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Buffalo Slaughter
at Yellowstone

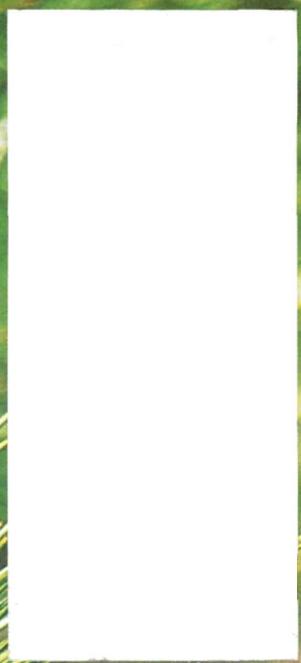
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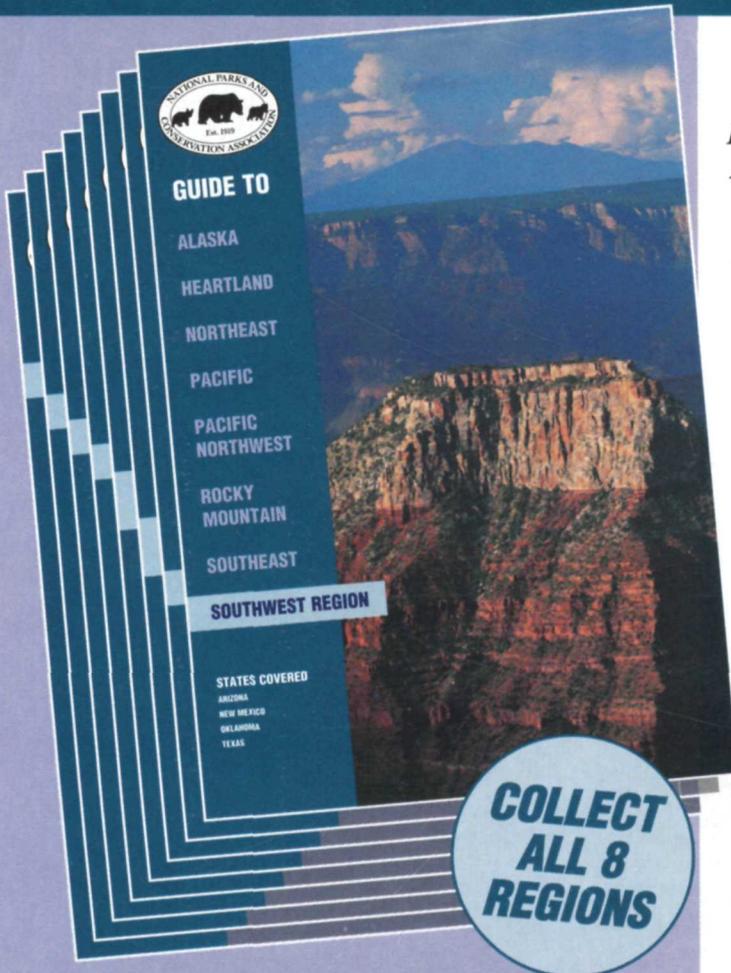
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National parks

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March/April 1997

The Magazine of the National Parks
and Conservation Association

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COVER: A male rose-breasted grosbeak. The bird is one of many neotropical species on the decline. Photograph by Randall B. Henne/Dembinsky Photo Assoc.



JOHN DITTM

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Slaughter in the Sanctuary

More than 800 Yellowstone buffalo have been killed so far. When will the killing end?

THE BUFFALO is one of the living symbols of America. As I write this column, however, dozens of American buffalo are being killed each day in Yellowstone National Park—a place specifically set aside to protect them and other wildlife. This outrage is being perpetrated by representatives of the U.S. government and the state of Montana who are sacrificing buffalo to “protect” subsidized cattle grazing on public land.

Millions of buffalo once dominated the Western plains, but by the turn of the century human blindness and greed had reduced them to an isolated remnant. As the buffalo teetered close to extinction, Americans stood up, took action, and demanded an end to the killing. Because of them, the buffalo was saved from destruction.

While we may have saved the buffalo from extinction, we can never fully restore its true nature—the freedom to roam as instinct and environment dictate. Today, most buffalo are held on ranches or in zoos.

It is only in Yellowstone National Park that a vestige of those vast herds still roams free.

Some of the herd is infected with a disease called brucellosis. In domestic cattle, the disease causes cows to abort, and the Department of Agriculture has made eradication of brucellosis a top priority. Montana is classified by the Agriculture Department as brucellosis-free and has argued that in order to retain this status it must kill any buffalo that cross into the state in search of winter forage. The



DUPONT PHOTOGRAPHERS

Agriculture Department, through an agency called the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has abetted the killing by insisting on a “zero tolerance” policy for brucellosis. The agency takes this position despite the fact that there is no evidence that

brucellosis has ever been transmitted from buffalo to cattle in the wild. This collision of intransigent bureaucracies has had deadly consequences.

Yellowstone is in the middle of an unusually harsh winter, and buffalo are moving out of the park in record numbers. They are also being killed in record numbers—more than 800 so far (the herd size is estimated to be 3,400). The buffalo cannot survive this killing rate for long.

It is my fervent hope that by the time you read this, NPCA's efforts in Washington, and public outrage across the country, will have forced an end to the slaughter. Even if an emergency compromise is reached, however, we will face this problem again and again until a long-term solution is found.

The president and the Montana governor must hear from you. Solutions exist that can protect everyone's interests. Tell the president and the governor to end the killing fields of Yellowstone. Write to: President Clinton, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20500 and Governor Marc Racicot, Capitol Building, Helena, MT 59620. (See story, page 12.)

Paul C. Pritchard

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Cowbird Blues



VICKI PARIS

THE VILLAIN (or one of them, at least) of this month's cover story is cowbirds. Judith Martin (aka Miss Manners) would have a field day with these boorish avian freeloader-

ers. Slouching around woodlots all day when they might be out building nests, these ne'er-do-wells thoughtlessly drop their eggs off at the humble dwellings of harried, overburdened songbirds, stretching these poor working parents beyond their meager limits.

Still, if cowbirds weren't so pernicious, you'd admire their pluck. Who hasn't dreamed—at least at the id level, let's be honest now—of something for nothing, a way to beat the system? Of course, we humans have evolved higher motives—and a good thing, too: The conservation movement, the national parks themselves, wouldn't exist without them. We've superseded the law of the jungle with a code that shields the vulnerable, that safeguards the long term and the greater good from the perils of reckless impulse.

Well, that's the idea, anyway. NPCA would be a superfluous gadfly if our system of governance had actually arrived at that state of grace. But alas, human beings are an enterprising lot, and opportunity a powerful siren. And the interests of a minority are often at odds with the protection of our national parks: From gigantic landfills to international airports to personal watercraft, the ensuing pages document threats from many quarters.

Cowbirds, crafty as they are, haven't yet developed a conscience. But we humans have—and we are thus bound to heed it.

Leslie Happ, Editor-in-Chief

ABOUT NPCA

WHO WE ARE: Established in 1919, the National Parks and Conservation Association is America's only private, nonprofit citizen 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 necessary to resolve them. Through its efforts, NPCA has developed a base of grassroots support that has increased effectiveness at local and national levels.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: NPCA's mission is to protect and improve the quality of our National Park System and to promote an understanding of, appreciation for, and sense of personal commitment to parklands.

HOW TO JOIN: NPCA depends almost entirely on contributions from our members for the resources essential for an effective program. You can become a member by calling our Member Services Department. The bimonthly *National Parks* magazine is among the benefits you will receive. Of the \$25 membership dues, \$3 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

EDITORIAL MISSION: The magazine is the only national publication focusing solely on national parks. The most important communication vehicle with our members, the magazine creates an awareness of the need to protect and properly manage the resources found within and adjacent to the national parks. The magazine underscores the uniqueness of the national parks and encourages an appreciation for the scenery

and the natural and historic treasures found in them, informing and inspiring individuals who have concerns about the parks and want to know how they can help bring about improvements to these irreplaceable resources.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: A critical component in NPCA's park protection programs are members who take the lead in defense of America's natural and cultural heritage. Park 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 about park issues. The Park Activist Network is composed of three groups: Park Watchers, park activists, and park support groups. For more information on the activist network, contact our Grassroots Department, extension 221. NPCA's success also depends on the financial support of our members. For more information on special giving opportunities, such as Partners for the Parks (a monthly giving program), Trustees for the Parks (\$1,000 and above), bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 146.

HOW TO REACH US: By mail: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; by phone: (800) NAT-PARK; by e-mail: natparks@aol.com or npca@npca.org; on America Online: keyword PARKS; and <http://www.npca.org/> on the World Wide Web.



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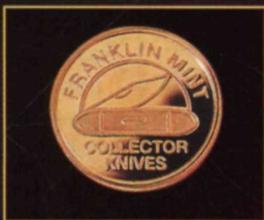
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Alien Invaders, Free Market, Extinction Distinction

Alien Invaders

The article "Alien Invasion" [November/December] failed to justify to me the millions of dollars being spent on fighting non-native species. Is the best use of limited environmental funds the killing of non-native trout? Is this going to help threatened and endangered species more than other alternatives (land acquisition, lobbying, etc.)? Money should be used for long-term protection. Buying an ancient grove and preserving it is going to help all life in the grove, indefinitely.

Ecosystems are complex wonders; they are more complex than we can begin to fathom. We need to use our money wisely. When we start eliminating non-natives, do we start or end with ourselves?

The same article states that "Domestic livestock—cattle, sheep, burros, and horses—are among the most wide-

spread exotics in the West." Ten pages later you feature "Hoofing It," which glamorizes horseback riding. How quickly and fully the promise of ease sways the American from caring about the impact of his actions.

"Hoofing It" tells the reader, "Whether you bring animals or rent them, nearly 60 national park sites provide opportunities for trail rides." Ten pages earlier, I would have thought that the fact that so many of our public sites are allowing this known "invasion" is horrific and worthy of NPCA's work. Let's work on getting our parks safe and healthy. Promotion of such harmful practices after pointing out the facts is contradictory.

Mark Jordan
Santa Cruz, CA

A couple of articles in the November/December issue irritated me:

"Alien Invasion" and "Yellowstone Bison to be Slaughtered."

I visit the national parks to see the wildlife, not cattle. What right do the ranchers have to let their cattle graze on my national park property? And when a bear or wolf kills one of their cattle, or a bison supposedly infects one, they have the nerve to get upset and kill the wild animal. Why can't the rancher vaccinate his cattle for *brucellosis*, instead of killing bison, which may not even be infected? The cattle have no right to be on federal land in my eyes. They are destroying the ecosystem.

What made me even madder was reading the article on "Hoofing It," which stated that if you bring your own horses to the national parks, you must bring your own feed to prevent the horses from overgrazing the land. Well, what are cattle doing? Get the cattle out of our national parks now!!! I don't want my parks ruined by ranchers who are using the land to graze their cattle. They could use their own property and pay to buy their own feed, since the public who brings in horses must.

I hope other people will feel the same way I do and start writing letters to Congress to remove livestock from our national parks.

Fay Hafer
Richmond, CA

Free Market

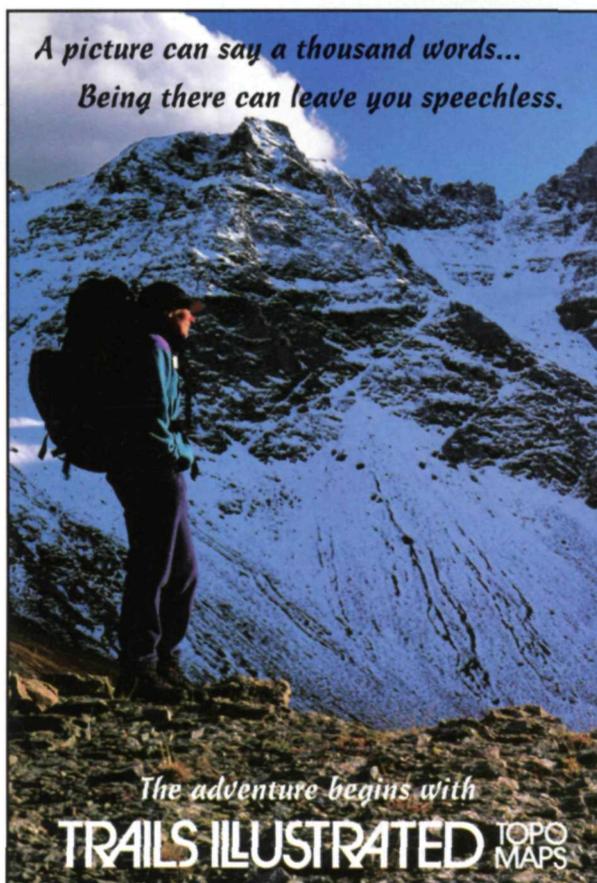
I enjoyed reading the Forum by Carol Estes [September/October]. It was a balanced summary of the issues surrounding what the Political Economy Research Center calls "free market environmentalism." But the article has an unfortunately misleading final paragraph that begins, "Let's refuse to base our policy decisions on economics alone."

Although I agree that economics

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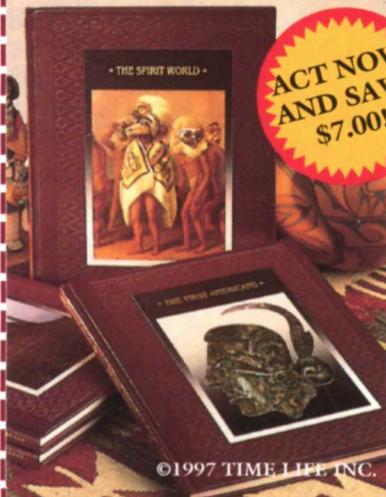
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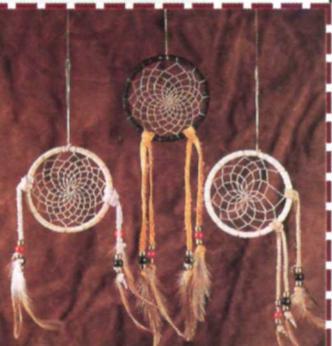
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alone is not sufficient to make public policy, Estes' statement suggests that economic analysis supports private control of public lands. In fact, one of the cornerstones of environmental and natural resource economics is that there is every reason to believe that unregulated private markets will not do a good job managing these sorts of resources. The main reason is suggested by a num-

ber of the arguments Estes makes: When a resource is used one way, there are often direct negative impacts on others who derive benefits from using the same resource. Assigning property rights to the resource will solve some—but probably not all—of these market failures.

Economic analysis, when done correctly, provides a framework for balanc-

ing the interests of multiple users in a way that should be helpful for policy-makers.

Bob Turner
Hamilton, NY

Extinction Distinction

I am employed as both a research scientist and as an educator.

My argument for proper use of the word "extinct" has fallen on deaf scientific ears for 27 years. I implore you to edit articles for meaningful use of the word.

In 1970, a relative told me that when eagles become extinct, we could bring them in from somewhere else. That concept is becoming more and more representative of mainstream thinking. Publications, such as *National Parks*, promote this concept unintentionally.

Extinction means no more exist anywhere in the universe. When a species becomes extinct, its genotype or species' genetic code is nonexistent. When it no longer exists in the wild, the species has been extirpated. The Presidio manzanita [November/December, Rare & Endangered] will not be extinct in the wild if the last wild plant dies. It will be extirpated, because other specimens still exist.

When states lose a species it is often listed as extinct, which is incorrect when that species exists in other regions. It has been publicized that extinct wolves have been reintroduced to various areas. It is no wonder that people believe we can reintroduce extinct species.

When people believe extinction is reversible, no compelling reason exists for the Endangered Species Act. Let's educate people correctly, so we can build support for the act and for species preservation.

Steven J. Mueller
Cedar Springs, MI

Write: Letters, NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Letters may be sent via e-mail to editornp@aol.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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Park News

BY M. KATHERINE HEINRICH

REHABILITATION

Storms Pound Western Parks

Damage totals \$178 million at Yosemite alone.

YOSEMITE N.P., CALIF.—The series of storms that struck the West Coast from Christmas through the New Year caused flooding, avalanches, and rock slides, forcing some parks to close and leaving several units with extensive damage. Because heavy snowfall followed record rains, many parks will not complete a final assessment of the devastation until the spring thaw, which at higher elevations can take place as late as June or July.

Yosemite National Park sustained severe damage when the Merced River flooded Yosemite Valley for three days, wrecking campgrounds, overturning tent cabins, and stranding more than 1,200 visitors and employees.

But Yosemite Superintendent B.J. Griffin sees a silver lining in the devastation—"the re-emergence of the park better than it was before the flood."

NPCA Pacific Regional Director Brian Huse observes, "This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for the Park Service to turn a disaster into an opportunity—to restore natural processes in Yosemite Valley by moving administrative and visitor facilities out of the floodplain."

Since Yosemite's 1980 general management plan, three separate planning documents have reaffirmed the Park Service's commitment to reducing congestion in Yosemite Valley and reclaiming the park's natural beauty.



MICHAEL MACORSAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Flooding in Yosemite Valley damaged roads, campgrounds, and other facilities.

"The flooding will accelerate the planning processes," Griffin says. "We will determine where planning priorities intersect with flood-damaged facilities before making our funding request to Congress."

Chip Jenkins, a strategic planner for Yosemite, says that campgrounds, employee housing, and a resource-management building—all of which were damaged in the flood—might be relocated outside the valley.

A preliminary report on infrastructure damage at Yosemite estimated rehabilitation and cleanup costs at \$178 million. The assessment was completed under the leadership of a National Park Service Type I incident management team, which draws specially trained workers with a variety of skills from parks across the nation. By late January, 649 workers were assigned to the park's "Highwater '97" incident. Although some sections of the park, including Mariposa Grove

and Tuolumne Meadows, were open to visitors by late January, officials announced that Yosemite Valley would remain closed at least through February.

Parks along the West Coast confronted a variety of challenges in the aftermath of the storms.

► Oregon Caves National Monument in southern Oregon may remain closed for two months or more because of damage to State Highway 46, the only access to the park. Repairs to the park's water system will not be complete until June because the equipment is buried under three to four feet of snow, says Superintendent Craig Ackerman.

► More than 75 rock and mud slides obstructed Generals Highway in Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks. Most park roads were cleared within a week, but reconstruction on Kings Canyon Highway, which winds through Sequoia National Forest to the Cedar Grove area of the park, will not be complete until summer.

SPECIAL REPORT

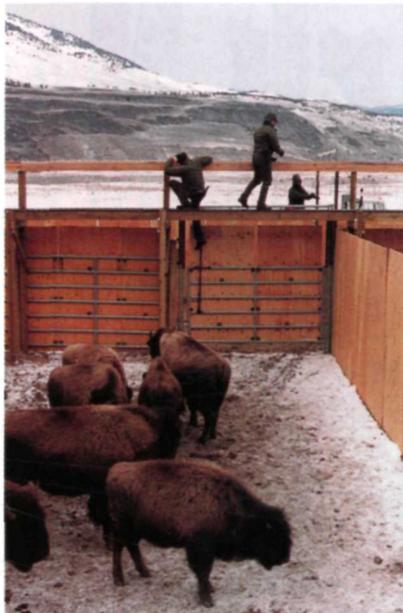
See NPCA's World Wide Web page for updates: <http://www.npca.org/>

Yellowstone Buffalo Slaughtered in Record Numbers

Park loses more than 20 percent of its buffalo population.

YELLOWSTONE N.P., WYO.—With snowfall more than 200 percent above average and a faulty management plan in place, at least 800 buffalo heading toward Yellowstone's exits in search of food have been shot or slaughtered this winter. Before this year, the largest buffalo kill in a single winter—569—occurred in 1988–89.

"It's taken a terrible winter and a crisis in Yellowstone's American buffalo



SCOTT MC MILLION/BOZEMAN CHRONICLE

Buffalo await shipment to slaughter at a capture facility in the park.

population to convince some officials that the current bison management plan is a catastrophe," says Mark Peterson, NPCA Rocky Mountain regional director. "This may be the worst intentional assault on a native

species in national park history."

Mary Meagher, a government scientist who has studied the park's buffalo for nearly 40 years, says the present operation could be disastrous for the species. "The best-case scenario is a population crash," Meagher predicts. "The worst case is a system collapse."

Park officials have estimated that Yellowstone's 3,400-head buffalo herd could be reduced as much as 50 percent by winter's end.

The park's interim bison management plan resulted from a legal settlement with the state of Montana, whose state veterinarian fears that buffalo will spread brucellosis among cattle herds—despite the fact that not a single known case of the disease passing from buffalo to cattle in the wild exists.

In accordance with the plan, the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) corrals buffalo near the park's western entrance, tests them for exposure to brucellosis, and ships those testing positive to slaughter. Buffalo that cannot be captured are shot, but by late January, heavy snowfall rendered DOL's

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<input type="checkbox"/>	11 Dry Tortugas	FL	<input type="checkbox"/>	34 Grand Canyon	AZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	60 Crater Lake	OR
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 Everglades	FL	<input type="checkbox"/>	35 Great Basin	NV	<input type="checkbox"/>	61 Lassen Volcanic	CA
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 Great Smoky Mtns.	TN	<input type="checkbox"/>	36 Mesa Verde	CO	<input type="checkbox"/>	62 Mount Rainier	WA
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Hot Springs	AR	<input type="checkbox"/>	37 Petrified Forest	AZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	63 North Cascades	WA
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Isle Royale	MI	<input type="checkbox"/>	38 Zion	UT	<input type="checkbox"/>	64 Olympic	WA
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 Mammoth Cave	KY	<input type="checkbox"/>	41 Channel Islands	CA	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 Redwood	CA
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Shenandoah	VA	<input type="checkbox"/>	40 Death Valley	CA	<input type="checkbox"/>	70 Denali	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	9 Virgin Islands	VI	<input type="checkbox"/>	42 Haleakala	HI	<input type="checkbox"/>	71 Gates of the Arctic	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 Voyageurs	MN	<input type="checkbox"/>	43 Hawaii Volcanoes	HI	<input type="checkbox"/>	72 Glacier Bay	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	20 Big Bend	TX	<input type="checkbox"/>	44 Sequoia/Kings Cyn.	CA	<input type="checkbox"/>	73 Katmai	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	21 Carlsbad	NM	<input type="checkbox"/>	45 Yosemite	CA	<input type="checkbox"/>	74 Kenai Fjords	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	22 Guadalupe	TX	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 Badlands	SD	<input type="checkbox"/>	75 Kobuk Valley	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	24 Joshua Tree	CA	<input type="checkbox"/>	51 Grand Teton	WY	<input type="checkbox"/>	76 Lake Clark	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	23 Saguaro	AZ	<input type="checkbox"/>	52 Rocky Mountain	CO	<input type="checkbox"/>	77 Wrangell-St. Elias	AK
<input type="checkbox"/>	30 Arches	UT	<input type="checkbox"/>	53 Theodore Roosevelt	ND			
<input type="checkbox"/>	31 Bryce Canyon	UT	<input type="checkbox"/>	54 Waterton-Glacier	MT			

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REGIONAL REPORT

News Briefs from NPCA's Regional Offices

ALASKA Chip Dennerlein, Regional Director

► January brought several Park Service leaders from Alaska—including the regional director and the superintendents of Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Kenai Fjords national parks—to Washington, D.C. At an NPCA-hosted event, the NPS Alaska officials briefed members of the conservation community on park initiatives in Alaska. The Alaska park delegation also participated in internal NPS planning sessions and congressional visits. Top items on the Alaska agenda include proposals for enhanced resource protection and improvements to visitor facilities. Specific projects under way include implementation of a vessel management plan at Glacier Bay and transportation planning at Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, and other Alaska parks.

HEARTLAND Lori Nelson, Regional Director

► NPS has determined that the construction of a four-lane, mile-long bridge across the St. Croix River between Minnesota and Wisconsin would have direct and adverse impacts on St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. The ruling, which cited the bridge's potential damage to the scenic and recreational values of the river, effectively halts the proposal—at least temporarily. In response to the NPS recommendation, other federal agencies will deny permits and funding for the project. The Minnesota Department of Transportation, which proposed the bridge, has announced plans to challenge the NPS determination in court. Nelson anticipates that the struggle over the bridge will continue in national legislation relating to transportation issues and possibly through mediation.

NORTHEAST Eileen Woodford, Regional Director

► After a number of Virginia-based park advocates helped defend national parks in the "Old Dominion" from a legislative assault in the last session of Congress, Woodford and NPCA organized an alliance known as the Virginia Parks Network. Two meetings held last fall in Richmond and near Shenandoah National Park brought together county and regional planners, battlefield preservation advocates, representatives from regional and national conservation groups, and local elected officials. Participants established a foundation for citizen advocacy on park issues in Virginia. NPCA's Virginia members are particularly encouraged to join the network. Contact Woodford at P.O. Box 382372, Cambridge, MA 02238-2372.

PACIFIC Brian Huse, Regional Director

► Polls show that only 24 percent of California voters support the construction of a massive landfill less than two miles from Joshua Tree National Park. Nevertheless, plans are proceeding on the project. (See page 22).  **TAKE ACTION:** Write to Bob Buster, chairman of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. Ask the board to reject the landfill and reconsider the poor land-use planning decisions that threaten to undermine nationally significant resources. Point out the short-sightedness of

capture facility inoperable, and the agency responded by stepping up its shooting program.

The bison management plan's zero-tolerance policy along Yellowstone's northern border called for the Park Service to round up all buffalo heading for the park's boundary and hold them for shipping—without testing—to slaughterhouses across the state of Montana. After more than 348 buffalo were captured and shipped to slaughter in less than two weeks at the NPS facility alone, park officials began implementing contingency plans.

Toward the end of January, the Park Service began testing the animals penned at the northern site, and shipped to slaughter only those that tested positive. Within a few days, NPS temporarily abandoned all efforts at capturing buffalo. Park rangers on horseback began attempts to drive the herd back into the park.

NPCA, a vocal opponent of the interim plan since its release last August, demanded an end to the killing in January. The association has developed a strategy of short- and long-term objectives to provide adequate winter range for the park's population and restore the buffalo to its natural role in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

NPCA is pursuing options including negotiations with area ranchers who hold grazing allotments on public lands adjacent to the park. The association also continues to be involved in efforts to develop a biologically sound long-term plan for buffalo management in Yellowstone. A draft environmental impact statement is due in July.

Readers can help advance NPCA's strategy to save the American buffalo on several fronts.

 **TAKE ACTION:** Write to Yellowstone Superintendent Mike Finley urging that he close groomed snowmobile trails, which have led to increased buffalo migration from the park. Address: P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone N.P., WY 82190.

Write to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman urging him to give buffalo—which belong to all Americans—priority over privately owned cattle on national forest lands adjacent to Yellowstone. Address: Department of Agriculture, 14th Street

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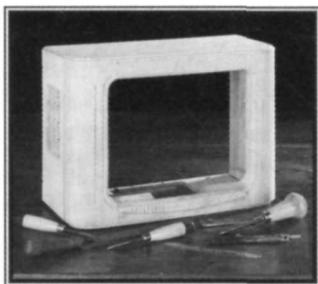
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REGIONAL REPORT *continued*

the landfill proposal, which would inevitably harm Joshua Tree—a source of long-term, sustainable economic benefits to the community. Address: P.O. Box 1147, Riverside, CA 92502.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST Phil Pearl, Regional Director

► The views in Mount Rainier National Park in Washington should improve dramatically—and quite soon—under a new proposal to accelerate cuts in sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions from a nearby power plant. Plans originally called for the Centralia Power Plant to reduce SO₂ emissions by 90 percent within ten years, but a new schedule calls for that goal to be met by 2003. NPCA and local conservation groups participated in hearings on the proposal, taking an active interest in improving operations at Centralia, which produces more SO₂ emissions than any other plant in the West. Studies show that the Centralia plant affects air quality and reduces visibility at Mount Rainier by at least 30 percent.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN Mark Peterson, Regional Director

► NPCA is joining a lawsuit filed by the U.S. government against Garfield County in Utah. County road crews had begun work on improvements to the Burr Trail in Capitol Reef National Park in defiance of NPS management policies. The case involves interpretation of Revised Statute 2477, which once authorized rights-of-way across public lands.

► Claims of pre-existing rights-of-way under R.S. 2477, which was repealed in 1976, continue to pose legal questions and management challenges to the Interior Department. In January, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt revoked a 1988 policy that was established outside of proper rule-making procedures and that offered a very broad interpretation of the sort of routes that could qualify as rights-of-way.

SOUTHEAST Don Barger, Regional Director

► NPCA submitted comments opposing construction of a landfill near Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area in Tennessee. The dump would be located outside the park along Bear Creek, a tributary of the Big South Fork. The area is rife with abandoned underground mines, which could make the site unstable. Barger argued that since all landfills leak over time, the project poses an unacceptable risk to a national park unit. Leachate from the landfill could affect the habitat of two federally endangered freshwater mussel species found only in Big South Fork. The project could also attract bears reintroduced through the park's black bear program.

SOUTHWEST David Simon, Regional Director

► In response to concerns raised by NPCA, regulations regarding the use of houseboats at Big Thicket National Preserve in east Texas have been put on hold. Activities associated with houseboats moored along the park's Neches River—including dumping of sewage and refuse and poaching of fish and game—pose a threat to park resources. NPCA supports regulations, but suggested that they include a limit on the number of houseboats allowed in the park and provisions to phase out houseboat use over time. NPS plans to revisit the issue and will consider NPCA's recommendations.

and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250.

Write to Montana Governor Marc Racicot asking the state to abandon its zero-tolerance policy for buffalo in favor of a risk-management approach—taking steps to separate cattle and buffalo instead of continuing the slaughter of wildlife. Address: Capitol Building, Helena, MT 59620.

LEGISLATION

Antiquities Act Under Attack

President's authority to declare national monuments challenged.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A coalition of preservation groups led by NPCA has united to defend the Antiquities Act from congressional assault. Since 1906, 14 U.S. presidents have used the act to declare 105 national monuments, protecting some of America's most beloved icons from the Statue of Liberty to the Grand Canyon.

After President Clinton used the Antiquities Act to proclaim Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in September, several Western legislators announced their intention to challenge the president's authority to create national monuments.

The 1906 Antiquities Act, originally used to halt the looting of ancient archaeological sites in the Southwest, allows the president to protect areas of historic, scientific, or scenic significance. Many national parks—including Denali, Arches, Zion, and Olympic—were first protected as national monuments under the Antiquities Act.

Although Congress also has the authority to establish national monuments, the legislative process can take several years.

"The Antiquities Act is a vital tool for preservation," says Al Eisenberg, NPCA's deputy director for conservation policy. "It gives the president the ability to act quickly to save nationally significant resources from imminent threats, such as mining, looting, log-

ging, and development.”

Clinton established the 1.7-million-acre monument—which will be administered by the Bureau of Land Management—to protect its redrock canyons, natural arches, and other features from mining claims.

Several bills challenging the new monument and designed to weaken the Antiquities Act failed to pass in the last Congress, but legislators have indicated their intent to offer similar legislation this session. Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska), chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, has announced plans to “reform” the Antiquities Act. Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land Management, has introduced a bill (S. 62) that would prevent the president from creating or expanding national monuments in Idaho.



CURT GIVEN

Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park may be zoned for PWCs.

“National parks are not appropriate places to enjoy PWCs,” says Phil Pearl, NPCA Pacific Northwest regional director. “No one group of users should be allowed to destroy the peace and tranquility that the majority of park visitors have come to experience.”

Olympic park officials held public meetings on the Lake Crescent proposal in January. In Seattle, a majority of citizens opposed PWC use in the park, but in Port Angeles, most local residents argued against restrictions on PWCs—and against virtually all NPS regulations at the lake.

Other parks, including Glacier, Yellowstone, and Everglades, have banned PWCs. Restrictions or bans are under discussion at Cape Cod National Seashore, and at Voyageurs, Big Bend, and Grand Canyon national parks.

A study at Everglades National Park in Florida found that PWC use resulted in negative impacts to park resources, particularly nesting birds. In December 1994, NPS enacted a ban on PWCs in Everglades after concluding that “the purpose for which the park was established, to protect a unique natural system, made...use of personal watercraft incompatible with preserving wilderness qualities such as serenity.”

A temporary ban on PWCs was established last May at Glacier National Park in Montana while NPS completes

RECREATION

PWCs: Out of Place in Parks

Olympic and other parks plunge into personal watercraft issue.

PORT ANGELES, WASH.—A plan to zone a portion of Lake Crescent in Olympic National Park for personal watercraft (PWC) has launched a local conflict and contributed to a national debate. PWCs, commonly known by the brand name Jet-Ski, are growing in popularity, but questions have arisen about their impacts on wildlife, natural resources, and other recreationists.

In the absence of a national policy on PWC use in the parks, Olympic and several other national parks are tackling the issue. A Park Service survey reveals that personal watercraft use occurs in about 36 park units.

Visitors complain that the incessant sputter and whine of PWC engines interfere with their enjoyment of the parks. PWC users often congregate in popular areas, traveling in tight circles and creating an extended disturbance.

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a general management plan that will examine their use. Superintendent Dave Mihalic says the public accepted the decision and expressed surprise that a ban was not already in place. "The general reaction was... "Of course they shouldn't be allowed here—it's a national park!"

Although Olympic Superintendent Dave Morris faces local resistance to PWC regulations, he acknowledges that the issue has implications beyond the park. "This decision has national overtones," he says. "I think it will be a precedent-setting case."

The Park Service is taking steps to develop a policy governing PWC use throughout the National Park System.

"We do not oppose the use of PWCs," Pearl says, "but they simply don't belong in national parks that were created for, and are supposed to be managed for, the protection of natural, cultural, and wilderness values."

TAKE ACTION: Write a letter opposing PWC use on Lake Crescent. Urge NPS to establish a strong precedent

on the inappropriateness of PWCs in the parks. Comments must be received by March 19. Address: Superintendent Dave Morris, Olympic National Park, 600 E. Park Ave., Port Angeles, WA 98362.

LEGISLATION

Parklands For Sale?

Bill to sell or lease park property introduced in Congress.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A bill that would allow individual units of the park system to sell or lease parklands to private individuals has been introduced in Congress.

Sponsored by Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-Md.), whose district includes part of Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, this legislation (H.R. 104) would allow people who cur-

rently reside in parks under fixed-term agreements to extend their occupancy—temporarily or indefinitely. H.R. 104 also would authorize active solicitation of newcomers to lease or purchase national park property.

"The Bartlett bill is the sale of the century," says Laura Loomis, NPCA's associate director for national issues. "This legislation creates the potential for an explosion in the number of private inholdings within the National Park System."

Today, more than 1,600 cabins, cottages, and trailers in at least 82 national park units are occupied as private residences under agreements with the National Park Service. For the most part, these structures are summer homes that were in use before the parks were established. Property owners sold their holdings to the federal government but retained the right to continue using the property for up to 25 years by accepting compensation lower than the full purchase price. For example, a seller could continue to use

a vacation home for 15 years if he or she agreed to sell the property to NPS for 85 percent of its fair market value. In other cases, sellers retain use of the property for their lifetime and renters occupy park-owned structures under renewable permits.

Many of these agreements are due to expire over the next few years, and permittees in some parks are pressuring their members of Congress to sponsor legislation to extend their occupancy or, as with H.R. 104, authorize the sale of park property. The Park Service has also undertaken a re-evaluation of its guidelines on special park uses, which include occupancy agreements.

Bartlett's bill purports to offer parks an innovative way to generate revenue in times of chronic budget shortfalls. NPCA contends that H.R. 104 would create a perverse incentive for parks to sell off lands needed to protect our national heritage.

Bartlett claims that his bill offers citizens an incentive to invest in historic preservation efforts that will enhance

the parks, but C & O Canal staff say that most of the structures in Bartlett's district are seasonal shacks and trailers.

Most occupancy permits involve ordinary vacation homes situated in prime scenic and recreational areas of the parks. At Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan, at least 80 structures are scattered along the park's scenic shoreline, bluffs, inland lakes, and streams. More than 50 cabins in the Mineral King area of Sequoia National Park in California occupy lands that the park plans to convert to public campgrounds when lifetime permits expire.

"National parks are for all the people," Loomis says. "Taxpayers have already paid for these properties, and any scheme to sell or lease parklands or extend residential permits prevents Americans from enjoying full access to their parks."

TAKE ACTION: Write a letter to your representative, asking him or her to oppose H.R. 104. Address: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

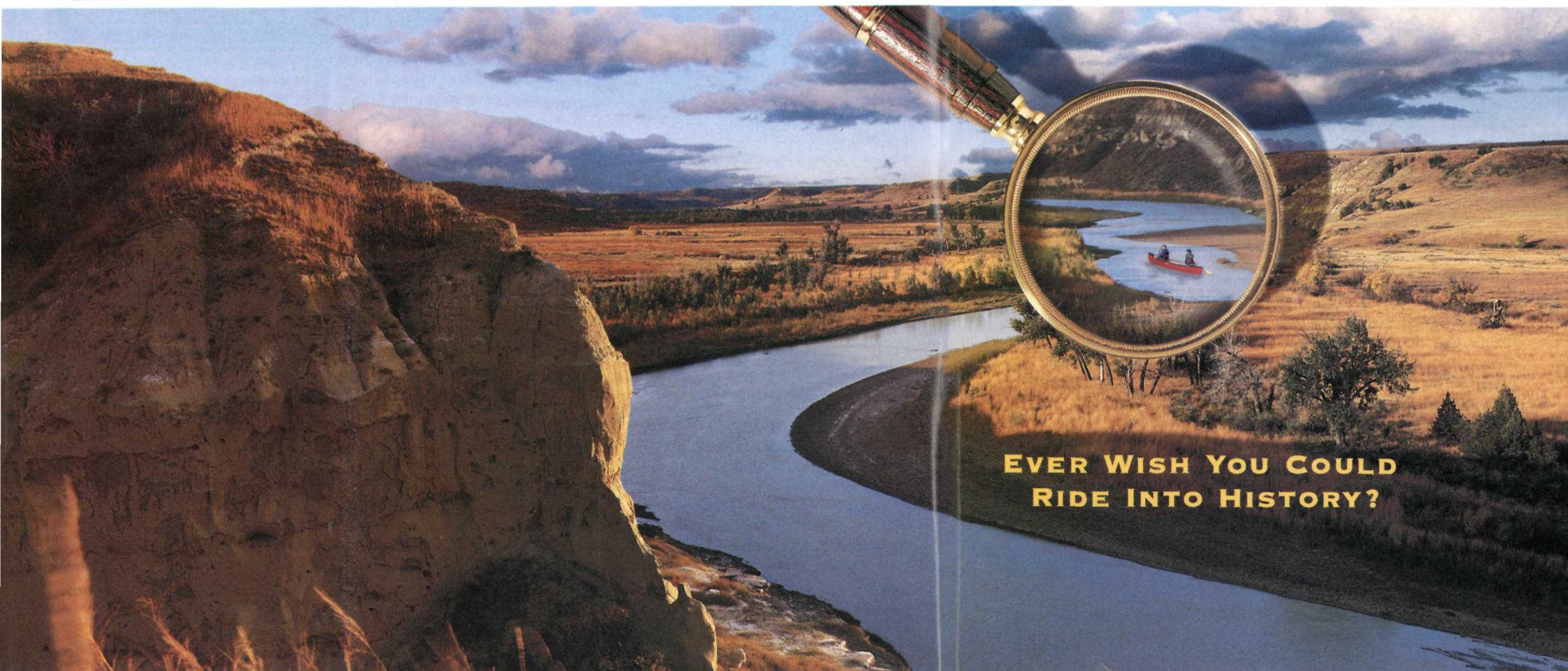
TOURISM

FAA Rules on Air Tours in Two Parks

Ban at Rocky Mountain, partial regulation at Grand Canyon.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has responded to an order from President Clinton, announcing regulations affecting air tours over Rocky Mountain and Grand Canyon national parks. But FAA's actions—and failure to deliver comprehensive rules for national park overflights—fall short of Clinton's Earth Day 1996 pledge to restore natural quiet in the parks.

► In January, FAA declared a temporary ban on air tour flights over Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. The regulation will remain in effect for two years, or until FAA develops a plan to control overflights in all national



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NPCA PARK NEWS

parks, whichever comes first.

NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard welcomed the ruling as a positive step toward the restoration of natural quiet in the parks. "Natural quiet is a park resource that is as precious as water, air, and wildlife. It deserves the same attention and protection," he says.

Although no air tours operated at Rocky Mountain at the time of the ruling, then-Transportation Secretary Federico Peña said the ban would preserve the serenity of the park while FAA works on a national overflights policy for parks.

"Proper bans and limits on sightseeing planes and helicopters will protect the park's natural quiet and its wildlife, and will give park visitors a much more enjoyable experience," says Mark Peterson, NPCA Rocky Mountain regional director. "More than 90 percent of Rocky Mountain National Park is managed as wilderness. And that's what visitors expect—not the buzz of low-flying aircraft."

A coalition of air tour companies has filed a lawsuit against FAA in an attempt to block the ban.

► FAA also released new regulations for overflights at Grand Canyon National

Park in Arizona. NPCA contends that the rules place no meaningful limits on park overflights and will fail to restore natural quiet in the Grand Canyon.

Although the ruling caps the number of aircraft in tour operators' fleets, it places no limits on the number of flights they make each day. The regulations also fail to keep aircraft away from sensitive areas of Grand Canyon, including Point Sublime, the Shivwits Plateau, and Havasupai Point, says NPCA Southwest Regional Director David Simon. FAA also announced draft regulations phasing out noisier aircraft in the park.

NPCA, joined by seven other conservation groups, filed a lawsuit against the Department of Transportation and FAA, claiming that the regulations fail to meet the standards of the 1987 National Parks Overflights Act.

"Ten years ago, Congress recognized a problem with overflights in national parks," Simon says. "Flights over the Grand Canyon have more than doubled since then, and this ruling will allow air tours to continue to expand." In 1987 about 40,000 flights operated in Grand Canyon. Last year nearly 95,000 air tours took place over the park.

NEWS UPDATE

► **A NEW DIRECTION:** NPS Director Roger Kennedy, who was appointed by President Clinton in 1993, announced his resignation in January. At press time, an announcement was expected on Kennedy's successor.

The president's nominee for NPS director will, for the first time, be subject to confirmation by the Senate. This change was one of many measures included in the omnibus parks bill that passed on the final day of the last session of Congress.

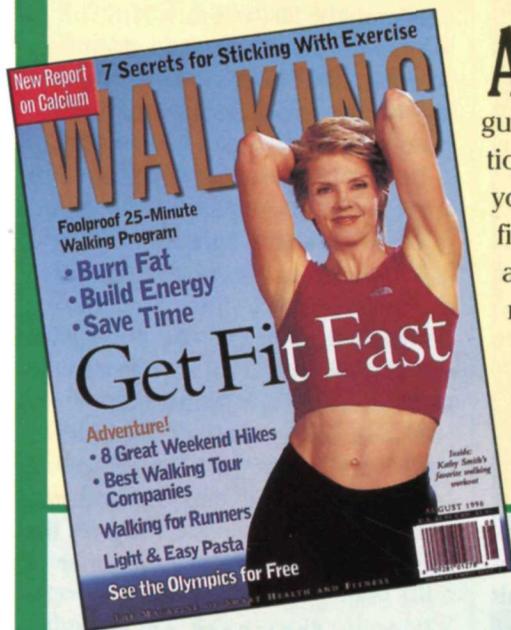
► **DAYS OF THE CONDOR:** For the first time since 1924, California condors are soaring in the skies of the American Southwest. In December, six of the endangered birds were released in northern Arizona,

30 miles north of Grand Canyon National Park. The juvenile California condors, all born in captive breeding facilities, had been in an enclosure at the release area acclimating to their surroundings since October.

All of the birds have been testing their wings—which measure about nine feet across—with short and long soaring flights. So far they are feeding on carcasses provided by the scientists associated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service California condor recovery effort. In January, one of the condors was found dead, apparently the victim of a conflict with a golden eagle.

Biologists continue to monitor the birds closely. Regular updates are posted on the World Wide Web: <http://www.peregrinefund.org>.

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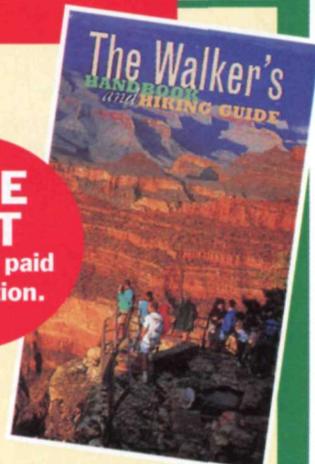
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ADJACENT LANDS

Landfill Project Nears Approval

Final report on trash dump near Joshua Tree released.

TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIF.—A proposal to build the world's largest landfill less than two miles from Joshua Tree National Park moved a step closer to reality with the January release of a final environmental impact statement (EIS) on the project. The Eagle Mountain landfill would sprawl over more than 2,200 acres and accept 20,000 tons of garbage a day from seven counties in the Los Angeles area.

"This proposal shows that some people still view the desert—a highly sensitive ecosystem—as nothing more than a wasteland," says NPCA Pacific Regional Director Brian Huse.

Pinto Basin, a vast wilderness area dotted with cacti, oases, and sand dunes, surrounds the proposed landfill

site. "The wilderness experience is one of the most significant and unique resources that we offer to the public," says Joshua Tree Superintendent Ernie Quintana. Although mitigation measures can—to some extent—address problems ranging from air quality to odor control, if the project goes through, little can be done to shield park visitors from the noise and visual intrusion of an industrial site. "The landfill's impacts to the wilderness experience cannot be mitigated," Quintana says.

The Park Service, which opposes the project, has nevertheless entered into an agreement with Mine Reclamation Corporation (MRC), the company proposing the landfill. MRC approached the Park Service offering to sign a contract outlining mitigation measures to limit the project's effects on the park, similar to those contained in the EIS.

Mike Soukup, associate director of NPS, says the decision to sign the agreement—before the release of the EIS and in advance of a final decision on the project—was made in the agency's Washington, D.C., office. Officials at Joshua Tree and the regional office

recommended holding off as long as possible in signing an agreement with MRC, Quintana says.

NPCA's Huse says NPS officials "cut themselves off at the knees" by signing the agreement and forgoing enforcement authority under the EIS. "The park submitted 50 pages of comments outlining inadequacies and inconsistencies in the EIS, and then NPS staff in Washington, D.C., signed a document accepting the EIS as a 'complete analysis' of the project's impacts on the park," Huse says.

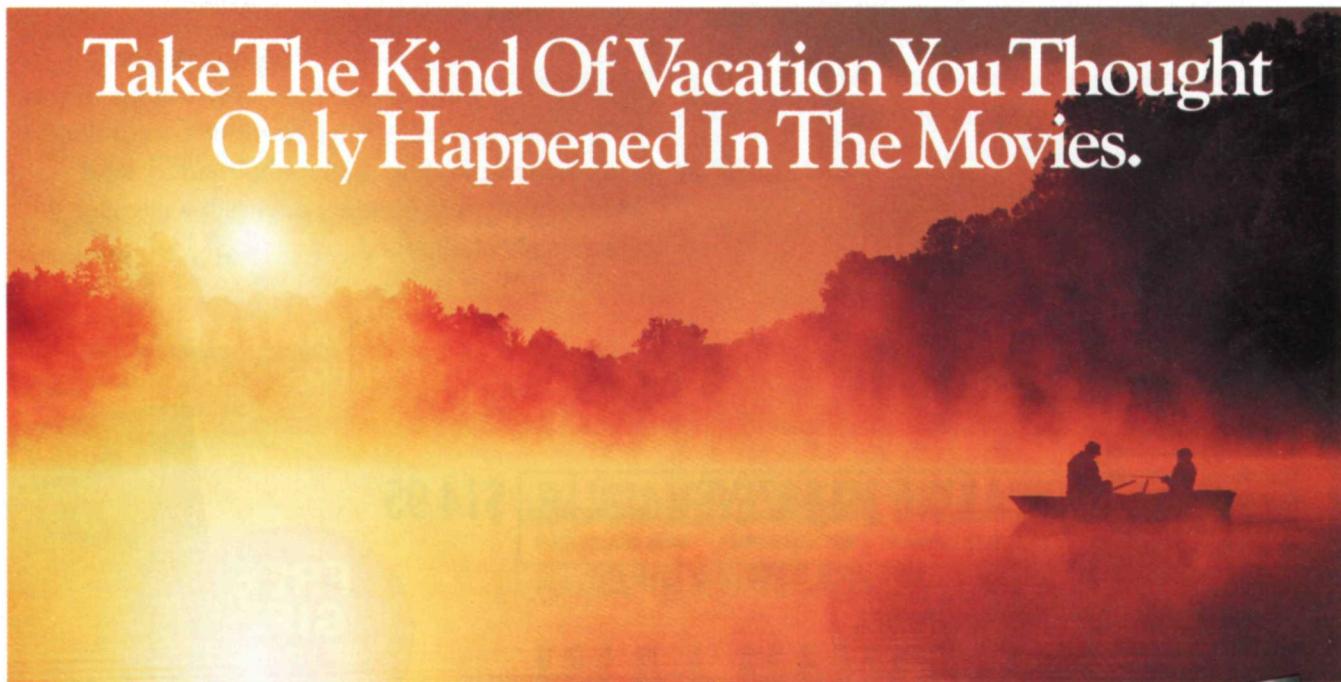
Interior Department officials have launched an investigation of the legality of the NPS-MRC agreement.

According to Huse, MRC has used the agreement in a publicity campaign designed to convince the public that the Park Service has acquiesced and that the landfill is a "done deal."

Joshua Tree's Assistant Superintendent Frank Buono says the agreement has caused a great deal of confusion over the landfill proposal. "It gives the impression that NPS is a supporter of

continued on page 24

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V I R G I N I A

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WISE USE GROUPS PACK HEARING

TWO OF THE local associations with representatives at a hearing on Olympic National Park's Lake Crescent management plan have ties to national Wise Use groups. Members of Friends of Lake Crescent and the Clallam Citizens Coalition were among the more than 400 people who turned out for a January 16 hearing in Port Angeles, Washington.

The hearings were part of the comment-gathering process for the management plan, one aspect of which would limit personal watercraft (PWC) to a portion of the lake, a restriction the Wise Use groups oppose.

A majority of those who attended the Port Angeles hearing opposed restrictions of any kind on the lake although the opposite was true of a hearing held the previous evening in Seattle.

Friends of Lake Crescent, which represents a portion of the 175 property owners on Lake Crescent, was named in William Perry Pendley's book *It Takes a Hero*, which lists prominent Wise Use groups and individuals.

The Clallam Citizens Coalition has ties to the National Federal Lands Conference (NFLC), a leading proponent of the county-supremacy movement, which contends that the rights of counties supersede those of the federal government. NFLC also has ties to the militia movement.

PWCs are the latest hot-button issue in the Wise Use movement's ongoing campaign to force the Park Service and other agencies to open up public lands to profit-making enterprises and motorized uses. Other parks, such as Everglades National Park, have banned PWCs. (See page 17.)

—Linda M. Rancourt

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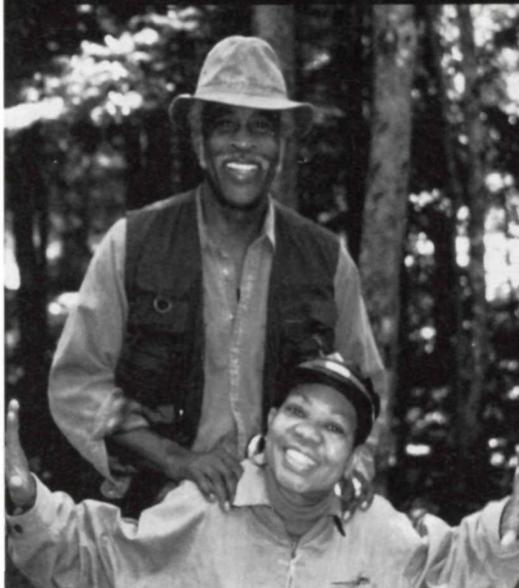
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NPCA PARK NEWS

the project," he says.

At press time, decisions on the landfill were expected from the Riverside County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. If the board approves the plan, NPCA will consider legal action to block the dump.

TAKE ACTION: For details on writing to the board, see page 14.

ADJACENT LANDS

Airport Plans Affect Parks

International airports proposed near Florida, Hawaii parks.

Federal agencies are weighing two airport expansion projects that would affect Everglades, Biscayne, and Haleakala national parks.

▶ A major redevelopment proposal for Homestead Air Force Base in south Florida will be delayed until additional studies of its potential effects on

Everglades and Biscayne national parks are completed, the Clinton Administration said.

"We are pleased that the administration realized that the first environmental impact statement [EIS] on making Homestead into a commercial airport is inadequate," says NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard.

NPCA and other conservation groups convinced the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) that the EIS, which studied a plan to turn Homestead into a small-scale regional airport, did not adequately reflect the impacts of a later proposal to transform the base into a major international airport.

To accommodate international traffic, Homestead Air Base Developers, Inc., plans to construct a second runway on the site. A supplemental EIS would examine the noise, air, and water pollution produced by an expanded facility, which could handle about 200,000 flights per year.

CEQ Chair Katie McGinty says the administration will continue its review of the existing EIS to determine if it

SAVE OUR NATIONAL PARKS

▶ **PHASE TWO:** The first phase of NPCA's Save Our National Parks Campaign ended with the passage of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act, the most significant parks bill in a decade.

To build on that momentum in the new session of Congress, NPCA has launched phase two of the campaign. Campaign priorities include: ▶ Boosting funding to the park system: Decades of insufficient funding have left a backlog of repairs and improvements that may be as high as \$8 million. NPCA is fighting to increase the Park Service's appropriation this year and to fend off inappropriate fund-raising schemes.

▶ Establishing consistent regulations for appropriate use: The Park Service is increasingly faced with determining what kinds of recreational uses are appropriate in the national parks.

Officials at Glacier National Park in Montana have banned personal watercraft from Lake MacDonald, but officials at Olympic National Park in Washington may allow them on Lake Crescent. (See page 17.)

▶ Preserving the Antiquities Act: The 1906 act, used by President Clinton to establish Escalante-Grand Staircase National Monument in Utah, is in danger of being weakened or repealed by Congress. (See page 16.)

▶ Renewing the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA): The law—slated to be reauthorized this year—funnels \$80 million a year to the Park Service to build and maintain 9,000 miles of roads. Provisions could be added that would damage the Park Service's ability to protect its resources.



GREG VAUGHN

Airport plan imperils the hinahina and other native Hawaiian species.

meets the standards of the National Environmental Policy Act. Pending that review and the federal government's approval of a long-term lease for the former air base, work could begin on the smaller airport as early as May.

NPCA will continue to monitor the development of the supplemental EIS focusing on the second runway. The process could take about two years.

► A draft biological assessment of an airport construction project on the island of Maui fails to address the development's potential impacts on Haleakala National Park. The park, located about 15 miles from Kahului Airport, is a haven for native Hawaiian species and harbors more threatened and endangered species than any other unit of the park system.

In April 1996, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Hawaii Department of Transportation issued a draft EIS on a plan to expand Kahului Airport to accommodate international traffic. After a public comment period—which NPCA participated in—and a meeting with officials from the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies, FAA agreed to conduct a biological assessment of the project. FAA officials

also assured Haleakala Superintendent Don Reeser that the park's concerns would be addressed.

The biological assessment examines the effects of alien species—which could be carried to the island on international flights—on Maui's endangered species. But according to Reeser, a member of the technical panel responsible for reviewing the assessment, the document does not evaluate impacts on the park.

"So far FAA has ignored the Park Service's input and failed to look into this project's effect on the park ecosystem," says NPCA Pacific Regional Director Brian Huse.

Reeser vows to continue urging FAA to consider Haleakala in the final EIS. "We need to focus on park ecosystems and keeping native species off the endangered species list."

The final EIS should be completed by this fall. If the study does not include analysis of the project's impacts on Haleakala, NPCA will explore further options, including litigation, to ensure that the park is protected.

ADJACENT LANDS

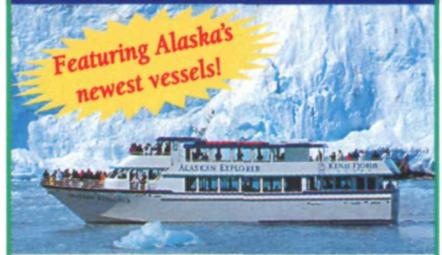
Reprieve for Gulf Islands

Citizens stand in opposition to gas drilling.

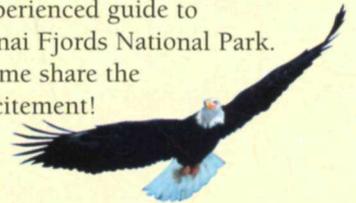
OCEAN SPRINGS, MISS.—The Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality (MCEQ) agreed in January to delay action on a plan for natural gas drilling near Gulf Islands National Seashore after citizens demonstrated overwhelming opposition to the proposal. NPCA members in Mississippi played a pivotal role in convincing the commission to put drilling plans on hold.

In September, MCEQ had voted 5-2 to accept bids for offshore drilling for natural gas in state waters surrounding the Mississippi unit of the national seashore. The commission rejected a motion to hear public comment on the

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drilling proposal, but in the wake of an unofficial public meeting on the plan in October, MCEQ agreed to schedule a public hearing for December.

More than 200 of NPCA's members in Mississippi agreed to contact the commissioners to voice their objections to gas leases near Gulf Islands. Most of the 300 citizens who attended the hearing—including NPCA members—expressed concerns about the risks drilling could pose to the wilderness areas of the park, Horn and Petit Bois islands.

"Gas rigs will inevitably have an impact on the park," says Louis Skrmetta, vice president of the Gulf Islands Conservancy. "I'd like to see my child enjoy the national seashore the way I have."

While testifying before the MCEQ, NPCA Southeast Regional Director Don Barger generated a media buzz by asking all those opposed to gas drilling to stand. Virtually everyone stood, Barger reports.

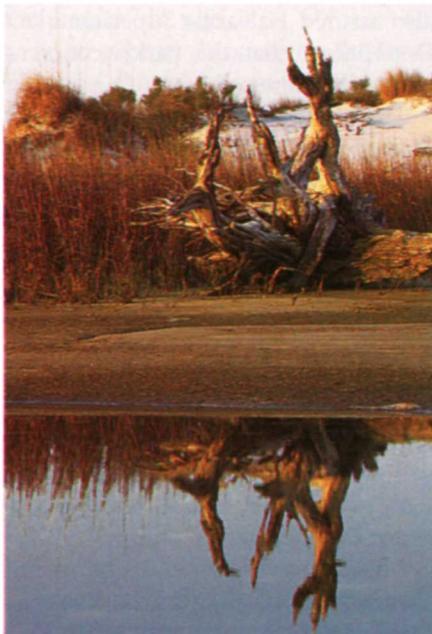
"Mississippi is blessed with the last undeveloped barrier island chain along the upper Gulf Coast," Barger testified. "It's a shame that the state would jeopardize a national seashore—which belongs to all Americans—with a speculative drilling project."

Citizens cited a number of threats associated with offshore drilling, including the risk of pipeline ruptures, marine debris, and the visual intrusion of production platforms, which park visitors would see on the horizon. Gas operations would also result in a dramatic increase in air and boat traffic near the rigs and over and around the park's wilderness islands.

"For an uncertain economic return, gas development will destroy the wilderness quality of the park, making it another industrial site," says Becky Gillette of the Mississippi Coast chapter of the Sierra Club.

State officials estimate that gas leases would generate \$45 million in revenue. Each year, 1.5 million visitors travel to Gulf Islands, pumping \$130 million into the state's economy.

After the December hearing, MCEQ announced that it would not make a decision on the drilling plan until



STEPHEN KIRKPATRICK

Offshore gas drilling could affect Gulf Islands National Seashore.

January. At that meeting, the commission reversed its September vote, declining to advertise submerged lands for leasing. Although MCEQ may still vote to proceed on the plan, the commissioners indicated that the issue had become politically charged and suggested that citizens take up the matter with the Mississippi legislature.

"The commission's reversal is a victory for the grassroots," says Barger.

Mississippi State Sen. Tommy Gollott (D), president pro tem of the Senate, introduced a bill that would have prohibited oil and gas leasing in the Mississippi Sound, but the measure stalled in a committee in February and never saw legislative action.

MCEQ will again take up the matter.

MANAGEMENT

Local Niobrara Council Approved

Lack of local zoning laws and NPS oversight could harm river.

O'NEILL, NEBR. — Niobrara National Scenic Riverway is a national park unlike any other. For 76 miles it

winds through eastern woodlands and western grasslands, fossil beds and sand dunes. And according to an NPS record of decision, Niobrara will be operated unlike any other park—with management responsibilities handed over to a local council.

"The Park Service addressed some of our concerns with the Niobrara Council in its final decision, but we're still not convinced that the plan goes far enough to ensure that the resource will be protected," says Lori Nelson, NPCA Heartland regional director.

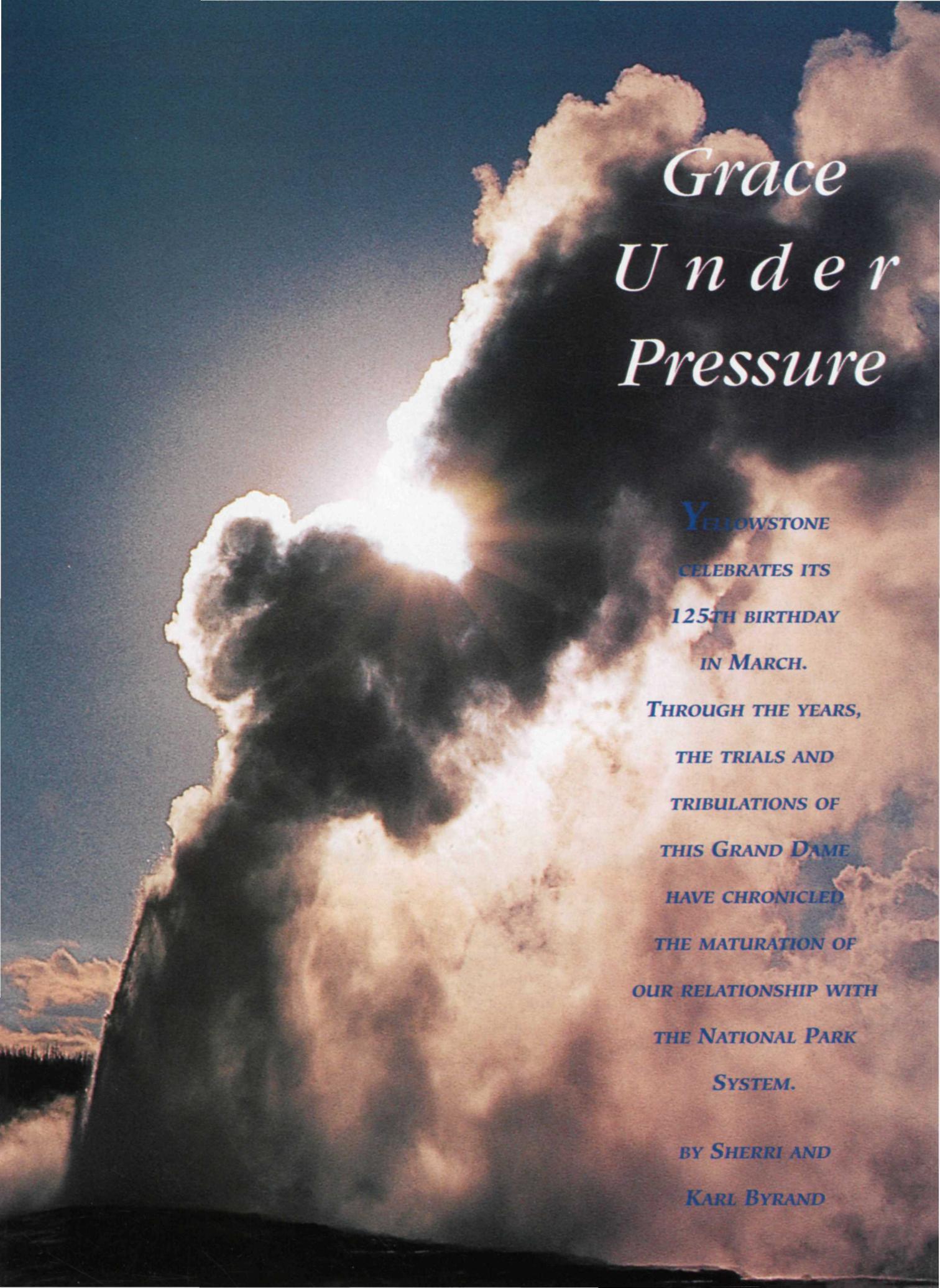
Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-Nebr.), who sponsored the bill that authorized Niobrara National Scenic Riverway in 1991, says the new plan leaves a great deal of authority over land use and management in the hands of county officials. And he expresses doubt about whether the four counties in question possess the political will to enact zoning regulations that will provide meaningful protection for the riverway.

Nelson shares his concern. "Our main point of contention with the plan involves land use regulation," she says. "We're not opposed to local participation in the management process, but Niobrara is part of the National Park System, and there are no local zoning regulations currently in place to help ensure that it will be managed in accordance with national standards."

Effective zoning laws will be critical to Niobrara's preservation because the authorizing legislation for the riverway strictly limits federal land acquisition. Niobrara's boundaries include meandering ribbons of land alongside the river, most of which would remain privately owned.

Nelson has begun working with Nebraska conservationists and Nebraska State Sen. Chris Beutler to strengthen the Niobrara management plan through state legislation. Beutler has introduced a bill that would provide state funding and some oversight of the zoning process.

NPCA is also considering legal action to compel the Park Service to oversee the establishment of an official agreement defining the relationship between NPS and the Niobrara Council.



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Under
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BY SHERRI AND

KARL BYRAND



IN THE PAST 125 YEARS, Old Faithful has spouted on schedule more than a million times, serving as the centerpiece for an astounding landscape that has endured both thermal outbursts and the consequences of being loved.

In 1872, Congress set aside more than 3,000 square miles establishing Yellowstone as our first national park—not because it understood ecosystem management or because it necessarily treasured wilderness, but because some considered it a wasteland, good only as a “pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

And so it was. Its hissing steams and boiling, sputtering fountains attracted 300 people in Yellowstone’s first year as a national park, visitors who strolled directly on the geyser cones and dared to look into the crater throats. They boiled eggs and washed clothes in thermal wells. They stuffed towels, even umbrellas into spouters to watch the objects carried skyward in a blast of water. They took as souvenirs hot-spring filigree and trumpeter swans.

Early park aficionados had a different sensibility—which today can seem an all-out lack of sense. Begging bears were sideshows; wolves, menaces. The first got scraps; the latter, poison. Even after the 1916 legislation establishing the National Park Service added the stipulation that the visitors’ enjoyment should be “without impairment to the resource,” pockets of Yellowstone looked like a honky-tonk resort, boasting dance halls and a swimming pool that pumped in thermal waters.

Attitudes began to change noticeably in the middle of this century with the realization that our actions had consequences not just for the “pests” we killed, but for everything in the environment, including ourselves. We have discovered the importance of ecosystems and preserving them: We stopped feeding bears with garbage and, for the most part, stopped treating natural wonders like arcade attractions. In doing so, we have restored Yellowstone and refreshed our spirits. Of course, we haven’t yet done enough. Today, we are shooting bison because of an inflexible livestock agency’s fears for cattle and because Yellowstone, among the largest parks in the country, cannot sustain the resource.

Many lament that one of the most common sights in Yellowstone is other people—with 3 million expected to visit this year. That may be true, but it is not the whole story. Because a majority will race from main attraction to main attraction, ignoring completely John Muir’s advice to go slowly, that “nothing can be done well at a speed of forty miles a day,” Yellowstone still offers places where the determined visitor can go days seeing only wonders, not throngs.

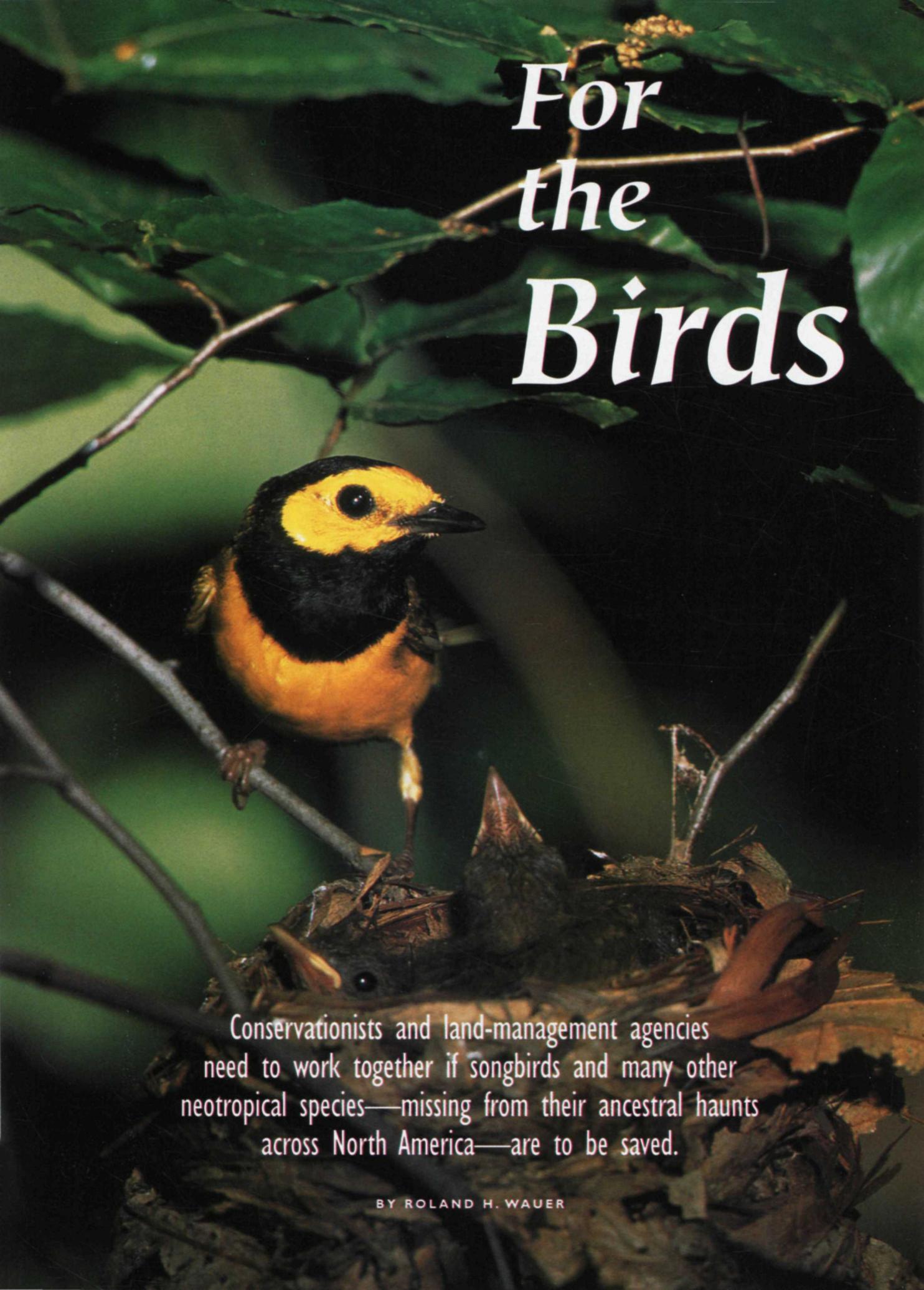
And so, although agriculture and mining interests continue to press on the park, and its stewards sometimes misstep, Old Faithful’s unwavering dependability reassures us—its spectacular eruptions a testament to the wisdom behind the creation of Yellowstone, and the very idea of a National Park System. We can take the opportunity offered by this anniversary to look forward as well as back and evaluate the direction in which Yellowstone and the rest of the parks are headed.



Geysers and wildlife inspire awe in Yellowstone visitors. Yet yesterday’s tourists trampled on geyser cones and fed garbage to bears (right). We have come a long way since then, but we still fall short of protecting all the park’s resources, such as the American buffalo. Color photos, Jeff and Alexa Henry. Black and white photos, courtesy of NPCA and Yellowstone National Park. Design by Belinda Lee/Zen Creatives.



SHERRI and KARL BYRAND lived in Montana while Karl completed his doctoral dissertation on how visitation at Yellowstone changed over the years.



For the Birds

Conservationists and land-management agencies need to work together if songbirds and many other neotropical species—missing from their ancestral haunts across North America—are to be saved.

BY ROLAND H. WAUER

MANY EASTERN woodlots no longer ring with the caroling of wood thrushes. From Alaska to Newfoundland, the staccato trills of Tennessee warblers are missing from many subarctic forests. The rich songs of rose-breasted grosbeaks have declined over much of their nesting grounds in Midwestern and Northeastern states. And the bright red-and-black plumage and whistles of scarlet tanagers are rare throughout the Eastern forests.

Some avian populations have disappeared, while others have declined even in places such as wild, remote, and protected Big Bend National Park in Texas. Hooded orioles, yellow-billed cuckoos, black-capped vireos, and summer tanagers no longer occur in the same numbers and at some of the same places where they could be expected 20 years ago.

More than half of the approximately 650 avian species that nest in North America are neotropical migrants—birds that nest here and winter in the tropics. They are key indicators of the health of our environment, barometers to our future well-being. If a reading of the numbers is any indication, the environment is in trouble all along the birds' range.

Tracking the Decline

The decline of North America's neotropical songbirds first was detected in the late 1970s. Breeding Bird Surveys from 1947 through the 1970s in Rock Creek Park, a national park in Washington, D.C., revealed that the yellow-billed cuckoo and yellow-throated vireo as well as northern parula, black-and-white, Kentucky, and hooded warblers had disappeared. Six other neotropical migrants—Eastern wood-pewee, Acadian flycatcher, wood thrush, red-eyed vireo, ovenbird, and scarlet tanager—had declined by more than 50 percent.

Further proof of a decline was pro-

LEFT: A male hooded warbler feeds its young. This species no longer appears at some former nesting sites.

vided by ornithologist Sydney Gauthreaux, Jr., who for three years in the 1960s used radar to detect spring migrants along the Gulf Coast. Each spring evening, migrants depart Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and fly 600 miles nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico, arriving in the United States about 20 hours later. Gauthreaux duplicated his three-year study in the 1980s and reported migrant numbers at only half of what they were 20 years earlier.



STEVE BENTSEN

The painted bunting has declined across its range and is on Audubon's watchlist. Here, a male bathes.

The reasons for the decline of neotropical migrants are complicated—encompassing a wide assortment of causes, including threats at both ends of the birds' ranges and at hundreds of resting and feeding areas in between. Because the vast majority of North America's missing and declining species spent their winters in the tropics, ornithologists initially blamed disappearing tropical forests.

Habitat Lost

Tropical forests have been cut around the world to accommodate grazing and agriculture. A 1990 report by the World Resources Institute revealed that 35 million to 50 million acres were being destroyed annually and predicted the complete disappearance of these forests

between the years 2030 and 2045.

Some species of birds require mature forests to survive. For instance, the Bachman's warbler, a species that nested in the southeastern United States and wintered in Cuba, disappeared from North America when 95 percent of Cuba's forests were replaced with sugar plantations. Other species can survive in second growth and in human-made habitats, such as gardens, orchards, and coffee plantations that have a native forest canopy.

Songbirds have been assaulted by habitat loss and forest fragmentation in the United States as well. Of 261 U.S. ecosystem types, 58 have declined by 85 percent or more, and 38 have declined by 70 to 84 percent. Wetlands have suffered the greatest losses: riparian habitats in Arizona and New Mexico experienced a 90 percent loss, and many bottomland hardwood forests from Virginia to Texas were lost to agriculture, plantations, and reservoirs. Many freshwater ponds and coastal estuaries, which are essential as resting and feeding sites for migrating and wintering shorebirds and waterfowl, have been eliminated by developments, polluted by chemicals, and seriously degraded by refuse.

Climate change caused by global warming is expected to produce additional threats. Coastal flooding from sea-level rise can wipe out millions of acres of feeding and resting sites for waterfowl and shorebirds; drier weather in the central prairies can eliminate essential nesting sites, and the change of timing of our seasons could be disastrous for migrants that depend on seasonal food supplies.

Pesticides and Parasites

If our songbird populations continue to decline, we may very well experience the "silent spring" that Rachel Carson wrote about so eloquently in the 1940s. Her concern then was the significant loss of American robin populations due to pesticide poisoning. Her warnings galvanized the public into action that eventually led to the ban of DDT in the United States and Canada. Robins, brown pelicans, ospreys,

peregrine falcons, bald eagles, and several other species affected by DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons eventually recovered. But it was too late to save breeding peregrines east of the Mississippi River. The only viable populations of peregrines left in North America south of Alaska were those living in large natural areas, such as Grand Canyon and Big Bend national parks.

Indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides also has taken a toll in the tropics. In spite of the 1972 ban on the use of DDT, countries from Mexico to South America have continued using pesticides and numerous other long-lived biocides, many of which are still manufactured in the United States. The most recent and most damaging results have been documented in Argentina, where as many as 400,000 Swainson's hawks have died from ingesting monocrotophos, an extremely potent pesticide. Partners in Flight biologists, supported by the American Bird Conservancy, who documented the slaughter, are now



WENDY SHATTIL & BOB ROZINSKI/TOM STACK & ASSOC.

The loss of American robins to pesticide poisoning provided the catalyst for Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Her warnings led to the ban of DDT.

Programs That Count

▲ **Christmas Bird Count:** annual one-day counts of all birds within 15-mile circles across North America, during a two-week period at Christmastime; contact National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022.

▲ **Breeding Bird Survey:** annual counts of all birds detected for three-minute intervals at 50 stops along pre-selected routes; contact Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Laurel, MD 20708.

▲ **North American Migration Count:** annual one-day census of all birds within counties throughout North America taken the second Saturday in May; contact NAMC coordinator, P.O. Box 71, North Beach, MD 20714.

▲ **Hawk Migration Count:** taken at a few key sites during the fall migration; contact Hawk Migration Association of North America, P.O. Box 3482, Lynchburg, VA 24503.

—RHW

working with the local farmers and chemical companies to find an appropriate pesticide substitute.

Besides chemical poisoning and deforestation, scientists realized another more insidious element was compounding the losses. Studies demonstrated that fragmentation—which can be caused by something as small as a footpath and as large as an interstate highway—was as much a danger for forest-dwelling birds as the complete loss of habitat. This became clear from Breeding Bird Surveys conducted in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina—a park with relatively large tracts of undisturbed forest. The surveys, conducted from 1947 through the 1970s, showed that even though overall populations appeared to be dropping, the birds nesting in Great Smokies were maintaining stable numbers.

Scientists looked for a cause. Clues came from three species that seemed to have stable wintering grounds but were at risk on their breeding grounds.

The species included the Kirkland's warbler, which winters in the Bahamas and nests in a rather specialized habitat in Michigan; the golden-cheeked warbler, a Texas specialty that winters in relatively stable pine forests in southern Mexico and Central America; and the

black-capped vireo, which winters in little-disturbed areas in northern Mexico and breeds in Texas and Oklahoma. Each bird faced increased parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds, a species that deposits its eggs in other birds' nests.

Brown-headed cowbirds are "edge" species that evolved on the North American prairies with bison and various grassland birds. They are called edge species because they tend to feed and breed along the outskirts of forests. As forests and woodlands were cleared for grazing and agriculture, cowbirds expanded their range all across the country. And, each time a roadway, right-of-way, or some other path that creates an "edge" is cut through a forest, the birds' radius of operation expands even farther.

Fragmentation has allowed the cowbird to parasitize even more species than ever before. A female cowbird can produce 30 to 40 eggs per season, which she deposits in nests of other, usually smaller, birds; she may even discard eggs or nestlings of her host. More than 200 species are known to be used.

Ornithologist David Wilcove, using wicker open-cup nests and quail eggs in suburban Maryland, found that nearly 95 percent of the nests suffered predation; similar experiments in Great Smoky Mountains showed negligible predation.

Habitats without top-level predators, such as coyotes, foxes, mountain lions, and bobcats, support a host of second-level predators and parasites, such as house cats and dogs, raccoons, grackles, jays, crows, and other nonforest species. All of these prey upon smaller species, and like the cowbird, they tend to concentrate their efforts along the edges of forests, gaining access to their prey via developed areas.

Neotropical songbirds are more vulnerable to predators and parasites than most full-time species. Native songbirds, such as bluebirds, titmice, and chickadees, tend to have limited migration ranges, often nest in cavities, and are able to produce two or more broods annually. Neotropical songbirds, on the other hand, usually build open nests, sometimes on the ground, and seldom are able to produce a second clutch if the first one is destroyed by a predator or the parents expend all of their energy raising cowbirds in place of their own offspring.

Saving Our Songbirds

Even though the odds may not seem to favor the survival of neotropical songbirds, actions taken by land-management agencies and private citizens (see: *What You Can Do*) could go a long way toward helping these species.

The National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service must reassess their activities and redesign many of their holdings. Areas of less than 125,000 acres are most likely to lose species. For instance, a road carved through a 125,000-acre reserve creates two 75,000-acre plots, increasing the risk of predation by "edge" species such as cowbirds. Preservation of long patches of forest—or at least long-term rotational cutting that allows second-

Male blue grosbeak.

STEVE BENTSEN



What You Can Do

P RIVATE CITIZENS, whether they are birders or not, can help to save our neotropical songbirds.

- ▲ Become better educated about the issues; excellent resources are available
- ▲ Participate in various monitoring and conservation programs
- ▲ Plant gardens made up of native vegetation that provides food for birds year-round
- ▲ Maintain a water source for birds, and maintain bird feeders that cannot be used by European starlings, house sparrows, grackles, and cowbirds
- ▲ Avoid using chemicals on your yards and fields
- ▲ Keep your house cats indoors
- ▲ Buy only coffee products marked ecook (to be on the market in early 1997). This means the coffee is not grown on cleared, otherwise sterile slopes
- ▲ Let your congressional representatives know you support key conservation measures, such as the Endangered Species Act and air and water quality legislation. Unless you speak out, you

cannot be heard

- ▲ For major landowners, consider placing land in a trust program
 - ▲ For birders, participate in some of the sanctioned monitoring and restoration programs: Christmas Bird Count, Breeding Bird Survey, International Migratory Bird Day, Hawk Migration Count, Breeding Bird Atlas, Project Feeder Watch, Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS), and Winter Bird Population Study. (See *Programs That Count*, page 32.)
 - ▲ If you already are involved with a local or state conservation organization, encourage that organization to join and support the American Bird Conservancy. ABC is a United States-based, not-for-profit, membership group dedicated solely to the conservation of wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC publishes the quarterly magazine *Bird Conservation*, dedicated to keeping its readers up to date about all the issues relating to bird conservation.
- RHW

growth forest to reach maturity—is essential. And wildlife corridors or greenways, where animals can safely reach one wild area from another, must also be developed whenever possible. These corridors allow animal populations to mix, enhancing the available gene pool.

Land-management agencies must participate in programs designed to protect and monitor wildlife and encourage habitat diversity. Among other things, they must control exotic plants and animals, use fire as a management tool, and reduce mowing. Most important is their duty to interpret birds and bird ecology. Although interpretation is often the first program to be cut when budgets decline, agencies must resist this tendency. Interpretation is essential to the success of neotropical songbird recovery and to the public's understanding

and support of habitat preservation.

In addition, each park, forest, and other public area must produce a checklist of birds, based upon known records. Each area also must obtain a scientifically valid breeding bird population baseline for all key habitats, and these areas must be monitored regularly. Otherwise an avian decline or recovery will not be recognized.

Our efforts must be joint ones; no individual or organization has the time, energy, or resources to get it done alone. Our immediate action can make a difference. Margaret Mead once wrote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

ROLAND H. WAUER, a member of NPCA's Board of Trustees, has written a series of books about birding in the national parks. He also leads live bird chats for NPCA on America Online. The next two, 9 p.m., ET, March 25 and April 15, will cover birds of Grand Canyon and Padre Island national parks, respectively.

AFTER THE FALL



A climber makes his way along the Emmons-Winthrop Route at Mount Rainier National Park.

off the face of the mountain.

Otis and Ryan were eulogized as heroes, and in the days following their deaths, officials at Mount Rainier insisted the two men were experienced and well-qualified climbing rangers. But as seasonal employees, not only were they paid a low wage, without job security or benefits, they also had no real training in the rigors of mountaineering on Rainier, the most heavily glaciated peak in the lower 48 states.

What training they had came in orientations, one-day sessions, or on the job. While they undoubtedly performed bravely and to the best of their abilities, perhaps another important element was that Otis and Ryan were simply young, full of adrenaline, and lacking in the seasoned judgment that comes with experience. But they were all the park had—or could afford.

Experience Is Not Cheap

In the aftermath of the fatal accident, Mount Rainier National Park is attempting to find, hire, and keep skilled rangers in its seasonal climbing positions. Doing so is a daunting task, and one with which many parks struggle.

“Our hands have been tied by a number of personnel regulations in reaching some of the really skilled people for critical positions,” says John Krambrink, the park’s chief ranger. “Mount Rainier has all the snow and ice challenges of Denali; Mount Everest expeditions train on Mount Rainier. It is not enough to have good climbing skills, like technical rock climbing. You need to have experience on this mountain to really climb it safely. And we have not in the past been able to screen people sufficiently in order to make sure they have those skills.”

Rangers at vertical parks throughout the National Park System generally say they face the same problems:

- ▲ More mountaineers are using the parks, and they are less self-sufficient
- ▲ It is easier than ever for climbers to call for help, thanks to cellular phones and radios, so demand for rescue and other services is rising

A fatal accident at Mount Rainier National Park has forced the Park Service to re-evaluate a policy that allowed relatively inexperienced rangers to serve on one of the most demanding mountains in the country.

BY HAL CLIFFORD

SOMETIME ON THE night of August 12, 1995, National Park Service rangers Todd Otis and Sean Ryan fell to their deaths on the icy slopes of Mount Rainier. The accident happened as they were climbing to rescue John Craver, a California mountaineer who had broken his ankle in a fall earlier that day. The rangers were young—22 and 23, respectively—and inexperienced, considering the demands 14,411-foot Rainier places on climbers.

The tragedy was the worst rescue disaster in Mount Rainier National Park’s history, yet to some observers, the accident was the inevitable cost of doing business in an age when the Na-

tional Park Service is being asked to do more with less.

Climbing Beyond Their Abilities

Ryan and Otis set out from Camp Schurman on a night climb, determined to reach Craver, who was alone and—they believed—at risk of freezing to death. They were the park personnel closest to Craver, and rescue manager Bill Larson, at park headquarters in Tahoma Woods, agreed they should go immediately.

Ryan, a first-year seasonal climbing ranger, had 36 hours of rescue training and had climbed Rainier about ten times; Otis, a volunteer with the Student Conservation Association, had climbed Mount Rainier once and had

received 16 hours of orientation.

The rangers’ fall was not witnessed by others, but a National Park Service board of inquiry concluded that the men made a number of technical errors while climbing Emmons Glacier.

Otis was climbing with a maladjusted crampon. After several hours, he apparently stopped next to Ryan to try to fix the problem. They were standing on a steep slope, made slick and dangerous by a band of ice left by a recent storm. Somehow, one man fell and began sliding down the ice. The other probably tried to hold him by sinking his crampons and ice ax into the mountain, but they had 60 feet of slack rope between them. When the first man reached the end of the rope, he pulled the second

▲ Congressionally mandated changes in how rangers are compensated have squeezed budgets that are essentially flat, forcing managers to cut seasonal ranger positions

▲ They cannot pay seasonal rangers enough.

The one exception to at least part of this litany has been the nation’s premier mountaineering park, Denali National Park in Alaska. Some of the world’s best mountaineers sign on for rescue duty at a 14,200-foot camp on Denali’s 20,320-foot peak. “We have the highest peak in North America, which attracts not only skilled climbers, but those people who want to do this kind of work for a living and prefer to do it in the best place possible,” says J.D. Swed, South District Ranger for Denali.

Rangers for All Seasons

Because the technical skills required at Denali are so specific to the job, Swed can circumvent the Park Service’s cumbersome hiring process to get the best-qualified people into jobs as climbing rangers. Most parks, including Mount Rainier, must hire seasonal rangers off the top of a “register,” which is a numerically scored rating. Applicants rate their own skills, and may receive bonus points for attributes, such as veteran’s status, that have no bearing on their ability to perform a technical job.

“The people with snow and ice climbing experience might be well down in the register and unreachable,” says Mount Rainier’s Krambrink.

Many of the most experienced workers are interested in full-time, not seasonal, employment. And the pool of qualified applicants for seasonal, technical positions—not only mountaineers, but law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians, and scuba divers—is diminishing.

Attaining full-time status within the Park Service is something few people have the time or the patience to endure. A full-time climbing ranger, says NPCA’s Pacific Northwest Regional Director Phil Pearl, has probably had to knit together nine or ten “seasonal” positions before earning full-time status. “They might work at Olympic part of the year and then go south and work in Grand Canyon, linking the seasons to-

RESCUE Continued

gether to be engaged for a full year," says Pearl. "We are not talking about a large number of people who are so devoted to the Park Service that they are willing to put in nine or ten years doing this to get a full-time position."

Curt Sauer, chief ranger at Olympic National Park in Washington, says, "I do see a problem recruiting employees who already have background in backcountry management and taking care

of themselves in the backcountry." During the summer of 1995, three of Sauer's seasonal rangers became lost or were injured.

"If you want experience and quality, and you cannot pay for it, you're never going to get it," says Peter Lewis, executive director of the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) in Golden, Colorado. "The [person] who has lots of climbing experience and is a Wilderness First Responder and has good crevasse experience isn't

going to do it for \$8 an hour." (As a seasonal employee, Ryan was earning about \$8.85 an hour; Otis was paid \$10 a day as a volunteer.)

As a result of changes following the deaths of Otis and Ryan, Mount Rainier has reclassified the park's full-time lead climbing ranger position to pay about \$4,000 more annually. Krambrink says he would like to be able to hire seasonal rangers at around \$12.25 an hour, if he can find the money. But cost increases, coupled with essentially flat budgets, have left no significant money to hire skilled seasonal employees.

"We [haven't had] enough money to hire an adequate seasonal staff for the last few years," Krambrink says. "You're asking these people to risk their lives, and they're being paid less than some people who are flipping burgers."

The Park Service also has no money to train the seasonal employees it hires, says William Sanders, Ranger Careers Manager in the Ranger Activities Division of the National Park Service. "What you're asking a seasonal [employee] to do is essentially self-train and self-develop, because the parks have virtually no ability to train them," says Sanders, who is developing a new policy on hiring and paying seasonal rangers.

Paying to Climb

In an effort to address these problems and to bolster funding, both Denali and Mount Rainier began charging climbers a fee in 1995.

Mount Rainier collects \$15 per mountaineer (\$25 for a season pass). In 1996, the park brought in \$82,000, which paid for nine climbing rangers, six more than the park could have hired without the fee. Denali charges \$150 per climber, which raises about \$160,000 annually.

Park managers say the fees are necessary because of the increasing number of mountaineers using the parks. As many as 10,000 people attempt Rainier's summit annually, a tenfold increase from the 1960s. Many of the newer climbers know little about the wilderness and rely on technology to get them out of trouble. Portable telephones give visitors the impression that help is just a call away. At Mount Rainier, climbers have used cellu-



CLIFF LEIGHT

The National Park Service plans to change its seasonal hiring policy in an attempt to attract more rangers who are expert at crossing crevasses.

lar phones in lieu of a map. One climber reached an area in the park and simply telephoned headquarters to ask where to go next.

At both Denali and Mount Rainier national parks, the fees have brought howls of protest from climbers who believe they are being singled out unfairly. "Why not educate the public, and keep less experienced people out of there?" asks AMGA's Lewis. "[The Park Service is] reacting to a symptom. If more people continue to get into the sport and they continue to take the sport less and less seriously, five years from now [the Park Service is] going to come back and say, 'Well, Rainier needs 200 seasonals, and they just can't fund [the positions].'"

But climbers are not responsible for the majority of search-and-rescue costs, according to John E. 'Jed' Williamson, a board member of the American Alpine Club and editor of the annual book *Accidents in North American Mountaineering*, the bible of rescue statistics. "The percentage of search-and-rescue time in the parks for climbing is around 7 percent," says Williamson, who adds that most searches and rescues involve hikers, picnickers, and other visitors.

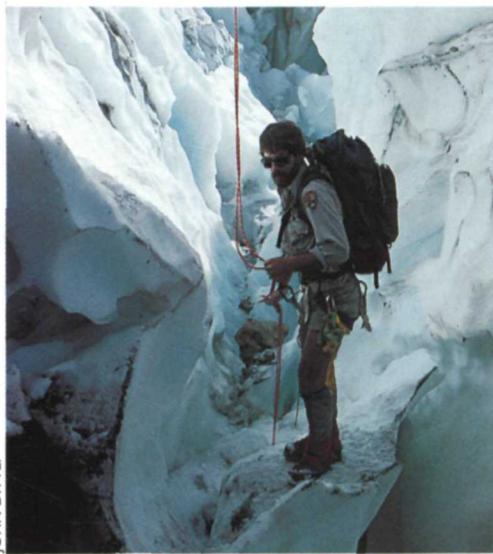
Although climbers may be responsible for a small percentage of rescues, maintaining high-altitude equipment is not cheap. Denali, for instance, has a high-altitude rescue helicopter on call to the tune of \$240,000 a year. The park also maintains medical and ranger support at 14,200 feet.

Park officials say one of the dangers in charging a use fee for climbing is that the less experienced mountaineers, who already view technology as paramount to experience, may perceive the fee as "rescue insurance." Some foreign climbers, who are more accustomed to paying for this sort of insurance, may also view the fee as a rescue guarantee. In Europe, for instance, private rescue insurance promises a speedy helicopter evacuation from almost anywhere in the Alps.

Some mountaineers suggest that both climbing fees and the services they are used to support should be



GLENN RANDALL



JOHN DITTU

TOP: Rescue workers at Denali National Park change oxygen bottles for an overcome climber. ABOVE: A climbing ranger makes his way through a crevasse at North Cascades National Park.

eliminated from the national parks altogether. Michael Kennedy, the publisher of *Climbing Magazine*, maintains that the National Park Service should close its permanent high camp on Denali, do away with the standby helicopter, and prohibit radios among climbing parties because the equipment fosters a false sense of security.

Wave of the Future

But Kennedy's opinion is not shared by everyone. NPCA's Pearl believes fees for climbing are just the beginning, given the cost-cutting mood in Washington, D.C. He also thinks that the money could be used more creatively than simply applying it to a few more seasonal positions.

"The Park Service could use the funds to pay for two or three full-time climbing rangers, whose job it would be to organize and regularly train teams of 'volunteers,'" he says. "Those volunteers could be called upon at any time to help in a rescue and would be paid for the time they are involved in that rescue. It would be similar to a rescue squad under the supervision of a paramedic. The Park Service wouldn't be paying for the rescue team full-time, but the team would be trained and ready at a moment's notice."

Rainier's Krambrink predicts that "entrepreneurial" behavior by park managers, including charging user groups such as climbers, will spread to other parks. In fact, with authorization from Congress, the National Park Service is increasing entrance and use fees at 47 sites this year. The Park Service hopes to use the money to improve recreation services and make infrastructure repairs.

Such fees may be necessary if new policies on hiring and paying seasonal workers are put into place, which could happen as early as this summer.

These changes are, in the end, a reaction to the symptom of a larger problem—a lack of funding to the Park Service in general. Ryan's and Otis' tragic accident should serve as an alarm that the Park Service does not have the money to pay for research, manage natural resources, or fix potholes—let alone direct cellular-phone-carrying climbers without a map.

If the parks are to find ways to pay for services the public wants, that may mean charging for them.

HAL CLIFFORD is a Colorado writer and the author of *The Falling Season: Inside the Life and Death Drama of Aspen's Mountain Rescue Team* (HarperCollins 1995).

A
PATH
made of
GOLD



DESCRIBED BY ONE traveler as the worst trail this side of hell, the Chilkoot Trail nevertheless attracted thousands of dreamers rushing from Alaska to the Klondike gold fields in British Columbia a century ago. The fabled route weaves for 33 miles over treacherous terrain from the Dyea tidewater to Lake Bennett in the Canadian high country.

Once a Native American trade route, the passage is now preserved as Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in the United States and Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site in Canada. Despite its difficult terrain and severe weather conditions—which can bring snow and sleet during the summer and up to one inch of rain in 24 hours—the trail lures more than 3,000 travelers each season with its gold-rush history and wilderness scenery.

One of only three glacier-free passages through the range of mountains that follow the inland coast of southeast Alaska, the Chilkoot served as a vital link between Alaska and Canada for hundreds of years before the gold rush began. But as the 19th century progressed, more and more prospectors and adventurers traversed it. They considered the trail—even though a difficult and dangerous course—an easier and more affordable alternative to other passages.

The Stampede Begins

In August 1896, miners prospecting near the Klondike River in the Yukon Territories struck the first rich deposits of gold. By the next summer, hordes of gold-hungry people from around the world began descending on Dyea for passage to Lake Bennett. From the lake, travelers could sail to the Yukon River for a 500-mile journey into Klondike country. (Today, Dyea, which is near Skagway,

LEFT: The Chilkoot Trail is a challenging hike, but the history and scenery make the effort worthwhile.

Thousands of prospectors followed the Chilkoot Trail from Alaska to the Klondike gold fields in Canada. The trail, which today offers hikers a glimpse of history, celebrates its centennial this year.

BY JEANNIE WOODRING



ED KING

The Chilkoot, once a Native American trade route, was a vital link between Alaska and Canada for years.

is a destination for cruise ships.)

Few gold seekers came prepared for the rigors of the Chilkoot. Even today, the stretch from Dyea to the summit crosses the rain-swollen Taiya River, twisted underbrush, and steep slopes including a 45-degree-angle, boulder-covered stretch known as the “Golden Stairs.” The trail from the summit to the lake poses similar obstacles. Rain storms smack the route from summer through fall, and deep snow covers the high elevations most of the year.

A century ago, winter snowstorms buried the trail, and travelers succumbed to hypothermia and avalanches. Those who survived faced further threats of starvation, illness, and sometimes despair or even murder at the hands of fellow prospectors whose nerves were strained to the limit by dreams of gold

and the realities of the trail.

But the promise of riches won out over fear. During the winter of 1897–1898, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people—stampedeers—passed through Dyea to attempt the Chilkoot. To control the crowds, Canada’s North West Mounted Police set up a checkpoint at the summit in February 1898 and enforced a “ton of goods” rule. To enter Canada, each traveler had to bring enough supplies to ensure a year’s survival in the rugged north. The combined load of food, tents, and equipment could weigh as much as 2,000 pounds.

To support the growing number of prospectors, a network of communities offering everything from freight-hauling services to saloons blossomed along the trail. Finnegan’s Point, nearly five miles into the trail, contained 75 tents in the fall of 1897, along with a blacksmith shop, saloon, and restaurant. Canyon City, eight miles from Dyea, had a population of 1,500 by May 1898 and included 24 businesses. Sheep Camp, nearly four miles from the summit, became known as the “City of Tents.” At its peak in 1898, Sheep Camp boasted more than 50 businesses and 8,000 stampedeers.

From the summit north to Lake Bennett, stampedeers found more towns and tent cities. Lindeman City, on the shores of Lindeman Lake, where prospectors built boats and set sail toward Lake Bennett, held 4,000 residents in 1898. The spring of that year found nearly 20,000 stampedeers in Bennett City, trail’s end for the Chilkoot and the nearby White Pass Trail from Skagway.

The overwhelming flood of humanity took its toll. Old-growth trees fell to the ax to fuel wood stoves and to build houses and foundations for roads. In late May 1898, the crowd at Bennett cut down enough trees to build 7,000 to 9,000 boats to cross the lake and travel down the Yukon River.

Even today, leftover equipment and supplies litter the trail, evoking those prospectors who, either broke or dis-



CHILKOOT *Continued*

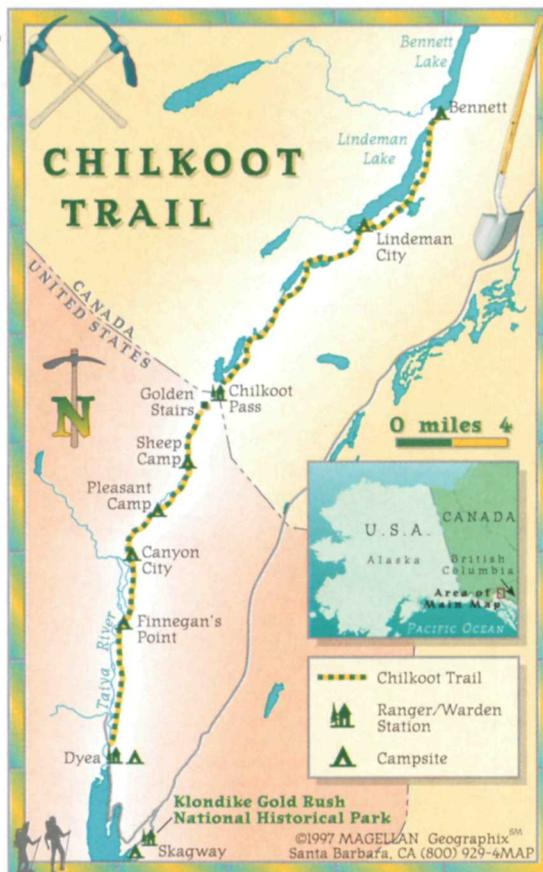
heartened, abandoned their dreams of striking it rich.

Boom, Bust, Renewal

Traffic over the trail stopped in 1899 when the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway extended a rail line from Skagway to Lake Bennett. Practically overnight, the boomtowns vanished. From Dyea to Bennett, entrepreneurs left behind hundreds of empty buildings and tons of scattered, rusting equipment.

For the next 60 years, nature reclaimed the Chilkoot. Since no road reached Dyea until 1948, only a handful of hikers sought out the trail; even fewer struggled through the entire journey.

The trail was abandoned but not forgotten. As early as the 1930s, Skagway residents sought to preserve their gold-rush heritage, even sending the idea of a



national park to the National Park Service (NPS).

In May 1961, the state of Alaska organized a work party to clean up the trail. By 1963, state crews had cleared to the summit, built cabins at Canyon City and Sheep Camp, and installed a cable bridge across the Taiya River.

By 1967, both NPS and its Canadian counterpart, Parks Canada, came forward to retrace gold-rush footsteps. NPS proposed a plan to manage the trail, part of the White Pass route, and a few acres in Skagway. In 1976, Congress passed a bill establishing Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, which besides the trail includes a small site in Seattle, Washington, where prospectors began their journeys to Alaska. Parks Canada acquired parts of the Chilkoot Trail area and additional historic sites in Dawson City and the Klondike gold fields.

The Yukon Territorial Govern-

LEFT: St. Andrew's Church overlooks Lake Bennett, from which travelers began boat trips to the gold fields.

ment in Whitehorse also embarked on restoration efforts. In 1968, Canada set up a work camp for prisoners at Lindeman City, and the crews began to clear the trail toward Bennett and back toward the summit. By 1969, the entire Canadian half of the Chilkoot lay open.

By the early 1970s, the original trail had been reconstructed into a 33-mile route. Along the passage, work crews created ten designated campsites and set up historical markers. The parks agencies also established a shared management plan.

Park rangers worked out of stations at Dyea and Sheep Camp on the American side and at Lindeman City on the Canadian side. They patrolled the trail to maintain the campsites, ensure preservation and hiker safety, and offer historical perspectives.

Hikers responded enthusiastically to the restoration efforts. By the mid-1970s, as many as 1,500 people visited in a summer, says Christine Hedgecock, park warden for Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site and a 21-year veteran of the trail's restoration efforts.

Today's hikers, Hedgecock notes, number more than 3,500 in the summer months and "include families of three generations.... And our hikers are a very international group." Statistics for 1996 show that 40 percent of the hikers are American, 40 percent are Canadian, and 20 percent are from other countries.

Preservation Remains a Challenge

More than 50,000 hikers have completed the trail in the last 30 years, exceeding the number of gold-rush prospectors who crossed the Chilkoot a century ago. Despite the vigilance of both park services, this new stampede presents a preservation challenge.

Though federal, state, and provincial laws prohibit removal of artifacts from the trail, hikers sometimes walk away with historic relics—such as old tools, clothing, or household items. These thefts hamper the efforts of both park agencies to complete cultural resource surveys along the historic corridor and

rob everyone of a piece of history.

But even conscientious hikers take their toll. Hard hit by heavy rains and winter winds and snow, the fragile countryside along the trail is easily eroded by the tread of hiking boots. "The damage to the trail hasn't been deliberate," says Clay Alderson, superintendent for Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, "but where we



FRED HIRSCHMANN



GEORGE MATZ

Reminders of the Klondike gold rush, and the hardships it caused, are found all along the trail.

used to have three-foot mudholes, we now have five-foot mudholes."

Besides theft and erosion, land-ownership issues and budget cuts pose challenges for park managers. Native Americans and Canadian First Nations have made claims to areas surrounding the trail—owned by the state of Alaska.

The Park Service operates the trail on

a memorandum of understanding with the state, private claimants, and the city of Skagway so that the public has the right of passage along the Chilkoot, says Alderson. When passing through these private holdings, hikers encounter NPS signs warning them to stay on the trail.

To cope with the prospect of fewer government dollars to maintain the remote trail, which requires ongoing bridge rebuilding and reconstruction, the park agencies have debated using permits to limit the traffic and establishing fees to pay for maintenance and resource protection. In 1996, Hedgecock says, Parks Canada surveyed previous users of the trail and found that many said they would be willing to pay for the experience.

And so, this year hikers traversing the Chilkoot will encounter both fees and permits. Parks Canada has initiated a limit of 50 people a day crossing the summit. Hikers will pay \$35 per person to use the Canadian section of the trail as well as a \$10 reservation fee. Parks Canada will use money collected from fees to maintain designated campsites along the trail.

To date, NPS has not begun a fee system but requires hikers to obtain a free permit at the Dyea ranger station before starting out on the trail. "I think we do need to watch closely the fee and limit systems that Parks Canada is implementing and see whether or not we will be using a similar system on our portion of the trail," says Alderson.

The fee system pales when compared with the ton-of-goods rule encountered by prospectors a century ago. Yet, like their predecessors, today's hikers still travel a tough trail, see lush scenery highlighted by different ecosystems, and enjoy the camaraderie of an international crowd as well as a fresh glimpse of gold-rush history.

"Finishing the Chilkoot is one of the most difficult things you could ever do," says Alderson, who has hiked the trail ten times. "But the scenery and historical sense make this one of the most premier hiking experiences I can imagine."

JEANNIE WOODRING, a writer living in Alaska, hiked the Chilkoot in 1996.



The Parks Want You

Don your work clothes, roll up your sleeves, and volunteer at your favorite park.

BY M. KATHERINE HEINRICH

MORNING FOG LOOMS in the Marin Headlands north of San Francisco Bay. A dozen bleary-eyed volunteers double-check their supplies and load into vans for the long haul across the Golden Gate Bridge, through the Presidio, and past the lengthy stretches of Ocean Beach to Sweeney Ridge.

After nearly an hour's drive through the southern reaches of Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), a now-animated crew layered in colorful gear tumbles out at the day's first project site. A cold drizzle fails to dampen the lively banter among the volun-

teers—students, teachers, and retirees hailing from Britain, Germany, Japan, and the United States.

Led by Judd Howell, a research scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division (formerly the National Biological Service), the crew divides into teams and descends into the scrub below the ridge to check live traps. Dozens of shrews, voles, and deer mice are weighed and tagged as other volunteers check track plates for footprints left by these and larger animals. In the afternoon, teams plot transects and survey the vegetation in the area, warily noting the prevalence of

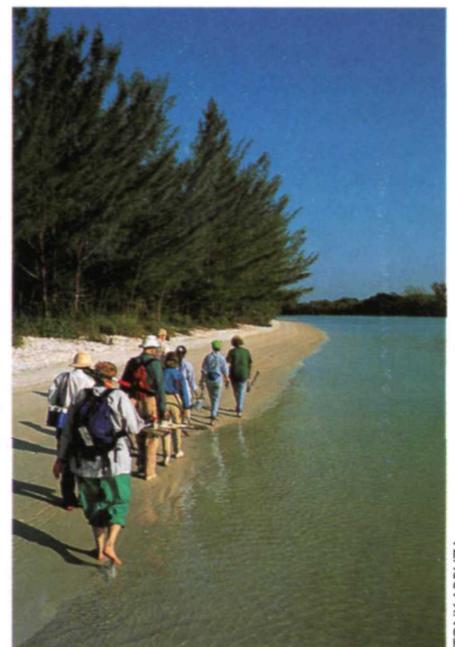
poison oak. Later that evening, crew members enter data into a geographic information system (GIS) under the supervision of Marcia Semenoff-Irving, a USGS Biological Resources Division scientist and GIS expert.

With the help of scores of Earthwatch volunteers over the last six years, the USGS scientists are completing a wildlife inventory at GGNRA, a 76,000-acre urban park with high concentrations of endangered species. In a time of maintenance backlogs and budget shortfalls across the National Park System, volunteers are pitching in on critical projects that would otherwise be



JEFF & ALEXA HENRY

Volunteers scan the horizon for bison at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and Montana. They are collecting information for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



TONY ARRUIZA

A crew of volunteers walks toward a work site near Everglades National Park in Florida.



A volunteer at Big Bend jots down information for a research project.

left undone. Through Earthwatch and other nonprofit organizations and the National Park Service's own Volunteers in Parks program, thousands of people of all ages are contributing vacations and other time to the legacy of the National Park System.

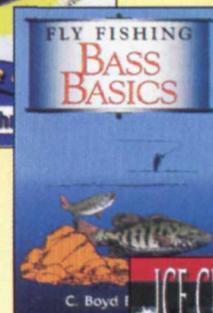
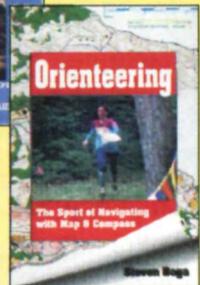
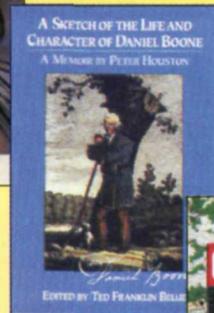
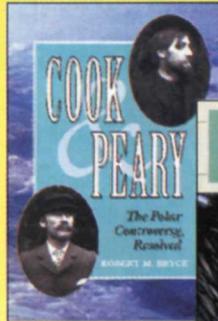
Volunteer Vacations

For a new twist on the working vacation, consider the American Hiking Society's (AHS) Volunteer Vacations. If you have a week or two to spare, AHS will put you to work rehabilitating and building trails through some of our most spectacular parklands. This year crews will take to the trails in Canyonlands National Park in Utah, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas, and other national parks across the country.

Trail work is challenging, exhilarating, and rewarding. A typical day will begin by 9 a.m. with raking, shoveling, clearing brush, trimming branches, or building and maintaining drainage structures. The day ends by 4 p.m. with a return to base camp, which might be a primitive backcountry site, an im-

M. KATHERINE HEINRICH, news editor of National Parks, spent two summers as an SCA volunteer.

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Earthwatch

The national parks are living laboratories replete with incomparable botanical, archaeological, and wildlife resources. Earthwatch gives the layperson a rare opportunity to contribute to the scientific body of knowledge about the parks by working alongside renowned scholars conducting research in parks across the nation.

Join Rolf Peterson, a wildlife biologist whose celebrated study of the predator-prey relationship of wolves



TONY ARRIZZA

Volunteers help the Park Service to remove non-native species.

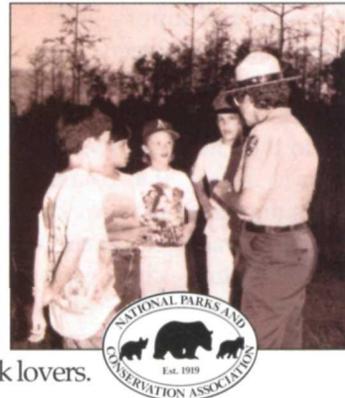
For Future Generations

Since 1919, NPCA has worked tirelessly to preserve priceless and irreplaceable treasures within the National Park System. One of NPCA's founders, Stephen Mather, and others of his generation had the foresight more than 75 years ago to take action to help save these sites that we all enjoy today.

When NPCA considers the task of preserving the parks for future generations, we know that charitable bequests from wills and other individual estate plans will play a vital role in future funding.

Perhaps you are giving all you feel you can afford on an annual basis but would like to do something extraordinary for your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. If so, we encourage you to take the time to make a will and include a bequest for NPCA among your other charitable interests.

By remembering NPCA in your will or trust, you can leave a legacy that lasts far beyond your lifetime, enriching the lives of future generations of park lovers.



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and moose in Isle Royale National Park dates to 1958. Volunteers search for moose bones in remote stretches of the ecologically isolated park, located off the Michigan shore in Lake Superior. The bones yield clues about a moose's age and health. These data, correlated with research on the wolf population and Isle Royale's flora, have led to new theories about the role of a predator in the food chain.

Earthwatch volunteers support park-based research by assisting scientists and scholars with data collection and analysis, and by underwriting the cost of the project. One- to two-week Earthwatch expeditions will be conducted this year in six other national parks, including Big Bend and Everglades. The cost for each participant ranges from \$595 to \$1,395. Contributions cover volunteers' food and lodging in addition to a share of the research expenses. Participants are responsible for travel to and from the research site.

Membership in Earthwatch, \$35 a year, is a prerequisite. Volunteers must

be at least 16 years old; an 87-year-old woman holds the record for participating in 44 expeditions. For information, write to: Earthwatch, 680 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02172; or call (800) 776-0188 or (617) 926-8200. Details are available on the Earthwatch web site: <http://www.earthwatch.org>.

SCA

You need not be a student to volunteer through the Student Conservation Association's (SCA) Resource Assistant program, but you should have a significant amount of time on your hands. Most of the positions last three months and span the busy summer season. You must be at least 18 years old to apply; each year SCA places volunteers of all ages in hundreds of positions in parks nationwide. This summer, SCA volunteers will tackle projects ranging from backcountry patrol in Gates of the Arctic National Park in Alaska to staffing a museum on Little Cranberry Island in Acadia National Park in Maine.

SCA and the host park cover volun-

teers' basic expenses. A travel grant covers the least expensive form of transportation to and from the area. Participants also receive a food allowance of about \$100 every two weeks. Each park provides volunteers with housing. Accommodations vary from tent camps to trailers to dormitories.

Each January, SCA releases a catalog of volunteer opportunities available for the summer and fall. A catalog of positions beginning in the winter and spring is available in July. To receive a catalog and application, send \$1 to: SCA, P.O. Box 550, Charlestown, NH 03603-0550. Contact SCA at this address or at (603) 543-1828 for more information about the Resource Assistant program and other volunteer opportunities, including programs for high school students and urban youth.

Volunteers in Parks

The Park Service's Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program deploys volunteers in virtually every unit of the National Park System. Last year about 77,000 VIPs



worked more than 3 million hours, devoting time and talent worth more than \$30 million to the parks.

Retired couples serve as campground hosts, teachers present outdoor education programs, and history buffs lead interpretive tours. Volunteers maintain park infrastructure and provide visitors with park information. Many VIPs work in a park in their neighborhood, while others travel across the country to spend the summer months working in a favorite park away from home. While some work full time, others work seasonally, or a few hours a week or month. Some volunteers devote their weekends to the park, while others staff facilities during the work week.

The 374 units in the park system present a wonderful variety of volunteer opportunities.

To receive a VIP information package, which includes a brochure, an application, and a list of parks and their addresses, write to: VIP Coordinator, NPS



CLIFF LEIGHT

Taking part in an archaeological dig is one of many ways to donate time.

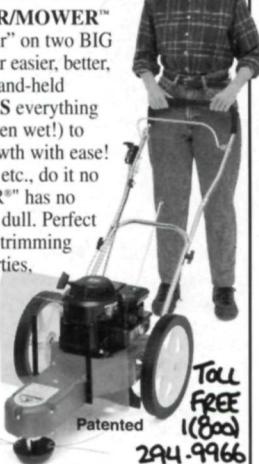
Director of Interpretation and Education, Suite 560, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127. Contact the VIP coordinator at the park or parks at

which you are interested in volunteering. A separate application describing your skills and interests should be submitted to each park.

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What Sort of Future?

The actions we take now—or neglect to take—will determine the quality or even the existence of the National Park System of tomorrow.

VIRGIL G. ROSE

MINUTES BEFORE Congress adjourned in early October, it passed the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, better known as the omnibus parks bill. The subsequent signing of the bill into law by President Clinton successfully capped years of effort to protect important pieces of our heritage, such as Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas, the Presidio in San Francisco, and the route of the Selma to Montgomery civil rights march in Alabama.

The omnibus parks bill, which contained more than 60 provisions affecting 41 states, was easily the largest public lands bill of the decade. NPCA's members, who contributed so much to the bill's success, should feel a great sense of accomplishment. Even as we celebrate, however, we should realize that much hard work lies ahead.

In three years, we will find ourselves, ready or not, hurtling into the 21st cen-

VIRGIL G. ROSE is chairman of NPCA's Board of Trustees.

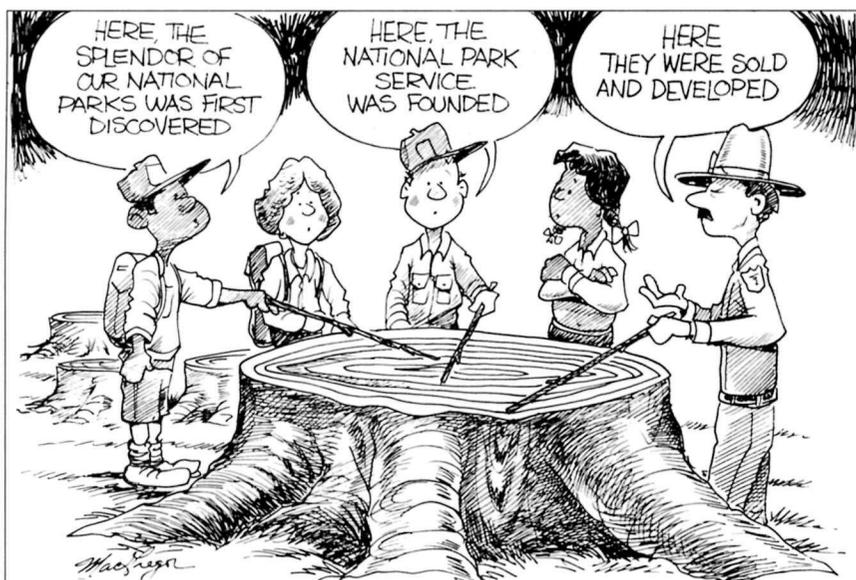
ture. Beginning a new century is a rare event for short-lived humans. It is a psychological milestone that allows us to stop and look back at how far we have come. More important, it offers the chance to think about where we want to go. For NPCA, the approach of a new century has encouraged us to

in history. On this path looms the possibility of the park system's demise. In this scenario, our country becomes more and more crowded and the development pressures on national parks grow to unprecedented levels. One by one, the parks are cut off from the national system. Many of them are closed,

sold to private interests. Of these, some are logged or mined or dammed. Others are turned into recreational theme parks. For instance, Gulf Islands National Seashore sprouts water slides and bumper cars.

A much brighter path leads to the second possible future. Here, similar forces are at work, but with very different results. As more and more undeveloped places are threat-

ened, our national parks are recognized as increasingly rare and valuable. People embrace the wisdom of enhancing their quality of life through preservation of pristine open spaces. Careless or thoughtless natural resource exploitation for short-term profit is relegated to the history books where it is studied as a prime example of social self-mutilation. At the same time, our cultural



DOUGLAS MACGREGOR

begin charting a course that will help steer the national parks through what we see as the dangerous shoals of the future.

As NPCA board chairman, I see two possible visions for the National Park System in the next century. One vision leads us down a dark path where people are allowed to exploit our national treasures for a relatively brief moment

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parks become more and more treasured as the events they commemorate recede farther into the past. This is the future that NPCA wants to help bring about through its 21st Century Project.

NPCA plans to compile a list of ideas that can be completed or at least started by the year 2000. Although the effort is still in its early stages, it will stress education, inspiration, and advocacy projects that benefit the national parks. The 21st Century Project recognizes that while America needs to look ahead to the next century, we also need a secure link to our past. We need the historic context that the National Park System provides.

I believe that in the 21st century our national parks can benefit us in ways that they never have before. For the parks to play that role, however, we must first ensure their survival. And then, we have to help them function as effectively as possible. That is the defining feature of NPCA's new 21st Century Project.

I write this column with the hope that our descendants 200 years from now will be inspired by the existence of a firm social and political commitment to the growth and health of the National Park System. Our commitment to our natural and cultural heritage will be a symbol of our love for future generations.

If we are going to achieve a revolution in how the national parks are perceived, we need to start building consensus now. Briefly, we must begin to answer a few basic questions: What are our eternal values? How will we each take responsibility for our own actions? What do we want to pass along to our descendants seven generations from now?

Any attempt to describe "eternal" values is bound to be loaded with pitfalls. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest a couple that a majority of us might be able to support. The first value is the survival of the "family of man," which includes:

▲ Survival of the self—all people are fundamentally concerned with main-

taining their own existence.

▲ Survival of the family—the endurance of the group contributes to the success of the individual.

▲ Survival of the species—we all share a deep, genetic drive to promote the well-being of the species.

The second eternal value is our hunger for spirituality—the recognition that we need truth, beauty, ethics, and art. Naturalist and writer John Muir said it best: “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike.”

This last concept has historically been the one most favored by the land conservation movement, and through it conservationists have gained a great deal. The National Park System itself is largely the creation of that spiritual ethic. Unfortunately, we have neglected to emphasize the “family of man.” That oversight has cost us dearly, as the success of the Wise Use movement demonstrates.

How can we correct our error? First and foremost, we must communicate that the health of the environment, and especially our national parks, is a measure of how well we have fulfilled our obligation to our descendants. That obligation requires us to preserve the richness of life with which our world is blessed. Clean air and clean water, wild places to renew the spirit and satisfy the soul.... These are not luxuries, or niceties we can live without. They are vital requirements for life—for us, for our families, and for those who will come after us.

NPCA’s 21st Century Project has already received dozens of promising suggestions from members, staff, trustees, and outside contributors. We will implement them with the understanding that ultimately history will judge us by our actions, not by our intentions. The 21st Century Project is designed to put into action a strategy that will provide a strong foundation for parks into the 23rd century and beyond. Our children’s children will have a National Park System which is an instrument to ensure the survival of the family of man and nourish its need for spirituality. 

COMING UP

National parks

Escalante and
the Antiquities Act

Amphibian Decline

Vanishing Cultural
Treasures

The Outer Banks of
North Carolina

*“The Yosemite, the Yellowstone, the
Grand Canyon are National
Properties in which Every
Citizen has a Vested Interest;*



*Stephen Mather (foreground) pictured with
Yellowstone Superintendent Horace Albright
(right), c. 1920*

*They Belong as Much to the Man of
Massachusetts, of Michigan, of Florida,
as They do to the People of California,
of Wyoming, of Arizona.”*

Stephen Tyng Mather,
First National Park Service director (1917–1929)
and a NPCA founder

Stephen Mather was among a handful of visionaries who were the national parks’ first trustees. Now NPCA invites you to advance your role in protecting the parks through membership in a growing group...

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BY SARAH D. WEES

Tallgrass Recognition

► On April 9, NPCA will honor former Kansas Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, Rep. Jan Meyers (R-Kans.), and Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kans.) for their successful efforts in establishing the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the Flint Hills of Kansas. NPCA board members Dolph Simmons, Jr., and Robin Winks are co-chairing the dinner tribute committee, and all proceeds from the event will go to support Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. Jim Lehrer of *News Hour* with Jim Lehrer is hosting the annual dinner, which will be held in Washington, D.C. Former Kansas Senator Bob Dole, Kansas Gov. Bill Graves, and Retired Gen. Colin Powell have been invited to offer tributes to the honorees.

March for Parks

► Join NPCA's March for Parks to celebrate Earth Day April 18 through 22. More than 1,000 marches are expected to take place nationally and internationally. March for Parks will kick off National Park Week, sponsored by the National

Park Service. Thanks to the generous support of our corporate sponsors, all money raised stays at the local level to fund park projects. NPCA wishes to thank its 1997 March for Parks corporate sponsors:

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For information on National Park Week, taking place April 21-27, contact Sue Waldron at the National Park Service, (202) 208-5477, or the national park nearest you.

Survey Says...

► NPCA has received more than 200 responses to its park survey (see NPCA Notes, November/December 1996). The findings, to date, are as follows:

1. Ninety-eight percent of respondents believe the parks need more money. Forty-three percent think the money should come from tax dollars, 79 percent believe it should come from higher park entrance fees, 74 percent think corpora-

tions doing business within the parks should bear the burden, and 12 percent would consider another source.

2. About seven-eighths, would like to see the National Park Service spend this money on protecting plants, animals, and historic objects compared with an eighth who believe the funds should be spent on accommodating visitors.

3. Readers rated the protection of plants, animals, and historic objects in the parks as most "deserving" of funding. Building new roads, hotels, and restaurants was given the lowest marks.

4. About three-quarters believe that cars should be replaced with public transportation in some national parks, while a quarter disagreed with this idea.

Alaska Director Honored

► NPCA's efforts in securing congressional approval for a land exchange agreement in Gates of the Arctic National Park were recognized in a ceremony in the Eskimo Village of Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska. Alaska Regional Director Chip Dennerlein received an award for his help in developing

and pursuing the agreement, which addresses changes to wilderness boundaries, use of all-terrain vehicles for subsistence (especially caribou hunting), and public access to Native-owned lands.

Victory for Capital Park

► After more than ten years of debate, the Washington, D.C., City Council voted 12-1 against the construction of a freeway across National Park Service lands. Last November, NPCA Cultural Diversity Manager Iantha Gantt-Wright joined more than 90 individuals and organizations to testify against the Barney Circle Freeway before the Public Works Committee.

The roadway would have destroyed 19.2 acres of Anacostia Park, a National Capital park, and caused increased pollution, noise, and traffic in the surrounding community.

Scenic America

► NPCA is co-sponsoring Scenic America's National Leadership Training Confer-

continued on page 53



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NPCA NOTES

ence, "O, Say, Can You See...Leadership for a Scenic Century," to be held May 11-14 in Baltimore, Maryland. The seminar, with keynote speaker Charles Kuralt, is the second part of Scenic America's 18-month effort to launch a national scenic conservation movement made up of citizens determined to stem obvious deterioration within their communities. For more information, please call (202) 833-4300.

Annual Report

► NPCA has released its 1996 Annual Report, and as NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard and Chairman Virgil G. Rose acknowledge

in their annual letter, "NPCA's citizen activists, through their contributions, calls, letters, and commitment, were able to make a world of difference." One of the main victories for the organization was the passage of the omnibus parks bill which resulted in the creation of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in the Flint Hills of Kansas, NPCA's longtime priority.

According to the audited financial statements for the fiscal year, 76 percent of NPCA's budget goes to its programs. For a free copy of the Annual Report, write to: NPCA, Dept. AR, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. See the box at right for NPCA's e-mail and Web addresses.



NPCA Online

► NPCA is developing online contents on national parks for children. Anyone with a childhood development or education background interested in assisting with this special project on AOL can contact NPCA at natparks@aol.com.

▲ Sign up for NPCA's electronic activist list and receive the *ParkWatcherFlash* newsletter by sending a message to npcan@npca.org.

▲ Test your knowledge of national parks with the educational trivia contest on the NPCA AOL site.

▲ Participate in live chats with park superintendents and other experts. For a schedule of upcoming chats on birding in the parks, turn to page 33.

▲ Help NPCA devote a greater share of its resources to the parks by joining or renewing your membership online.

▲ To receive NPCA's free AOL starter kit, call (800) NAT-PARK.

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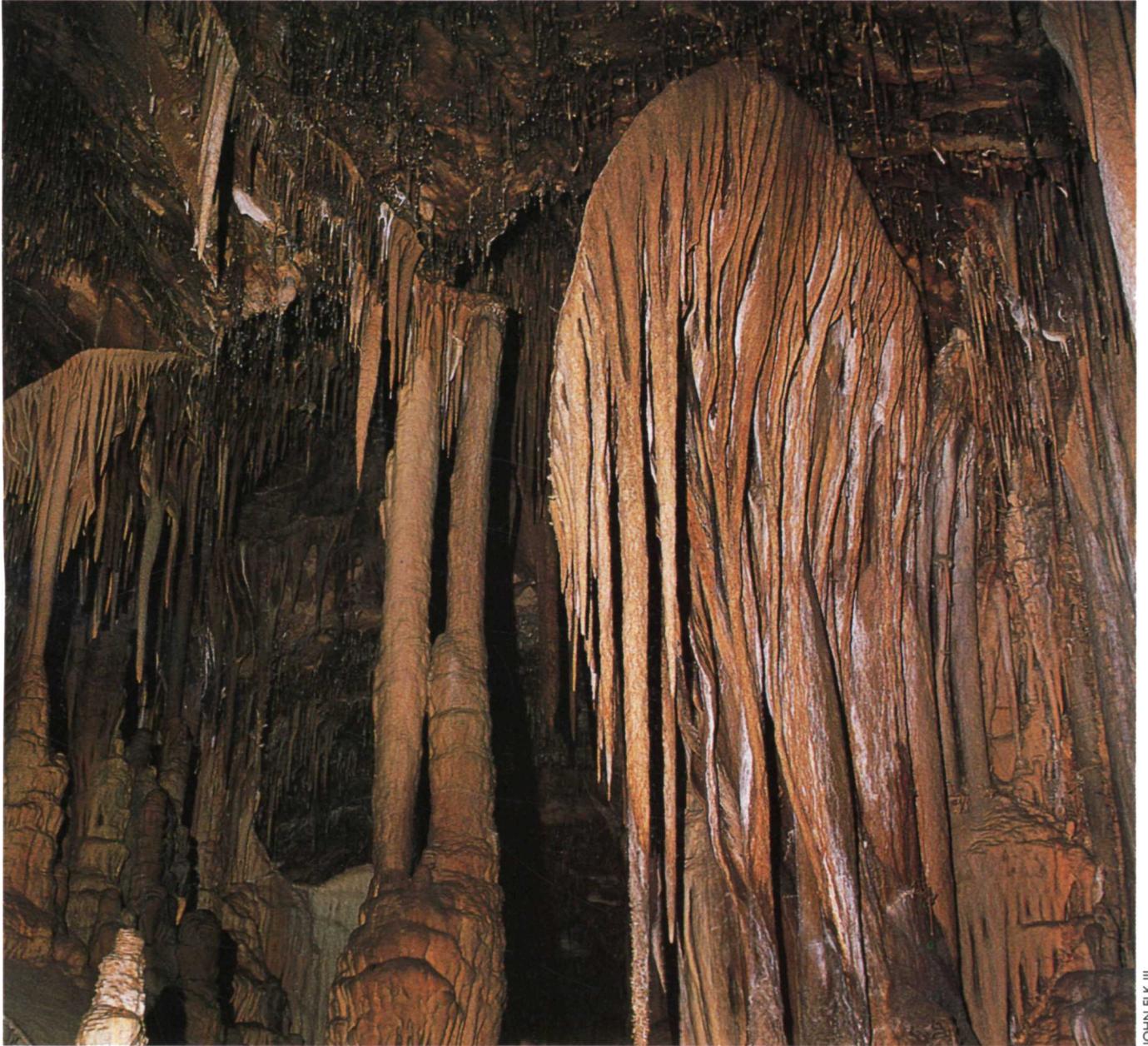
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