 1890 to 1891. Today, the home Dunbar purchased for his mother and

where he lived as well is a state-owned museum, the Paul Laurence Dunbar State Memorial.

There's no question that the Wrights' contribution to flight was one of the greatest intellectual achievements in the nation's history. True pioneers, the brothers possessed a combination of intellect, curiosity, and just plain gumption that exemplifies the best of the American spirit. Today, Dayton, "birthplace of aviation," and Kitty Hawk, "first in flight," commemorate their achievement and show how genius and geography can create a new world. 🐘

Douglas Gantenbein is a freelance

writer who lives in

Seattle, Washington.



HELLO SUNSHINE!

Florida's southernmost national parks offer a natural vacation alternative to the state's famous amusement park. From wildlife viewing to snorkeling, the Sunshine State has something for everyone.

By Jenell Talley

A Florida vacation does not have to be about an amusement park and a world-famous mouse. If you are searching for a good destination for the family, cast aside thoughts of thrill rides, shows, and fireworks and imagine exploring breathtaking vistas, snorkeling in clear, blue bays, and camping under the stars in one of Florida's national parks.

With 11 national park units in the state, selecting a destination may be the most difficult part of getting away because each site offers its own unique cultural, historical, or natural treasures. History buffs may want to spend some time in St. Augustine at Castillo de San Marcos National Monument exploring the oldest masonry fort in the continental United States as well as the oldest

European settlement. But if wildlife is what you are after, plan a trip to the state's southern sector.

Wading birds, American alligators, Florida panthers, and snail kites are just a few of the creatures that inhabit Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National Park. Wildlife can be spotted at these parks throughout the year, although park staff suggest plan-

ning trips after the muggy, mosquito-infested summer season. Alternatively, Dry Tortugas and Biscayne national parks, both famous for snorkeling and diving, are especially appealing during the summer, when the seas are relatively calm. With three of the four sites within driving distance and the other a ferry ride away, these parks provide worthwhile vacation destinations for any time of the year.

Biscayne National Park

Biscayne National Park's turquoise waters, emerald islands, and fish-adorned reefs make the park a paradise for wildlife-watching, snorkeling, diving, and a host of other activities for vacationers of all ages.

The Dante Fascell Visitor Center has exhibits to help children learn about Biscayne's water world, and the touch table, piled with articles found throughout the park, such as animal bones, soft coral, and sponges, provides opportunities for one-on-one learning with a park ranger. The entire family can snorkel in Biscayne Bay, explore the rocky shoreline at Convoy Point, or canoe along the park's mangrove coast. Biscayne National Park is 95 percent water, so seeing anything beyond the visitor center area requires a boat.

The park's Glass Bottom Boat Tour



Biscayne's visitor center offers a touch table, complete with animal bones and soft coral.

usually tops a visitor's to-do list. Calm seas allow views of the spectacular underwater world of the coral reef and may include glimpses of dolphin, manatee, turtles, sharks, rays, and colorful tropical fish. Visitors can also enjoy the park's ranger-led scuba-diving expeditions. "Diving is super awesome," says Susan Paishon, Biscayne park ranger. "Diving can allow you the freedom of being up close, to within a few inches of fish darting in and out of coral crevices that you might only catch a fleeting glimpse of from the glass bottom boat."

The boat tour is offered daily from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., April through December. Fees, excluding taxes, are \$22.95 for adults, \$17.95 for seniors, and \$14.95 for children under 12. Scuba diving is offered on Saturdays and Sundays only, April through December. A two-tank dive costs \$47.95; additional equipment is extra. Call 305-230-1100 for information and reservations.

Most activities at Biscayne are offered year-round, but Ranger Paishon suggests scheduling activities several days in advance. Reservations during the Christmas holidays, the



Sea turtles can be spotted at Biscayne.

park's busiest season, are highly recommended. For more information on the activities at Biscayne, call 305-230-7275, or visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/bisc.

Big Cypress National Preserve

The first national preserve established in the park system, Big Cypress holds some of the last vestiges of wild Florida. The preserve, set aside to protect more than 2,400 square miles of watershed for the Everglades ecosystem, is filled with a mixture of pinelands and hardwoods, palm-treed prairies and mangrove forests, and an astounding number of cypress trees. The land provides diverse habitat for a variety of wildlife, including the endangered Florida panther.

Alligators, which also can be seen in the preserve, are often found in the



The Anhinga Trail loop is an ideal place for visitors to enjoy wildlife-watching in Everglades National Park.



ponds by the visitor center, but anyone who wants to can get a better look at them along Turner River Road. Traffic is fairly slow on this road, and visitors are able to pull over and watch the animals.

Ranger-led swamp walks and visitor center wildlife exhibits are offered from December through March. Fewer insects, low humidity, and cool temperatures make winter to early spring the best time to visit, says Sandra Snell-Dobert, chief of interpretation at Big Cypress.

Bicycling, fishing, and canoeing are popular pastimes in the preserve. Bicycles are welcome on any of the preserve's off-road vehicle trails. Bicyclists can enjoy a tour up Turner River Road or State Road 29 in the Bear Island area; motor vehicles aren't allowed past the island's gate. Some visitors fish for bass or catfish along the preserve's canals, while others paddle along Halfway Creek's canoe trail. The trail offers canoeists an opportunity to explore a hidden mangrove tunnel and its intriguing

epiphytic plants, those that live on top of other plants. During the winter months, visitors may catch a glimpse of manatees in one of the preserve's canals as the creatures move toward sheltered inland waters. The canoe trail is located in the extreme southwest corner of Big Cypress, about two miles east of Highway 29 and 41 Junction. Visitors can also bird-watch, participate in the park's

Junior Ranger program, or picnic at H.P. Williams Roadside Park. The preserve has four campgrounds: Midway Bear Island, Mitchell's Landing, Monument, and Pinecrest.

Visitors must bring their own gear for all activities; rental equipment is not available in the preserve. For more information, call the park at 941-695-2000, or go to www.nps.gov/bicy.



Big Cypress is filled with palm-treed prairies, sawgrass, cabbage palms, and cypress trees.



An osprey rests atop a red mangrove.

Everglades National Park

Everglades National Park, the only subtropical national park in the United States, spans the southern tip of the Florida peninsula and most of Florida Bay. It is widely known for its rich bird life, particularly large wading birds including herons and egrets.

Bird-watching is popular in several parts of the park. In the Flamingo Area at Eco Pond, visitors can spot red-shouldered hawks, warblers, and anhingas. Purple gallinules can be found along the Anhinga Trail, and snail kites and wood storks are often seen at Nine Mile Pond. Visitors may also see roseate spoonbills, brilliantly colored painted buntings, wood storks, snail kites, and the limpkin, a long-legged wading bird that can be seen searching for snails and frogs. The Flamingo Area also offers morning and afternoon canoe trips and daily narrated tours into Florida Bay and the mangrove estuary. Call the Flamingo Visitor Center at 239-695-2945 for more information.

In addition to being a great bird-



A tri-colored heron perches on the back of a turtle in Big Cypress.

watching trail, the Royal Palm Area's half-mile Anhinga loop is one of the best ways to observe other park wildlife, including alligators, close up. The Everglades is the only place in the world where alligators and crocodiles inhabit the same environment. The Royal Palm Area also provides visitors with an opportunity to experience several South Florida habitats, including hardwood hammocks and freshwater sawgrass prairie. Visitors can learn more about the Everglades' natural and human his-



Both alligators, shown, and crocodiles can be found in the Everglades.

tory on ranger-led walks and evening programs.

Ranger-led walks, slough slogs, bike hikes, and two-hour tram tours regularly venture into the heart of the Everglades in Shark Valley, and from the Gulf Coast Visitor Center, kayakers can drift into the Ten Thousand Islands to view dolphins, manatees, and other wildlife of the mangrove estuary. Kayakers and canoers can journey through the Everglades' wilderness, staying at various campsites along the park's 99-mile wilderness waterway. Call Everglades National Park Boat Tours or the Gulf Coast Visitor Center at 305-221-8776 for information on fees and departure times. For programs and tram tours at Shark Valley, call 305-221-8455.

For more information on activities at the park, please call 305-242-7700, or log on to www.nps.gov/ever. For hotel accommodations, call the Flamingo Lodge, Marina, and Outpost Resort, open year-round, at 1-800-600-3813.

Dry Tortugas National Park

Legends of bearded pirates and sunken sea chests of gold precede Dry Tortugas, a tranquil cluster of seven coral reef and sand islands about 70 miles west of Key West. Discovered by Juan Ponce de León in 1513, the isles are now part of Dry Tortugas National Park.

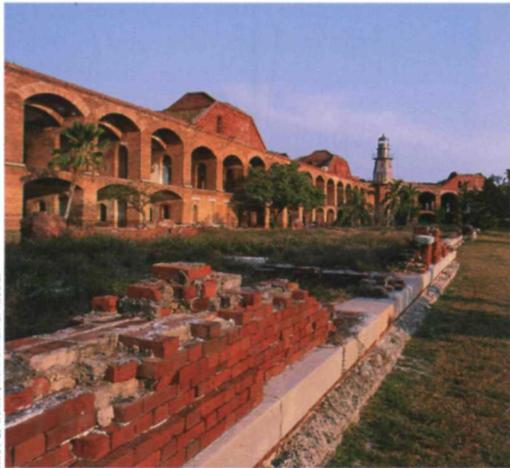
The park was designated in 1992 to protect Fort Jefferson, one of the largest American coastal forts of the 19th century, its surrounding waters, and a subtropical marine system. The fort, located on Garden Key, a 2.5-hour ferry ride from the mainland, is the park's central cultural feature and its most prominent destination. The historic seacoast garrison rises above the shimmering waters of Dry Tortugas and is surrounded by expansive sky. Nearly 30 years in the making, it incorporates 2,000 brick arches in its design. Visitors exploring its interior can examine a rare shot furnace and marvel at 25-ton cannons. The visitor center also has exhibits, films, and a bookstore.

Commercial guides traveling aboard the ferries offer daily tours of the fort. Ranger-led lantern tours and other programs are offered periodically. Self-



EXCURSIONS

continued



RYAN C. TAYLOR/TOM STACK & ASSOC.

Self-guided tours are an option at Fort Jefferson.

guided tours, which include exhibits on the construction and cultural significance of the fort, also are an option.

Dry Tortugas also serves as a principal bird-watching station. "The park is world renowned for its bird-watching

opportunities," says Mike Ryan, lead interpretative ranger at Dry Tortugas, adding that nearly 200 species have been identified within the park. Spotting a ruby-throated hummingbird, Canada goose, and greater flamingo is all in a day's work. Bird-watchers and others can also marvel at the frigate bird's seven-foot wingspan. Each year, between February and September, some 100,000 sooty terns gather on nearby Bush Key for their nesting season. Bush Key closes to visitors once the birds land in February and begin to lay eggs, but the rookery is often witnessed

from Garden Key. "Bush Key is the only significant nesting area in the United States for the sooty tern and the brown noddy," Ryan says.

The islands are known for their natural resources, such as fisheries and sea tur-

tle nesting habitat, and the tropical coral reef of the Tortugas is among the most complex on the continent. Snorkelers find sanctuary among patches of coral reef near Garden Key, especially during summer. The season's heat and humidity give way to calm seas, ideal for water sports. The park does not offer ranger-led snorkeling activities, but Garden Key has a protected snorkel area, and ferry and seaplane passengers receive equipment and basic instructions while en route to the park.

Other activities, such as diving and boating, are available at the park, which also offers a Junior Ranger Program year-round. To learn more about activities at Dry Tortugas, call 305-242-7700, or obtain information from the park's web site at www.nps.gov/drto. 

Jenell Talley is a staff writer for

National Parks magazine.

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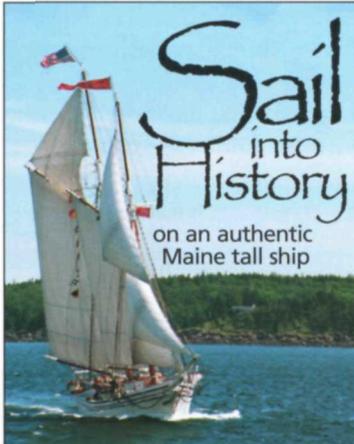
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HAYWOOD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

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The elk like it here, but in the late 18th century they were hunted out of existence. Reintroduced to the Cataloochee Valley, the elk are thriving again. They wander out to graze in the mornings and evenings, a great time to take the family and watch the majestic creatures.

The town of Maggie Valley is a perfect place for children and families. From craft festivals and family fishing tournaments to clogging championships and terrific country music, from horseback riding to great tubing and snow skiing, Maggie Valley is ready made for family vacationing. With cozy rental cabins and charming brookside motels, Maggie Valley has held on to its unique personality.

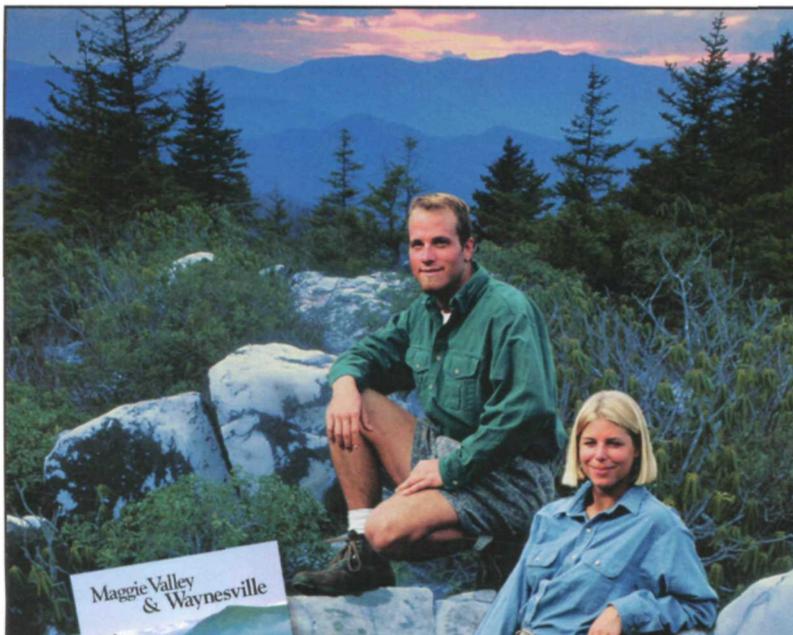
Fine arts and crafts are a part of this region's history and the

town of Waynesville is at the heart of the arts community. Take a walk down Main Street and see it all, from traditional to contemporary, including gourmet coffee shops and light airy galleries, old-fashioned newsstands, and a genuine country store. Spend a morning on Main, an afternoon in the mountains, and an evening enjoying elegant dining and arts. Waynesville has a European village atmosphere that makes it a getaway of a different kind.

Authentic Appalachian heritage is also alive and well here, thriving in farmer's markets in Waynesville, Canton and Maggie Valley. Families will enjoy live outdoor bluegrass music all summer long in Maggie Valley, Waynesville and Canton, when the sounds of guitar, fiddle and banjo float on the mountain air.

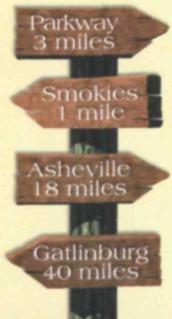
Whether you are looking for a destination to relax, see the arts, or enjoy family, a honeymoon, or the outdoors, Haywood County is a world away yet visiting is like coming home. Whether you're planning a weekend or a retirement, you'll find Haywood a heavenly destination.

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The Pacific Coast Explorer offers one of the most scenic rail journeys in America, traversing striking coastlines, canyons, and mountain regions. Traveling between Los Angeles and Seattle, passengers enjoy breathtaking scenery, as well as picturesque

and memorable off-train excursions. Travelers will visit the Napa Valley for wine tasting and a gourmet, candle-lit lunch in a wine cellar, a tour of Hearst Castle and its extensive art collection, San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, Golden Gate overlook, and the redwood forests of Muir Woods. In Oregon, Multnomah Falls and the Columbia River Gorge provide stunning scenery at the height of their autumn beauty. Prices for this eight-day, seven-night itinerary start at \$2,590.

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Eastern National sees its mission as twofold: to offer quality educational materials and services to park visitors and the general public and to donate the profits derived from these activities to the National Park Service. Purchases, both in Eastern National bookstores and on the web at www.eParks.com, have led to more than \$65 million in donations to the National Park Service. All of the products, programs and publications offered to visitors have a strong educational value and assist the educational programs of the Park Service.

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East Meets West

Golden Spike National Historic Site in Utah tells the story of America's first transcontinental railroad, which transformed a nation by linking its coasts.

BY RYAN DOUGHERTY

Today, travelers can get on a plane and fly from New York to San Francisco in about six hours. That makes it hard to appreciate the historical significance of the first transcontinental railroad. Indeed, mid-19th century Americans would have scoffed at the notion of coast-to-coast travel. To go “out there,” to the vast, unknown West, was to most a pipe dream. Little did they know that an ambitious effort by two companies would, within two decades, link the Atlantic to the Pacific and transform a nation.

Once America's first railroads started running in the 1830s, visionaries dreamed about transcontinental rail travel. They believed that bridging the gap to the West would boost trade, ease the emigrant's trip, and help the military to control American Indians hostile to white settlement. But the first proposal for the idea in 1832, by Samuel Dexter, was, historians say, about as bold as if one had said in 1932 that an American would walk on the moon within 40 years.

By 1861, however, an engineer named Theodore Judah had persuaded rich Sacramento merchants to form the Central Pacific Railroad. Congress then authorized the Central Pacific to build a railroad eastward from California and chartered the Union Pacific Railroad in New York. Each railroad received loans of \$16,000 to \$48,000 per mile. The

RYAN DOUGHERTY is news editor.



Park replicas of the two locomotives that met in 1869, marking the railroad's completion.

Central Pacific began in January 1863, the Union Pacific started that December, but neither got very far—the country's attention, and that of investors, was fixed on the Civil War.

Central Pacific's Collis Huntington and Union Pacific's Thomas Durant, both frustrated and exemplifying the unscrupulous business ethics of the times, visited Washington with enough cash to get congressmen to listen. A second Railroad Act doubled the land subsidies. Once the war ended, Central Pacific crews began work on the Sierras. Although Union Pacific started on easier terrain, Plains Indians harassed its workers. Still, both companies progressed faster than expected, placing up to five miles of track each day.

Crucial to Union Pacific's efforts were about 10,000 unemployed Americans, German, Irish, and Italian immigrants,

Civil War veterans of both sides, and formerly enslaved blacks. Because so many westerners had joined the rush for gold, Central Pacific imported 10,000 Chinese workers. By 1868, its crews had crossed the Sierras and laid 200 miles of track, and Union Pacific had laid 700 on the plains.

As the two railroads neared each other in Utah, they rushed to lay more track and earn more land subsidies. They eventually passed each other and went in opposite directions for about 200 miles. Congress then declared Promontory Summit, in Utah, as their meeting place. Two locomotives

pulled up to the remaining gap left in the tracks on May 10, 1869. A golden spike was ceremoniously tapped and a final iron spike driven to connect the railroads. Combined, the companies had laid 1,776 miles of track. In the words of a reporter of that time, “they overcame that old enemy of mankind, space.”

The railroad spurred new social, economic, and political opportunity—but it also marked the end of the western frontier and way of life for the American Indian tribes. Settlers flocked westward. Their journey, which once took six months by wagon, was now a six- or seven-day train ride. Plains Indians fought white settlement on their lands, but the loads of troops and supplies brought by the railroad soon overpowered them. Twenty years after the railroad's completion, the frontier was gone, forever replaced by industry.



A Whale of a Tale

Unregulated commercial whaling caused the number of bowhead whales to decrease to an alarmingly low level.

BY JENELL TALLEY

People long have been fascinated by whales. Classic novels have been written about the world's largest mammals, Shamu was among Sea World's most popular attractions, and whale-sighting adventures have become ever-popular excursions. Still, despite widespread reverence for these kings of the sea, species' numbers, such as those of the bowhead whale, are cause for concern in some areas.

Bowhead whales, *Balaena mysticetus*, inhabit different parts of the Arctic in five populations. The western Arctic stock, near Alaska's Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, is the only group with significant numbers—9,860. Most of this stock inhabits the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas. Bowheads also are found in the Okhotsk Sea, North Atlantic, Davis Strait, and Hudson Bay, but none of these stocks numbers more than 100.

Commercial whalers discovered the bowhead whale in 1611. Bowheads were prime targets because they are slow and nonaggressive, and because they float once they've been killed. Hunters favored bowheads' meat and blubbery skin, and large profits were made from the sale of their oil, baleen, and whale bone, which was used for corsets, buggy whips, watch springs, and fishing rods.

Extensive unregulated commercial



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During the late 1800s and the early 1900s, as many as 200 bowheads were taken each year.

whaling began around 1848 and went on for more than 60 years, pushing the bowhead species to the brink of extinction by the early 20th century.

Bowheads are a distinct group. Their bodies are less streamlined than those of other baleen whales, and they are the only baleen whales that spend their entire lives near sea ice—their blubber, up to 1.5 feet thick, enables them to live comfortably in Arctic waters. When the species surfaces to breathe, a V-shaped spout emerges from twin blowholes at the peak of its triangular-shaped head.

Bowheads have the largest head in the animal kingdom. It accounts for one-third of their body length and is strong enough to rip through sea ice a foot thick. The whales grow to be about 60 feet long and weigh up to 75 tons, thanks to a diet of copepods, euphausiids, and other small invertebrates. They

have smooth, black skin with splotches of white on their chins, stomachs, and tails. They have short, narrow flippers and wide flukes, often stretching 27 feet across.

The whales navigate through ice-choked waters using sound. Bowheads are slow swimmers and retreat under ice when alarmed. Killer whales and humans are their only known predators and only major threats.

Before commercial whaling, there were more than 50,000 bowheads worldwide. Between the 1600s and 1800s, eastern Arctic stocks were reduced from more than 30,000 to fewer than 1,000. In the late 1800s, nearly 200 were taken each year.

Today, Alaskan Eskimos kill about 40 bowheads per year for food. "This is a carefully managed hunt with quotas set through the International Whaling Commission (IWC)," says Sheila McLean, public information officer for the Alaska Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Juneau. There is no commercial take, she says. Numbers are, consequently, on the rise.

The western Arctic population is growing at a comfortable rate, currently increasing 3.3 percent per year, according to the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management. Dave Rugh, a wildlife biologist at the National Marine Mammal Lab in Alaska, says, "The numbers reflect a very healthy recovery rate."

JENELL TALLEY is a staff writer.



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National parks

The Magazine of
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