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The National Parks  
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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999

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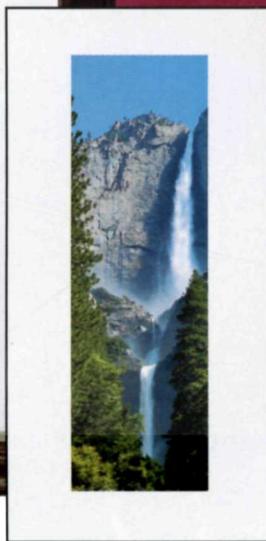
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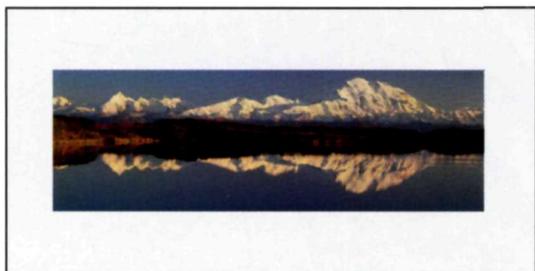
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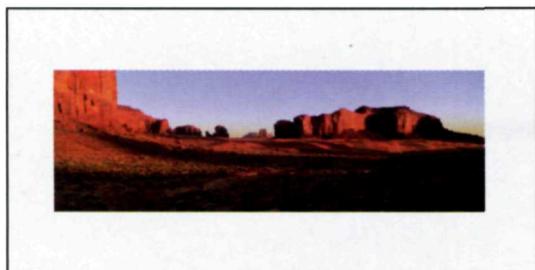
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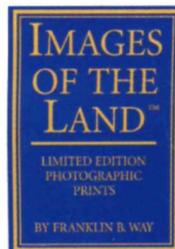
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# National parks

Vol. 73, No. 9-10  
September/October 1999

The Magazine of the National Parks  
and Conservation Association

## FEATURES

**22 Promised Land**  
Park advocates believe Congress has failed to make crucial wilderness designations, and the Park Service has fallen short in its attempts to manage these wild places. But a presidential initiative may reinvigorate an appreciation for our wild lands.

By Todd Wilkinson

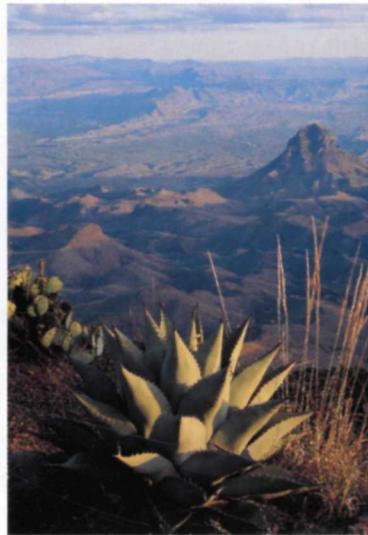
**26 The Art of Appreciation**  
Although paintings constitute a small portion of the Park Service's cultural objects, they represent a significant challenge to the agency, which must preserve these works of art without the funds to do the job.

By Bess Zarafonitis Stroh

**30 By Leaps and Bounds**  
An exploding population of white-tailed deer has denuded fields and reduced the number of woodland nesting birds in some places along the East Coast. Controlling the herd size of this popular animal presents a challenge for park managers at 50 national park units.

By Connie Toops

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**COVER:** A view of the Chisos Mountains at Big Bend National Park. The park contains about 500,000 acres that have been proposed as wilderness. Photo by David Muench.



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## OUTLOOK

# Funding Solutions

Two of NPCA's national programs seek to close the funding gap for the National Park Service.

**T**HE STRUGGLES in Kosovo left me, at times, feeling little hope for our world. If ethnic hatred can become that deeply seated, what are our chances of rising to a more civilized society?

I had cause to think about Kosovo and its refugees on a recent trip to Ellis Island, which is part of the Statute of Liberty National Monument and one of the 378 units in our National Park System. Refugees fleeing starvation and other hardships passed through Ellis Island during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ellis Island serves, in part, as a reminder that although the United States is not perfect, the country has over the years offered hope to thousands of people from all over the globe, a hope that is represented and preserved through the National Park System.

But the ability of our park system to remain a beacon of hope is not a given. We must remind ourselves that these special places will not remain so if we do not preserve them. For example, the south end of Ellis Island requires an additional several hundred million dollars to restore the buildings that once served as a hospital. A public-private partnership may be formed to raise the money necessary for repairs. Restoring the buildings is an admirable goal, but NPCA's experience has shown that while many of these partnerships provide essential assistance, some are in fact—and unfortunately—destructive to the purposes of the parks.

To help ensure the success of these



SCOTT SUCHMAN

alliances, NPCA has begun a program to review the partnerships created by the Park Service. From the review, NPCA will craft guidelines by which the Park Service, Congress, and the public can evaluate—and improve—these partnerships.

Aside from the catastrophic need of places such as Ellis Island, parks throughout the system suffer from chronic underfunding. Whether the lack of funds means that an antiquated sewage system at Yellowstone spills waste into lakes or forces a superintendent to protect one resource at the expense of another, the size of budget increases over the past few years has not kept pace with need. To help ensure that each park receives the money it needs to adequately support the 378 units, NPCA has launched the Business Plan Initiative. Seventeen graduate students from leading business and policy schools are working in 12 parks to draft plans that will clearly communicate to the American public and Congress where the funding for each park has been going and what the true costs are of appropriately running these special places.

Both the partnership review and the Business Plan Initiative are part of NPCA's nationwide effort to address and resolve fundamental challenges facing our national parks. It is up to all of us, and to NPCA in particular, to protect and enhance these beacons of hope.

**Thomas C. Kiernan**  
President



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# National parks

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**PRODUCTION MANAGER:** BRIGGS CUNNINGHAM

**ASSIGNMENT EDITOR:** MARILOU REILLY

**NEWS EDITOR:** ELIZABETH G. DAERR

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:** WILLIAM A. UPDIKE

**DESIGN CONSULTANTS:** SUE E. DODGE AND INGRID GEHLE

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

**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, extension 215. 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 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 to improve these irreplaceable resources.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE:** A critical component in NPCA's park protection programs is 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.

For more information on the activist network, contact our grassroots coordinator, extension 222.

**HOW TO DONATE:** 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), contact our Membership Department, extension 215. For information about Trustees for the Parks (\$1,000 and above), bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 146 or 243.

**HOW TO REACH US:** We can be reached the following ways: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; by phone: 1-800-NAT-PARK; by e-mail: npca@npca.org; and <http://www.npca.org/> on the World Wide Web.



# Appreciation

**N**EARLY 30 YEARS ago, a vandal took a hammer to Michelangelo's *Pieta*, a marble rendition of the Madonna holding the body of Christ on display in Rome, Italy. Although the horror the scene evoked may not have been as great as that evinced by the visions of a war-ravaged country or the sudden death of an admired celebrity, the result was still a hard emotional blow. How could anyone intentionally try to destroy in just a few seconds what had taken an artist months if not years to create? The fragility of life, in that instance, was represented in art.

Even though no one is deliberately seeking to destroy the paintings that are kept by the National Park Service, art by the likes of Thomas Moran, Albert Bierstadt, and Charles Willson Peale could be just as irretrievably lost if they are not properly safeguarded by their custodians.

As you will learn from reading Bess Zarafonitis Stroh's article, beginning on page 26, the National Park Service faces a difficult challenge in preserving the small but invaluable collection of paintings and other art contained within the park system.

Part of the agency's challenge has to do with the significance of the art to a given site. The paintings bestowed upon Henry Wadsworth Longfellow are as important to the story told at his home in Massachusetts as the poet's written works.

In addition to the ceaseless challenge of preservation, the National Park Service must address the conflict of needs between paintings and the buildings that house them. This story gives us an added appreciation not only for the artworks found within the park system but also of the difficult and divergent roles the Park Service must fill as curator, interpreter, naturalist, maritime expert, and sometimes police officer.

**Linda M. Rancourt**  
Editor-in-Chief

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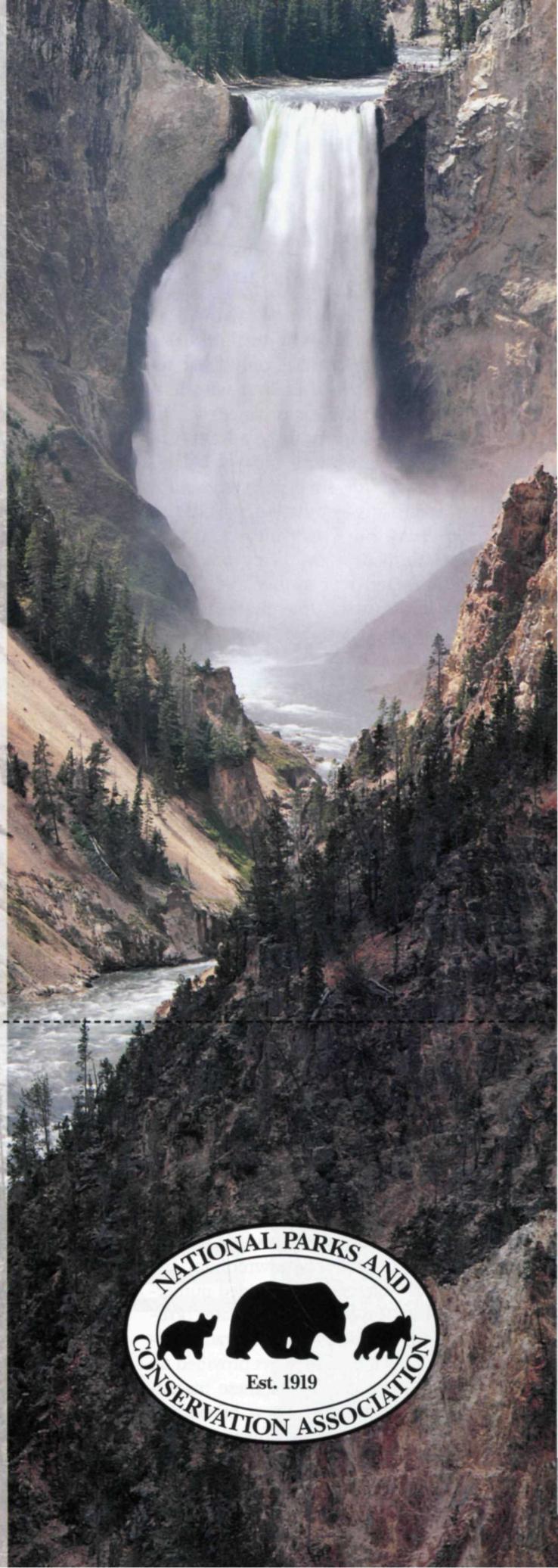
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## Whitewater, an Omission, Tram at Mesa Verde

### Whitewater Access

I support your efforts, along with the Park Service, towards keeping whitewater recreation out of Yellowstone National Park (March/April 1999). I don't mean to criticize only these recreationists, but after four-wheelers, PWCs, and other disturbances in our parks, there has got to be a limit. Just as we are converting our natural biomes into "life-support" systems for our increasing population, we are also converting our parks into centers of entertainment as we bring our technologies and toys farther and farther into the animals' domain. So, who is the park for, after all?!

**Meredyth Lewis  
Tabasco, Mexico**

The March/April edition of *National Parks* carried an article commenting on American Whitewater's proposal to open limited access to whitewater boaters on four river stretches within Yellowstone National Park. The article provided an inaccurate view of the proposal, and paddlers in general.

The article argued that American Whitewater presented this proposal with a "me first" attitude, and that we did so "while avoiding equal discussion of responsibility." In fact, our proposal provided extensive discussion of protection of park resources, responsibility of recreational users, environmental ethics, safety, and how American Whitewater can assist park staff in managing limited whitewater recreation.

The article describes whitewater boaters as "thrill-seekers" and equates the impacts of human-powered boating with the impacts of snowmobiles and personal watercraft. It provided numerous examples of how whitewater boating will "damage" and "degrade" Yellowstone National Park, yet provided no substantive examples for these inaccurate comparisons. A review of existing recreational use management plans at national parks and national forests

across the country demonstrates that whitewater paddlers adhere to the most stringent "leave no trace" ethics of all recreational user groups on public lands. The environmental stewardship of whitewater boaters is exemplary.

American Whitewater's proposal establishes a new standard for recreational "responsibility." The proposal asks the Park Service to evaluate all recreational use on the benchmark that there be no degradation to Yellowstone's natural resources as a result of that use. American Whitewater believes that gauging actual effects on wildlife and sensitive areas is better than current standards, where recreation use is based on an archaic paradigm driven by traditional use or political clout. This paradigm shift requires the Park Service to manage for resource protection first, use secondarily.

American Whitewater has introduced self-imposed use limits to support the standard of no significant impact. No other recreational user groups within Yellowstone subject themselves to a self-imposed use limit. These limits include: limiting whitewater boating to less than 45 miles of Yellowstone's 2,373 miles of free-flowing rivers; avoiding sensitive reproductive areas and seasons for park wildlife; establishing a permit system which limits the number of boaters and allows park staff to quantify and manage this use; and creating a system to monitor resource integrity and adapt limits as needed.

If all park users would adhere to similar standards, Yellowstone's existing problems with overcrowding and resource impacts would be reduced. The goal of this proposal, in part, was to develop defensible regulations for all recreational use that emphasizes resource integrity. We expect the model to carry over to other public lands.

In missing these substantive aspects of our proposal, NPCA's comments damage the reputation not only of American Whitewater but everyone who has ever picked up a paddle to float a

river. From our perspective, paddlers (and many others who fish, hike, or climb along rivers) are some of the world's strongest conservationists—not those looking to harm Yellowstone's outstanding resources.

We agree with NPCA that we all have a responsibility to do our part for the park and that we must "keep Yellowstone healthy for future generations." But we do not agree that the way to accomplish this is through politics rather than good science, good management, good judgment, and cooperation.

American Whitewater proposes a management system that protects our resources and wild places for future generations of conservation minded recreationists. We welcome comments and ideas for improving our model.

**Rich Bowers  
Executive Director  
American Whitewater**

**EDITORIAL REPLY:** More than 3 million people visit Yellowstone each year. American Whitewater's proposal would further tax the park's resources for a recreational use that can be enjoyed elsewhere. And while the proposal is initially limited to 45 miles of the park's rivers, it calls for "exploratory permits" for additional backcountry river travel and a survey of the park's creeks "that are suitable or capable of supporting whitewater boating" for this fast-growing sport.

### Eighty Years

Having just read the May/June 1999 issue, I am somewhat mystified. How could any article titled, "Eighty Years of Advocacy," fail to mention Paul Pritchard and his many contributions? It was during his tenure as president that NPCA flourished, with significant membership growth. He also brought public awareness to the plight and importance of our national parks.

**Susan A. Ivory  
Southampton, NY**



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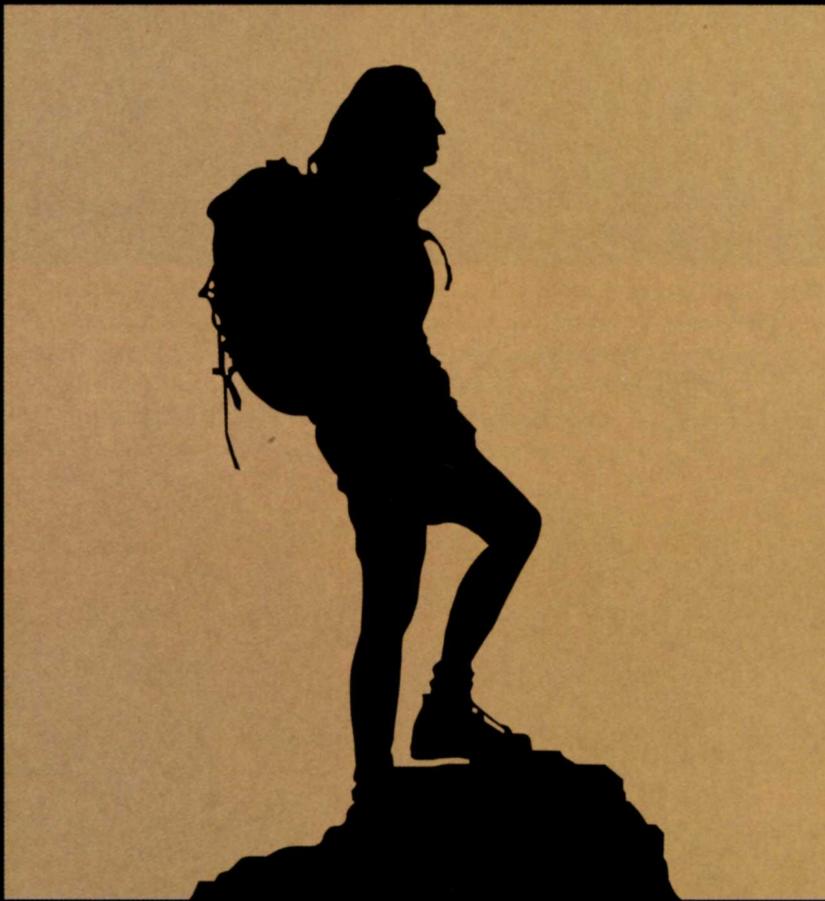
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**EDITORIAL REPLY:** We have heard from several members that key figures were omitted from our article celebrating NPCA's history. Our intention was to focus on the accomplishments of NPCA as a whole, rather than on its leaders. Any omission was not intentional.

**Mesa Verde Tram**

We were appalled by the article in the May/June 1999 issue of your magazine about a tram being proposed at Mesa Verde. We agree with William Chandler regarding this issue. We are strongly opposed to any such proposal for this type of transportation. Part of the natural awe of this park is the limited accessibility to the ruins themselves. That is what has preserved the ruins from some of the senseless violations we see in some of our other national parks. A tram in Mesa Verde? If it's built, you might as well hire Mickey Mouse and Goofy to meet the visitors when they get to the other side.

**Carole and Bruce Sylvara**  
**Osceola, Wisconsin**

**CORRECTIONS**

The Chimneys on Cumberland Island National Seashore [News, March/April 1999] are not in the Greyfield North property.

**WRITE TO US**

Send mail to: Letters, NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Letters can be sent via e-mail to [npmag@npca.org](mailto:npmag@npca.org). Letters should be no longer than 300 words and may be edited for length and clarity. Please include a telephone number for verification. We will notify you if your letter will be published and in which issue.

**"YOU ARE HERE"**

This park's name is a Spanish corruption of the Navajo word "tsegi," meaning "rock canyon." Its canyons were used as a Navajo stronghold until the "Long Walk" in 1868, when more than 9,000 tribe members were forced to march to Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

**Answer:** Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Arizona

# Park News

BY ELIZABETH G. DAERR

VISITOR USE

## New Winter Plan at Yellowstone

*Recreation gets more attention than natural resource issues.*

YELLOWSTONE N.P., WYO.—A proposed winter use plan for Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks focuses more on snowmobiles than it does bison management, even though the large herbivore is the reason the National Park Service (NPS) was forced to redraft a winter use plan.

NPS agreed to create a winter use plan after it settled a lawsuit filed by the Fund for Animals, which claimed that the National Park Service was not protecting park bison, clean air, and other park resources.

Currently an estimated 100,000 snowmobilers use Yellowstone in the winter, and the packed, groomed trails draw bison to park exits where they may be shot by state wildlife management officials who fear that the animals transmit brucellosis to cattle. By focusing on recreation, the latest draft of the plan still does not satisfy the Fund's concerns, says D.J. Schubert, a wildlife biologist for the organization.

"Yellowstone is not supposed to be Disneyland, and the Park Service doesn't have to open it to snowmobiles," he said. "They have a mandate to protect the wildlife and natural resources; the preferred plan will not accomplish that congressional mandate."

But National Park Service spokesperson Cheryl Matthews says that the agency has addressed all issues from

resource protection to growing recreation interests. "The plan encourages visitors to use the park without having an impact on park resources. It solves our problems and is affordable to implement," Matthews said.

The preferred alternative proposes to begin plowing the road from West Yellowstone, Montana to Old Faithful, which would allow winter visitors to arrive by bus and car. The agency believes plowing the road will provide a low cost way for people to visit the park without having to rent a snowmobile.

At press time, the plan had not been released to the public, but reviews of the draft raise questions as to whether the NPS-preferred alternative could exchange one set of problems for another.

Adding tour and shuttle buses will likely attract more visitors to Old Faithful and the Firehole River corridor, which may crowd out wildlife that depend on the geothermal area to survive the harsh winter. Mark Peterson, NPCA Rocky Mountain regional director, says another issue that the National Park Service has not addressed is the likely

displacement of snowmobilers to other, traditionally quiet, areas of the park when they can no longer enter through West Yellowstone.

Also included in the plan are restrictions on snowmobile use that aim to address the concern about noise and air pollution created by the machines. The new plan calls for a curfew from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. on snowmobile use. That schedule, Peterson says, is not fair to visitors who want to enjoy the park's natural quiet.

"Does that mean that if I'm a cross-country skier who wants to experience the natural sounds of the park, I should have to get up at 4 a.m. for solitude?" Peterson questions. "There has to be more hours given to nonsnowmobilers." He suggests that the Park Service could handle this a number of ways: by allowing equal 12-hour shifts; placing some parts of the park off-limits to snowmobiles; or by creating noise-free use days when no snowmobiles are allowed.

The NPS plan would mandate a 40 percent to 70 percent reduction in



Visitation and snowmobile use could rise at Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks under a new winter use plan proposed by the Park Service.

emissions and a reduction in noise levels from snowmachines currently allowed in the park. Any machine not meeting the use requirements by the year 2008 would not be admitted into the park. "While we would like to see an earlier year for these standards, this is the right approach. The snowmobile industry must realize that unless they give consumers more choices with cleaner and quieter machines, their products will not be welcome," Peterson said.

**TAKE ACTION:** View the winter use plan for Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks on the web at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov). Write to park officials and urge them to preserve natural solitude by limiting the times and places snowmobiles can travel. Question whether plowing the road to Old Faithful will simply lead to more crowding by day users and to more snowmobile use in other areas of the park. Write: Clifford Hawkes, DSC-PDS, NPS, Denver Service Center, PO Box 25287, Denver, CO, 80225-0287. Or e-mail [yell\\_winter\\_use@nps.gov](mailto:yell_winter_use@nps.gov).

LITIGATION

## Court Ruling Helps Niobrara

*Federal judge orders NPS to throw out plan that gave too much control to locals.*

O'NEILL, NEBR.—A federal judge has ruled that the National Park Service (NPS) management plan for the Niobrara National Scenic Riverway is inadequate and unenforceable. The ruling was handed down in June in response to a lawsuit, filed by NPCA, the American Canoe Association, and a member of NPCA from Nebraska. The plaintiffs argued that NPS was not fulfilling its mission to protect the river because it had abdicated authority to the Niobrara Council, composed almost exclusively of local landowners, business owners, and politicians.

The Niobrara case sets a precedent by establishing minimum guidelines for

public/private partnership arrangements within the park system. With inadequate federal funding and staff shortages that strain park management and maintenance, NPS has turned to local and private organizations to fill the gaps. NPCA asserts, however, that NPS must retain ultimate authority of management for national park units.

"Undoubtedly, there is a legitimate role for a local community to play in advising NPS on national park management. But there is a definite line that should not be crossed, and NPS crossed that line at Niobrara," says Lori Nelson, NPCA Heartland regional director.

In the Niobrara case, NPS had little control over the council's decisions, and the council had made very little progress on major resource management issues at the river. In her ruling, Judge Gladys Kessler of the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia said the council neglected to determine carrying capacity for visitor use, provide proper management of natural resources, and oversee land use along the river—actions imperative to protecting the

river's aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features. The judge also stated that NPS would certainly accomplish more than the council, which was, in her words, "zero."

Nelson hopes that Nebraska's delegation will press Congress for the funds desperately needed at Niobrara to provide visitor services, law enforcement, and inventory and monitoring of park resources, and studies to determine the maximum number of people who can use the area without adverse impact.

Because the current management plan has been nullified, NPS has severed its formal relationship with the council. NPS, the council, and Nebraska elected officials are exploring options such as legislation endorsing the council and redrafting the management plan.

"This is not necessarily a victory but rather a turning point," Nelson says of the court decision. "It will now be up to NPS and the council to decide whether they want to prolong the controversy or come to the table to find constructive solutions that would preserve the Park Service's management authority."

PRESERVATION

## Babbitt Proposes a Monument at Arizona Strip

*Conservation groups are calling for protection of 1 million acres.*

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZ.—Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt is considering a new 450,000-acre national monument north and west of Grand Canyon National Park, a move that could set aside the Shivwits Plateau and what Babbitt has called one of his native state's "last best places."

Sandstone cliffs, sweeping canyons, and forests of pinyon-juniper and Ponderosa pines on the Arizona Strip harbor abundant wildlife such as desert bighorn sheep, mountain lion, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, bats, and a variety of bird species. Many of these

species have found refuge on the plateau because of habitat lost to development elsewhere in Arizona and Nevada. Few visitors come to the plateau now, although Grand Canyon and Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA) are nearby.

Most of the proposed monument is already public land and, under Babbitt's proposal, would continue to be managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Babbitt's proposal, however, also envisions placing 150,000 acres of Lake Mead National Recreation Area within the monument. This land would continue to be managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Babbitt has suggested that subsurface mineral rights be acquired and that state-owned parcels be exchanged for other BLM lands in Arizona so that the monument can be protected from development. Grazing, however, would continue in the national monument under the proposal.

Conservationists, including NPCA, have been supportive of Babbitt's proposal but have urged him to go even further. In a letter to Babbitt, Grand

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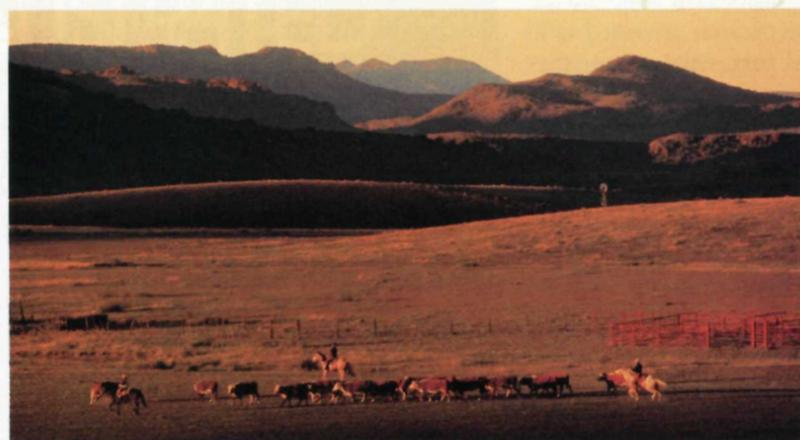


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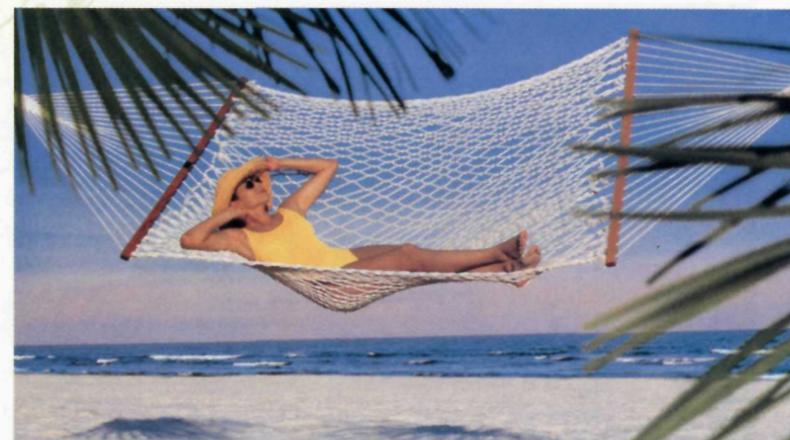
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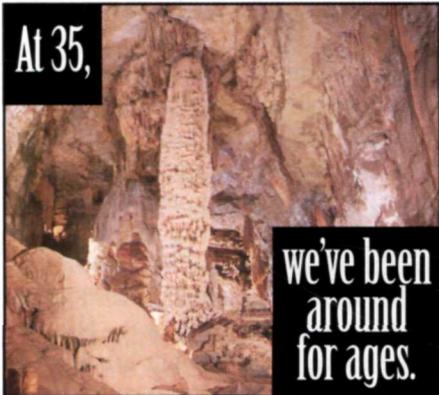
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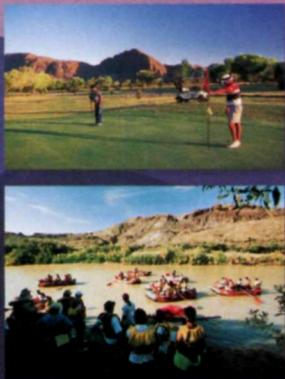
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## NPCA PARK NEWS

Canyon Trust, NPCA, and other conservation groups suggested the creation of a 1-million-acre national monument that would also include the Upper and Lower Grand Wash cliffs and the Virgin Mountains to the north and west of the Shivwits Plateau. Such a monument would be of "sufficient size to permanently safeguard the area's wild character and ecological integrity," stated the letter the groups sent to Babbitt. The letter also called for strong management guidance to limit development and visitor use to levels compatible with the area to preserve its wild character and opportunities for solitude.

NPCA also urged Babbitt to take other steps to better protect the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. Instead of including the 150,000 acres of Lake Mead NRA within the new monument, NPCA recommended that these lands be transferred to Grand Canyon National Park and that the park be further expanded to encompass another 143,000 acres, including Upper Kanab Canyon, Snap Point, and the Mt. Logan wilderness.

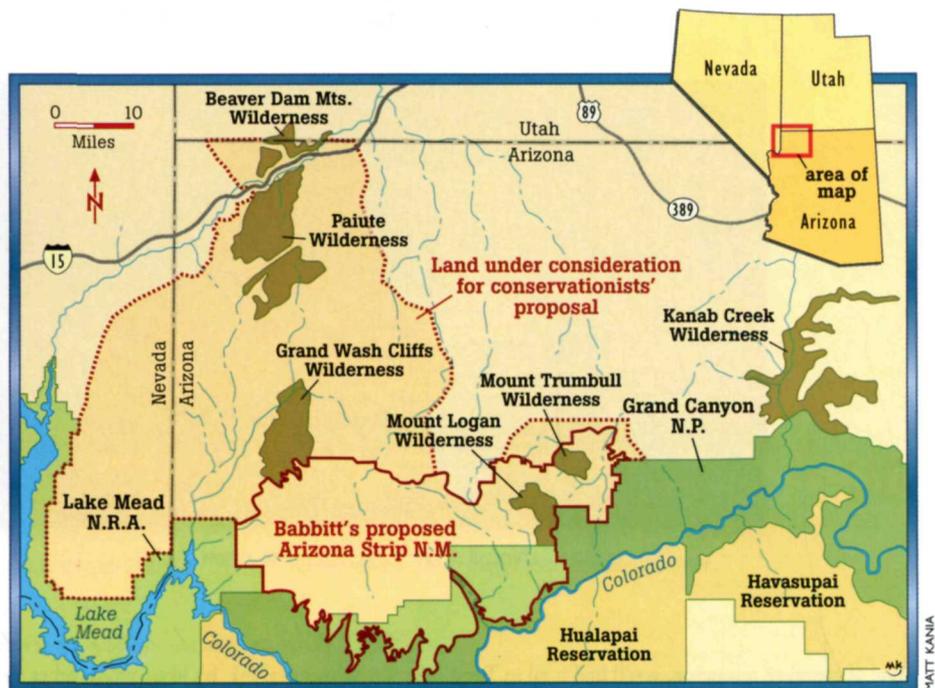
National monuments can be established by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act or by an act of Congress. The 1906 Antiquities Act, currently under fire in Congress, has been used by 13 presidents of both parties

since its inception to set aside some of the country's most astounding landscapes and artifacts, including Grand Canyon and Mesa Verde national parks and the Statute of Liberty National Monument. The act has come under criticism from mining and grazing interests since 1996, when President Clinton used the legislation to establish Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. In the Senate, momentum is gaining for legislation that would weaken the president's power to provide swift protection of natural areas facing immediate threats.

Babbitt has said that he prefers national monument legislation but has suggested that a presidential proclamation may be forthcoming if Congress does not take action. So far, no member of Congress has introduced legislation to create the monument.

—Katurah Mackay

**TAKE ACTION:** Write to Secretary Babbitt (U.S. Dept. of the Interior; Washington, DC 20240). Urge him to use the Antiquities Act to: create a 1-million-acre Arizona Strip monument; shift the Lake Mead NRA lands on the Shivwits Plateau to Grand Canyon NP instead of including them in the proposed monument, and; add Upper Kanab Canyon, Snap Point, and the Mt. Logan wilderness to Grand Canyon NP.



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## RESTORATION

# Giant Forest Floor Restored

*Commercial structures removed to encourage natural tree growth.*

THREE RIVERS, CALIF.—Approximately 150 acres of Giant Forest, the largest grove of sequoia trees in Sequoia National Park, will be restored to their natural condition by removing commercial structures and encouraging revegetation of the grove.

Established in 1890, Sequoia National Park was created at a time when lodging and commercial facilities were typically built to draw visitors to America's natural wonders. Giant sequoias, breathtaking in size, enchanted throngs of curious tourists at the beginning of the 20th century. To accommodate visitors, the Park Service built numerous structures throughout the forest floor. These structures, built mainly between 1915 and 1940, reflect an important era of California's recreational history. But the Park Service has since recognized the greater value of the giant sequoias and, beginning in 1980, decided to remove intrusive structures from the forest floor.

Although several tree species grow taller and at least one variety lives longer, in volume of total wood, the giant sequoia stands alone as the largest living tree on Earth. One sequoia—the General Sherman tree—has stood in Giant Forest for approximately 2,200 years. Its trunk weighs nearly 1,385 tons, and its largest branch spans nearly seven feet wide in diameter. The base diameter of many of these giants exceeds the width of an average city street. Few records show mature sequoias ever having died from disease or insect infestation; most die from toppling over.

Sequoias grow naturally only in the high, dry Sierra Nevada regions of California and tend to live 1,000 years longer than redwoods. Approximately

65 percent of the original giant sequoia stands remain, partly because their wood is less usable than redwood lumber. The park has functioned as a sanctuary for these trees, protecting them from logging and development.

Although it reduces disease and thins organic debris, fire has been suppressed in Giant Forest for the last century because of the number of visitor facilities sprinkled among the trees.

"Fire is key to the reproduction of sequoias," says Bill Tweed, chief of interpretation for the park. "They are a disturbance-dependent species, requiring mineral-rich soil and openings created by fire to allow sunshine to the forest floor."

Despite a loss of plant diversity from excessive trampling, Tweed says the park is planting other native species with sequoia seedlings to recreate a growth density as though it were five to ten years after a natural fire.

The subterranean infrastructure that accompanied many of the buildings in the grove also harmed sequoia root systems. Giant sequoia roots are shallow—extending only three to five feet below the surface. Sewer lines, water pipes, and the process of installing and repairing such fixtures repeatedly sliced roots. Trampling and the dry climate of the Sierra Nevada region also contributed to soil erosion in the grove, exposing roots. Tweed says the park has been able to reduce damaged areas of the forest by approximately 95 percent.

It has taken nearly 20 years for the Giant Forest/Lodgepole Development Concept Plan, devised in 1980 with public input, to be adequately financed by Congress and implemented at the park. In 1992, the California Water Quality Control Board ordered the shutdown of all inadequate sewage systems in Giant Forest by October 1998. All commercial facilities were phased out in the grove beginning in 1993 and razing of some structures continues. The



**A portion of Giant Forest before restoration (above) and after commercial structures were removed (below).**



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (2)

National Park Service expects the last of the buildings to be removed by the end of the summer.

"Giant Forest has gone the furthest in resolving the problems with these types of intrusive facilities because people here realized this park is about living things. It isn't about just scenery—these trees are living organisms," said Tweed.

Delaware North Parks Services Company, which operates concession facilities throughout the park system, was selected by the Park Service to construct new visitor accommodations at Wuksachi Village, a few miles north of Giant Forest. The new complex will offer three buildings with a total of 102 rooms, a main lodge, food service, retail services, and new employee housing. The village will also include an amphitheater with a fire circle for ranger talks; walkways, signs, lighting, and benches; an audio-visual program; and a complete trail network and pedestrian bridge over Clover Creek that will link hikers to backcountry trails.

—Katurah Mackay

## Tower Proposed at Gateway NRA

FAA tries to force NPS to accept tower within recreation area.

BROOKLYN, N.Y.—Seven local environmental and user groups have filed suit against the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) over a proposal to build a Terminal Doppler Weather Radar Tower at Gateway National Recreation Area. The tower would be used to detect wind shear at New York's LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy airports.

The plaintiffs argue that it would be illegal to construct the tower without the Park Service's consent and that FAA has violated Gateway's enabling legislation by selecting the site. The legislation mandates that any plan to expand air facilities at Floyd Bennett Field must be

acceptable to the Department of the Interior (DOI). Even though the National Park Service (NPS) and DOI have rejected the tower, FAA insists it will move ahead with the project. When Gateway was established in 1972 to provide a sanctuary for wildlife and outdoor recreation opportunities, DOT retained land within the area for an active U.S. Coast Guard station. In 1998, the Coast Guard shut down operations, and all but 1.8 acres was turned over to NPS. That land, which still remains under the jurisdiction of DOT, was kept for the purpose of building the tower, FAA says.

FAA officials also claim that the Gateway field is the only acceptable site for the tower given the geographical guidelines for construction. The plaintiffs argue, however, that other, less destructive alternatives are available, and political wrangling is behind efforts to place the tower at Gateway. Two other locations, one on Long Island and one on Hart Island in Queens, were named as viable sites. But constituents of former New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R) called him to protest the placement of

the tower at these sites. D'Amato then had legislation passed that forced FAA to abandon placing the tower at either.

The plaintiffs argue that Hart Island is the best alternative because it receives few visitors and provides no recreation or tourism opportunities. In contrast, Gateway hosted more than 7 million visitors in 1998 and provides a refuge for more than 300 species of birds, including some that are endangered. Moreover, geographical studies confirm that the line of sight between Gateway and LaGuardia has a blind spot that could hinder the safe use of the radar.

Joseph Avery, former Gateway superintendent, emphasizes that an unsightly 140-foot tower is incompatible with the park. In a letter to the FAA, Avery wrote, "The National Park Service has been working since the inception of Gateway to restore the natural landscape and shoreline of Jamaica Bay, as well as the historic scene. Placing this structure, which is visible for many miles, runs counter to this goal."

In the wake of the tension created by the Gateway conflict, FAA has been

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# REGIONAL REPORT

News Briefs from NPCA's Regional Offices

## ALASKA Chip Dennerlein, Regional Director

► As the Senate takes up FY 2000 appropriations legislation, it is expected to consider a provision that would facilitate the construction of a railroad through the northern portion of Denali National Park and Preserve. Construction of a railroad, as well as related large-scale hotel facilities, would degrade the very attributes Denali is revered for—healthy wildlife populations, undisturbed ecosystems, and vast wilderness. The National Park Service has indicated its opposition to this project. For the estimated \$214 million cost of building a railroad, nearly every NPS construction priority in all of the major Alaska park units could be funded. **TAKE ACTION:** Write, call, or e-mail your representative and senators today and ask them not to support any Interior appropriations provision that would promote a fiscally and environmentally irresponsible railroad project in Denali National Park.

## HEARTLAND Lori Nelson, Regional Director

► NPCA has begun working with local communities outside of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Kansas, to promote economic development while maintaining the natural, cultural, and historical characteristics that led to the establishment of the park. The National Park Service has said it will limit development in the park and is asking the local towns of Cottonwood Falls and Strong City to help provide visitor services and facilities—a move that would also boost a limited local economy. NPCA's comprehensive Gateway Initiative plan, which collaborates national, state, and local interests and will be implemented over the next 20 years, addresses issues of commercial design guidelines, transportation, and visitor education.

## NORTHEAST Eileen Woodford, Regional Director

► Seabeach amaranth, a threatened plant with only 55 known colonies in New York, North Carolina, and South Carolina, has been found at Assateague Island National Seashore, Virginia. The plant has not been recorded on the island for 32 years. Scientists say that the plant does not tolerate competition from other vegetation, and its presence indicates unimpaired natural shoreline processes. Seabeach amaranth has pinkish-red stems with small round leaves and acts as an anchor for sand, which collects around it to form dunes. Park Service officials found only two plants and are propagating one in an effort to re-establish a colony at the seashore.

## PACIFIC Brian Huse, Regional Director

► The Presidio Trust, the new federal agency charged with managing the Presidio at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, has released plans to redevelop the Letterman hospital complex. Situated at the main entrance to the park, and representing nearly a quarter of the commercial space available at the Presidio, the project will set both the tone for visitors and future development planning at the park. Unfortunately, the preferred Letterman proposal, the Lucasfilm Digital Arts Center (a computer special effects complex), strays dramatically from the publicly supported vision of converting the Presidio's historic buildings into a center for researching solutions to global environmental, cultural, and social problems. NPCA is requesting that the Trust follow the publicly approved plan or develop a new comprehensive plan that includes ample opportunity for citizen involvement.

*continued*

delaying its long-awaited regulations governing park overflights nationwide. The new rules are expected to give NPS power, along with FAA, to control who operates flights, how often, and where within a park. "Not only are they (FAA) breaking the law, but they are holding up critically needed national regulations," said NPCA Northeast Regional Director Eileen Woodford. Currently, NPS has no authority to regulate sight-seeing flights within a park.

The Gateway case has been tentatively scheduled for a court hearing in October; meanwhile the Clinton Administration wants to resolve the conflict through the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ).

**TAKE ACTION:** Write to CEQ Chairman George Frampton telling him that the Doppler Tower has no place in a national park, especially when alternatives exist. Council on Environmental Quality, Old Executive Office Bldg., Room 360, Washington, DC 20503.

## PRESERVATION

# Hatteras Light Move Completed

Famous lighthouse safe from future Atlantic storms.

CAPE HATTERAS, N.C.—Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is now safe from the crashing waves of the Atlantic Ocean, which were rapidly eroding the beach where the lighthouse was constructed 129 years ago. After a year of preparation and some conflict concerning the best way to protect the lighthouse, the National Park Service completed the 2,900-foot move in July.

Workers spent three weeks moving the 2,800-ton building inland on a bed of steel beams and rollers. Along with the 208-foot lighthouse—the tallest in the United States—the National Park Service (NPS) plans to relocate the original sidewalks, a brick oil storage building that held fuel in the lighthouse's

early days, and both keepers' quarters.

NPS and lighthouse enthusiasts say the move was necessary because the renowned black and white, candy-cane-striped structure was possibly one hurricane away from destruction. In the years since the lighthouse was built, the distance from it to the shoreline has shrunk from 1,500 feet to 150 feet because of beach erosion. The Park Service projects that the structure is safe for at least another 100 years at the new site.

The agency is scheduled to re-light the structure on September 4 and open it to the public Memorial Day 2000. Approximately 1.2 million people visit Cape Hatteras National Seashore annually to learn about the maritime history of the area once dubbed the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" because of its treacherous shallow waters, currents, and storms. Of those people, nearly 250,000 accept the challenge of climbing the lighthouse's 255 steps to the top.

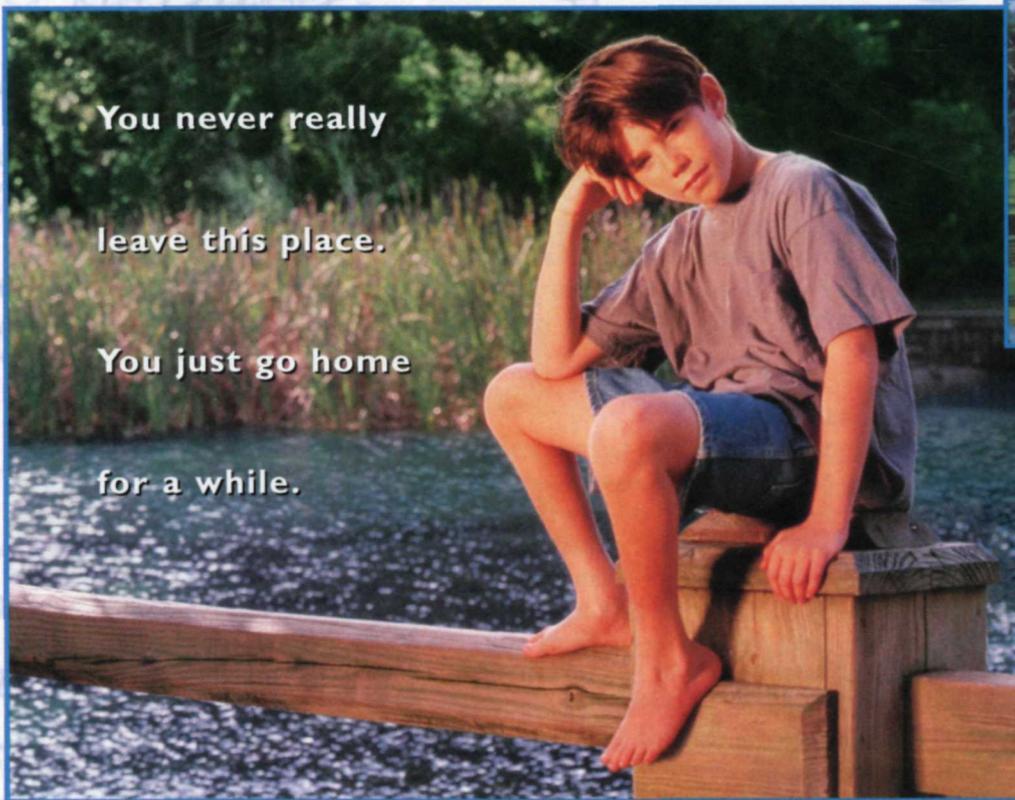
For details and photos of the relocation project, view the Cape Hatteras web site at [www.nps.gov/caha](http://www.nps.gov/caha).

## NEWS UPDATE

► **CELLULAR TOWERS:** Bell Atlantic Mobile lost another bid to place cellular phone towers in Rock Creek National Park. In July, the National Capital Planning Commission tabled the company's second application to construct two 130- to 180-foot towers, which would require accompanying roads and utility lines to service them and likely draw requests from other companies demanding equal access. The commission said the application did not adequately consider the cumulative impact of other reasonably foreseeable towers at the park. Within hours of the vote, however, Sen. Tom Daschle (D-S. Dak.) attached a rider to the District's appropriations bill that would force the National Park Service to put the towers in the park and eliminate the role of local authorities in the consideration of any future applications.

The measure also requires federal agencies to take final action on any permit request within 90 days, insufficient time to conduct an analysis of the impact on park resources.

► **PERSONAL WATERCRAFT:** The National Park Service has still not issued a ruling on personal watercraft (PWC) use even though the agency has been promising to do so for months. It appears that the Park Service is unwilling to take steps to ensure that PWC use will be substantially reduced in national parks. Under the rule as it is proposed now, most PWC use would be allowed to continue. Air, water, and noise pollution would be undiminished. NPCA is considering legal action to force the Park Service to live up to its responsibility to protect park resources unimpaired.

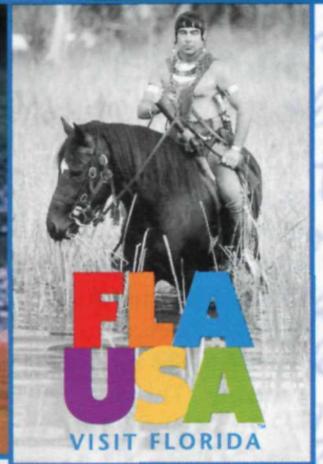
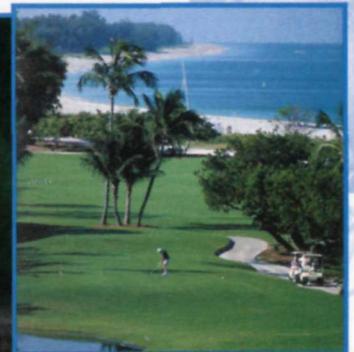


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REGIONAL REPORT *continued***PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

► The FY 2000 Senate Interior Appropriations bill includes a provision that would renew and extend livestock grazing within Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, Washington, for 20 years or until the end of the permit holder's lifetime. This measure undercuts a 1990 Park Service decision to stop grazing at the recreation site because of its negative impacts on land and water resources. Grazing at Lake Roosevelt stopped in 1997—the deadline given to ranchers who had existing permits to transition to other lands. The amendment, inserted by Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.), would reinstate grazing practices for the benefit of a handful of ranchers—approximately ten. NPCA opposes this amendment and has urged Congress to remove it from the Interior bill.

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN** Mark Peterson, Regional Director

► A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore the riparian habitat in Utah's Timpanogos Cave National Monument is knocking. Recently, PacifiCorp filed an application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to relicense a small hydroelectric project above the park for the next 50 years. The project drains the American Creek, which runs through the park, leaving no water in a portion of the stream during certain periods of the year. **TAKE ACTION:** NPCA urges its members to support the decommissioning of this small project so that the riparian habitat throughout the park can be restored for its aesthetic and recreational potential. Write to FERC, Office of Hydropower Licensing, 888 First St., N.E., Washington, DC 20426 and refer to American Fork Hydroelectric Project No. 696-010.

**SOUTHEAST** Don Barger, Regional Director

► Obed Wild and Scenic River has received Outstanding Natural Resource designation, which provides waterways the highest level of federal protection. The Obed runs through the burgeoning Tennessee Valley, and recently demands have increased for drinking water, electricity, and recreational opportunities. Since 1993 when a dam was proposed on the Clear Creek tributary, NPCA's Southeast regional office has fought to keep the waters flowing unimpeded. "It's taken us six years to get from a dam proposal to the highest level of protection offered under the Clean Water Act. But then the national parks are all about the long run," said Don Barger, NPCA Southeast regional director.

**SOUTHWEST** Dave Simon, Regional Director

► For the first time, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has proposed limiting airtour flights over Grand Canyon National Park to meet a federal law that aims to restore natural quiet to more than half of the park for 75 percent of the time. In July, FAA suggested a cap on the number of helicopter and sight-seeing flights over the park to 88,000 each year—the same number recorded from May 1997 to May 1998. One-third of the park meets the goal for natural quiet, and FAA estimates that the new regulations will increase that area to 41 percent. The Park Service and flight operators have until 2008 to meet the federal law, a time allowance that NPCA believes is too long. "The new plan is progress, however, we are worried that there are those in Congress who are actively working to negate that progress," said Phil Voorhees, NPCA's director of park funding and management programs.

## FUNDING

**Budget Would Restrict Research**

*Senate proposal provides inadequate funding for Everglades and endangered species.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congress is considering an Interior Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2000 that would severely undercut funding for land acquisition and scientific research programs crucial to park protection. At press time, the House had passed its version of the bill, and the Senate debate was continuing.

The Senate has recommended only \$263 million of the \$797 million President Clinton requested to fund his Lands Legacy Initiative, which would provide funds to buy national park in-holdings from private owners. The money would also be used to counter adjacent threats to parks, such as mining, logging, and development. The Clinton Administration responded angrily to the Senate proposal, saying it is "short-sighted" and does not provide adequate funds for Everglades restoration, endangered species conservation, and open space expansion.

The Senate also rejected the president's request for increased spending for natural resource protection, including the Natural Resource Initiative (NRI) program, which was introduced in 1998 with the goal of improving the management and protection of natural resources in parks. The Clinton Administration asked for nearly \$20 million to fund the program. Even though the House earmarked \$16 million for it, the Senate has proposed cutting the NRI budget in half. "This is an example of the National Park Service trying to do a better job and Congress not giving the agency the tools it needs," said Kevin Collins, NPCA legislative representative.

The Senate also proposed to drastically cut allocations for the Land and Water Conservation Fund—funded by royalties from offshore oil and gas drilling—

to only \$85 million, down from the \$148 million the program received last year and the \$173 million President Clinton requested. The House offered a similar proposal at nearly \$89 million.

On a positive note, both the House and Senate have agreed with the president's \$1.4-billion request for the National Park Service's (NPS) operating budget, and the House has added an additional \$30 million to states for local land protection and recreation.

As the Senate bill has moved through the approval process, several anti-environment amendments have been attached, including a measure that increases the amount of public land on which companies may dump mine waste. Another amendment prohibits NPS from relocating Gettysburg National Military Park's visitor center without approval from Congress. NPCA highlighted Gettysburg in its *Ten Parks in Jeopardy* report and supports the relocation because the present visitor center is beyond repair, and the park's extensive collection of artifacts is suffering from mold, rust, and rot.

#### LITIGATION

## Park Agrees to Halt Mining

*Threat of lawsuit brought resolution to mining at Mojave.*

BARSTOW, CALIF.—The National Park Service (NPS) has agreed to halt illegal mining operations at the Cima Cinder Mine within Mojave National Preserve in response to a potential lawsuit. NPCA had alleged that the mining operation was in violation of several federal laws, including the Mining in the Parks Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The mining operation annually removed up to 10,000 tons of cinder from the national park unit, despite the fact that there is no completed operations plan or environmental analysis.

NPCA, along with the Center for

Biological Diversity, Citizens for Mojave National Preserve, and Western Mining Action Project, threatened to file suit, fearing that NPS's negligence was destroying habitat critical to the recovery of the declining Mojave desert tortoise population and ruining a geological wonder. The mining site sits on a volcanic field containing more than 20 cones estimated to be 1,000 to 5,000 years old. In 1973, the area was designated a National Natural Landmark because of its unique volcanic features.

Mining is permitted in some national park units under the 1872 Mining Act, yet NPS has the authority to restrict and even stop mining to protect park resources. The 1994 California Desert Protection Act transferred Bureau of Land Management lands in the eastern Mojave desert to the Park Service to create the Mojave National Preserve. This transfer included the Cima Cinder mine and placed the operation under stricter National Park Service management. These regulations require a mine to have an NPS-approved plan of operations and money set aside to pay for reclamation up to the agency's standards. The Park Service temporarily approved continued operation of the

mine on the condition that the operating company take prompt steps to comply with NPS regulations. Even after the temporary approval expired in May 1996, the Park Service allowed the company to continue mining despite the fact that it failed to meet basic environmental standards.

"They (NPS) admit that they were violating a number of laws, but because of bureaucratic timidity or a lack of political will they had refused to stop this mining operation," says Roger Flynn, an attorney with the Western Mining Action Project who is representing the environmental organizations. "This is one of the clearest cut cases I've had."

The mine was also making plans to use 18 mill sites for its two claims; under the 1872 Mining Act mines may legally use only one site for each claim.

A measure introduced by Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.) as part of an emergency spending bill for Kosovo, however, temporarily suspended this law through October 1999. Both the Senate and House Interior Appropriations bills include language that would permanently revoke this law and allow the dumping of mine waste on public lands, an action now considered illegal.



**Mining of the Cima Cinder cones, volcanic structures formed 1,000 to 5,000 years ago, continued at Mojave even after the land was transferred to NPS management.**

# PROMISED LAND



**T**HE YEAR WAS 1851. The place: a lecture hall in Concord, Massachusetts, just east of a forest-encircled pond called Walden.

As Henry David Thoreau stood before a room full of contemporaries and recited his now-immortal words—"in wildness is the preservation of the world"—he couldn't have fathomed how strongly the declaration would resonate a century and a half later.

Thoreau's poetic sentiments, describing a rare part of the landscape we know today as "wilderness," has, at the end of the 20th century, become a rallying cry for park advocates who believe that Congress has failed to make crucial wilderness designations and the Park Service has floundered in managing the last, wild places under its care.

Wes Henry, a senior National Park Service (NPS) planner and wilderness management expert, argues that resolving the wilderness question is among the most important issues the agency currently faces. Today, he says, national parks are confronting encroaching development and the increasing intrusion of technology. On a daily basis, airplanes and helicopters buzz wilderness areas in the Grand Canyon previously reached only by foot and raft; cellular telephones ring on top of Mount Rainier; snowmobiles whine throughout Yellowstone's winter wonderland; and chainsaws roar in isolated corners of parks as trail crews clear fallen trees from the paths of hiking trails.

The sad truth, Henry says, is that although many Park Service employees have the inclination, not many have the training, time, or resources to provide the special care that goes into preserving wild places and making the experience more available to visitors.

"In today's world, wilderness and the ability to escape civilization" are among the most valuable commodities many parks can offer to the American public, Henry says. "Many people assume that as an agency renowned for preserving

**Park advocates believe Congress has failed to make crucial wilderness designations, and the Park Service has fallen short in its attempts to manage these wild places. But a presidential initiative may reinvigorate an appreciation for our wild lands.**

nature, the Park Service would be the leader in wilderness management among the land management agencies. Unfortunately, the crush of visitors and relatively stagnant budgets has meant that wilderness and other priorities have suffered neglect."

But even now, Henry says, the Park Service has been given a chance to redeem itself—and the orders are coming from the top. With a new Clinton Administration initiative to reinvigorate appreciation for wilderness, the future of places such as Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Glacier, Great Smoky Mountains, Big Bend, and a dozen smaller parks is a little brighter. The plan, influenced heavily by the office of Vice President Al Gore and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, begins to address the long unfinished national park wilderness agenda.

Wilderness is simply the recognition that the American public bestows on very special wild places, and these parks are surely some of the most special. A Wilderness Task Force made a series of recommendations in the early 1990s, and the Park Service is now beginning to take action. Recommendations included the restart of the designation process, better leadership, training, and educational outreach. NPS Director Robert Stanton will soon sign a wilderness management reference manual, training courses are being offered, and the education issue is being explored at the interagency level.

The reference manual advises park superintendents of their legal responsibility to protect lands already designat-

ed as federal wilderness and other tracts under consideration in Congress. More important, from an outside perspective the document serves as a *mea culpa*, confirming allegations leveled by NPCA and its partners that the Park Service has been ambivalent toward wilderness designation or resisted it. Perhaps in the most stinging indictment of all, some agency officials confess that the Park Service has demonstrated less leadership in wilderness preservation than the U.S. Forest Service.

Wilderness is a management touchstone for the Park Service because it serves as a gauge for the public to assess the character of lands inside parks, says David Simon, NPCA's Southwest regional director. "How we deal with the wilderness question in our national parks will determine what kind of experience our grandkids and great-grandkids inherit from us. It's that important," Simon says. "With wilderness, a whole set of values are brought forward, and they get at the very heart of why national parks were created."

Chip Dennerlein, NPCA's Alaska regional director and a member of a national steering committee for wilderness science issues, brought these issues to the fore this spring at a national conference in Missoula, Montana, where hundreds of activists converged to try and rekindle the wilderness movement, which historians say helped give rise to modern environmental awareness.

Thirty-five years ago this September, President Lyndon Johnson gathered conservationists together in Washington, D.C., and signed into law one of the most important landscape protection measures in the country's history—the Wilderness Act of 1964. This act created special land management zones within federal lands where highways, machines, and developments are forbidden, "where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man—where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Although the act is best known for setting aside millions of acres of "capital W" wilderness in national forests, its intent was also to safeguard the wildest sections of national parks. Over the past four decades, however, critics say NPS has maintained a detached, if not

**Some wilderness designations have languished for years, as in Glacier National Park, Montana.**

## WILDERNESS Continued

downright hostile, attitude toward proposed federally designated wilderness inside park borders.

The Clinton Administration plan, now before the Republican-controlled Congress, is intended to be a wake-up call for the Park Service by setting out first to resolve the fate of 5 million acres of proposed park wilderness lands that have languished in limbo since the Nixon Administration. Under the old proposals, more than 90 percent of Yellowstone's 2.2 million acres would receive formal wilderness designation, along with nearly 1 million acres in Glacier and roughly half a million acres each in Big Bend and Great Smoky Mountains. Other proposed sites are Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Crater Lake, Grand Teton, Zion, Assateague Island National Seashore, Cedar Breaks, Colorado, and Dinosaur national monuments, and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. A similar call in 1996 went nowhere in Congress. NPCA believes some of these proposals need to be updated to add more acreage. Moreover, some parks are not being advanced, such as Grand

Canyon, which has 1.1 million acres of recommended wilderness.

Why has the Park Service resisted wilderness protection efforts? Park Service historian Richard West Sellars, author of *Preserving Nature in the National Parks*, suggests that agency leaders have not wanted to be hamstrung by regulations that might hinder development and management options.

Nothing illustrates the clash of values better than the Park Service's modernization program, Mission 66, and the public groundswell that led to the Wilderness Act in 1964. Mission 66, conceived during the 1950s, had the stated goal of repairing park facilities (hotels, visitor centers, nature trails, etc.) that had fallen into disrepair. Initially, the program received praise, but conservationists soon concluded that Mission 66 was compromising natural values by expanding the footprint of development and asphalt.

In a telling admission, the 1994 Park Service Wilderness Task Force Report refers to this conflict: "The amount and degree of park development throughout the decades of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s caused a growing concern in the environmental community, and among many NPS staff, that the National Park Service was placing too much emphasis on development and not enough on the preservation of pristine lands."

NPCA's Chip Dennerlein says the Park Service's antipathy for wilderness owes as much to the organizational culture as to economic incentives. The Mission 66 goals took priority over wilderness, and those sympathies have lingered to this day.

As of December 1998, 44 NPS units contain 43.1 million acres of wilderness—the vast majority of it in Alaska. Another 7 million acres have been set aside as wilderness study areas. Once wilderness is designated, the challenge of management begins. For example, only 12 percent of the national parks have wilderness or backcountry plans, and most of those are at least a decade old, observes Henry. With the Clinton Administration plan aimed at settling the bulk of

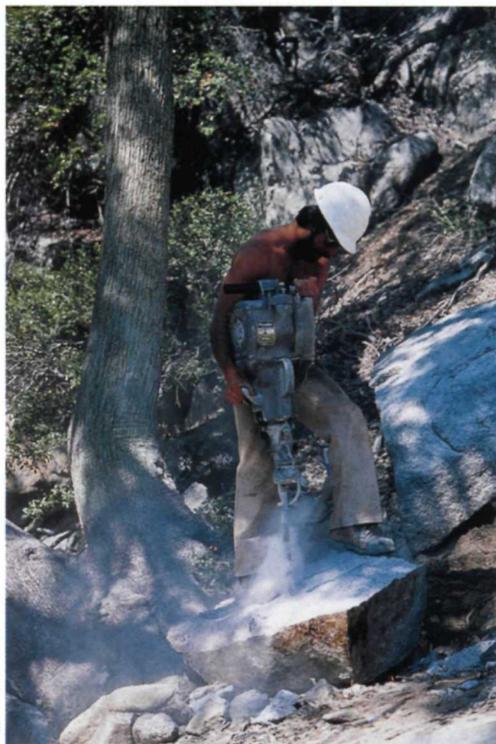
lands in wilderness study areas, several management issues for wilderness remain unresolved, such as:

▲ How does the Park Service handle changes in technology, which is outstripping the ability of land management agencies to deal with it? Many of these issues involve noise and whether certain motorized uses should be allowed in wilderness areas, such as personal watercraft, aerial overflights, and snowmobiles. In parks such as Yellowstone, where noise from snowmobiles carries over many miles, wilderness could also mean restrictions on the type of snowmobiles allowed. Another question involves whether cellular phones should be allowed in wilderness areas. Other issues include what role, if any, the Park Service should play in consulting with county governments to zone areas next to parks and whether it is better to have concentrated or dispersed campsites in wilderness.

▲ How will the Park Service manage forests inside designated wilderness? Ecologists acknowledge that in some parks, controlled burns, possibly in combination with mechanized tree cutting, are needed to reduce the possibility of giant forest fires in dry years and to enhance biological diversity. Further, questions exist about who holds jurisdiction over water that originates in wilderness and what limitations should be imposed on above-ground development to protect fragile park cave wilderness systems.

▲ How does the Park Service apply the "minimum requirements" provision of the Wilderness Act, which requires land managers to use the least-intrusive tools necessary to maintain wilderness areas? The Park Service has been lax in its interpretation of the provision. For years, the Forest Service has been recognized as a pioneer in perfecting "minimum requirements," and Park Service officials admit they can learn a lot from their sister agency.

In some parks, superintendents have ignored wilderness requirements and allowed vehicles to cross virgin landscapes. Some superintendents also have invoked the Americans with Disabilities Act to ask that paved trails be constructed into existing wilderness, which has touched off fierce debate.



FRED HIRSCHMANN

**Wilderness management requires that managers use the least intrusive tools necessary for trail maintenance.**

Simon and Dennerlein are adamant in their belief that wilderness designation is an important means available to the public for protecting parks against unthinking park managers. Because the Park Service in some ways still functions like a military organization, the tenure of individual park superintendents at any one location lasts only a few years. But during his or her brief stint, a superintendent may approve a number of proposals designed to economically aid the local community or the regional tourism industry. While the projects might seem small individually, they add up.

“How can they or outside interests appreciate that this is tantamount to a slow nibbling away of resources that make the area valuable as a park and attractive for recreation and tourism—a competitive event here, a recreation support facility there, and you slowly erode the wildness,” says Henry. “You can’t see it from one decision to the next, but cumulatively, the wilderness is lost—despite the best of intentions.”

Simon maintains that wilderness status actually makes a land manager’s job easier. “For park managers who have neither the resolve nor the backbone to stand up against proposals that compromise the character of the parks they oversee, wilderness designation helps them say no,” Simon says. “Instead of exposing parks to constant aesthetic and ecological erosion, wilderness can help the public hold the agency to a higher standard.”

Superintendents at Yosemite, where 677,000 acres lie in wilderness, North Cascades, which has 634,000 acres, and Mount Rainier, which has 228,000 acres, have been able to reject proposals for hotels and ski areas. Had official wilderness been in place in Yellowstone 20 years ago, snowmobiling could have been prohibited or tightly regulated. Instead, today 100,000 snowmobilers enter the park each year.

But conservationists warn that the transformation must have strategic ob-

jectives in mind—objectives that yield ecological benefits in addition to the obvious gains of protecting scenery. Some are concerned that politicians such as Rep. James Hansen (R-Utah) may use the national park wilderness proposal to cut a deal to reduce the amount of acreage in national forests and Bureau of Land Management tracts proposed for wilderness designation in his home state. And others may use a



GALEN ROWELL/MOUNTAIN LIGHT

**NPS must determine how it will manage noise—such as that generated by airplanes—in wilderness areas.**

park wilderness bill as a vehicle for anti-environmental attachments.

At present, several park gateway communities have expressed open hostility to wilderness designation because they fear it will hamper the flow of tourism dollars. In February 1999, business leaders in Estes Park, Colorado, on the edge of Rocky Mountain National Park, refused to endorse proposed wilderness (even though since 1973 an estimated 95 percent of the park has been managed to the high wilderness standard as the park’s wilderness proposal remained in limbo).

Ray Rasker, an economist with the Sonoran Institute, notes that numerous studies suggest access to wilderness is an economic boon for towns because it provides an incentive for people to live in and visit the area. Echoing that appraisal, the editors of the local Estes Park newspaper wrote in a banner headline that was aimed at detractors: “Rocky Mountain National Park deserves its wilderness” and added in the text of the editorial: “It’s time to bury the political

hatchet and move ahead with official wilderness. If not Rocky Mountain National Park, then where? If not now, then when?”

Some park superintendents have asserted that certain areas of proposed wilderness should be disqualified because they are compromised by urban settings or sit among existing developments. During the 1970s, the Forest Service used a similar argument in seeking to have national forests exempted. But in 1978 when Congress passed the Endangered Wilderness Act, it said that even sights and sounds of civilization cannot be used to eliminate stretches of federal land from wilderness consideration.

Wilderness that is proposed for parks on the outskirts of cities serves a valuable purpose, says Henry, for it provides urban dwellers with easy access to an unspoiled landscape.

“We are faced with the increasing reality and challenge of managing wildernesses, not in the sense of different places, but more important, in the sense of different types of wilderness,” suggests NPCA’s Dennerlein.

In general, Dennerlein concludes: “Wilderness is about sharing the delight of aboriginal Americans when they camped at the edge of a cliff thousands of years ago and were inspired by the view. It is about gaining a sense of humility in the face of nature; it is about putting certain pieces of the landscape off limits to any human temptation to exploit or despoil them; it is about thinking ahead and viewing the glory of the land in spans longer than your own life.

“In the modern world, that’s difficult for many to grasp. Wilderness is not convenient, but the values of wilderness are as important to our human condition—present and future—as they were when the Wilderness Act was passed. Perhaps, more so.”

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TODD WILKINSON, a regular contributor to National Parks, last wrote about extreme sports in parks.

Although paintings constitute a small portion of the Park Service's cultural objects, they represent a significant challenge to the agency, which must preserve these works of art without the funds to do the job.

# The Art of Appreciation

BY BESS ZARAFONITIS STROH



NPS/LONGFELLOW NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE



NPS/LONGFELLOW NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE



INDEX STOCK IMAGER/KINDRA CLINEFF

The Longfellow family displayed its art collection in many rooms, including the dining room (top) and the parlor (left), in the mid-Georgian style mansion (above).

**I**F THE WALLS at Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, Massachusetts, could talk, they might whisper details about the people and experiences in the life of popular 19th-century poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his family, who lived there from the 1830s through the 1950s. But, even in the absence of voices, those walls “speak” through the paintings the Longfellows selected to hang in their mid-Georgian-style mansion.

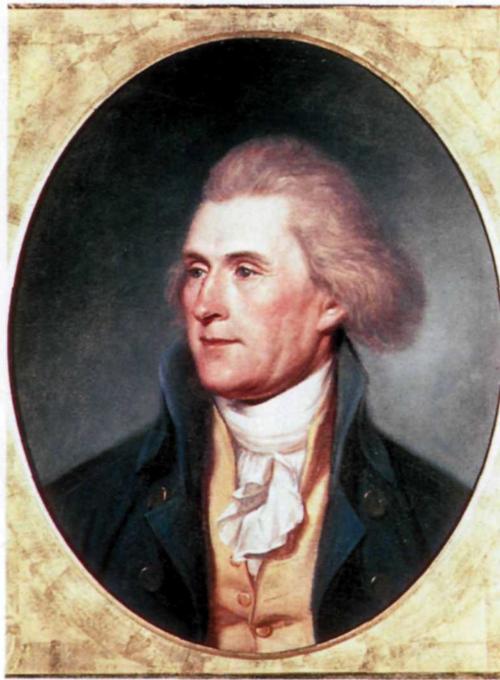
Among the roughly 175 works on exhibit have been portraits, landscapes, and genre pieces of family significance, some painted by noted American and European artists whom the Longfellows entertained in their home. In the dining room, for example, two Gilbert Stuart oils of Longfellow’s in-laws have joined other family portraits lining the gold-and-maroon-papered walls. Nearby is Thomas B. Reed’s endearing interpretation of Longfellow’s three young daughters, evoking the poet’s famous “The Children’s Hour.” Another deeply personal painting was a gift from family friend and American artist Albert Bierstadt, who surprised Longfellow at a dinner party in England in 1868 by presenting him with *The Departure of Hiawatha*, an oil on paper celebrating Longfellow’s poem about the mythical American Indian hero. Other artists have included American masters Washington Allston and Mather Brown, as well as such intimates of Henry and Frances Longfellow’s families as Eastman Johnson, John Frederick Kensett, William Morris Hunt, and George Healy.

Although these works are in storage as Longfellow House, which became a national park site in 1972, undergoes renovation, the collection exemplifies how paintings in the park system are tied to their locations. Unlike most traditional museum collections, National Park Service (NPS) paintings are found in context at the sites, giving them meaning beyond their interpretation in the art world. In turn, the works—many of them historically and artistically important in their own right—lend as much insight to the parks as any of the structures, furnishings, or other

property that surround them.

At sites such as Longfellow, paintings collected as mementos and decorative pieces are “part of the historic ecosystem,” says Eileen Woodford, NPCA’s Northeast regional director. “They contribute to the function of the house, the commemorative integrity.”

Among the fine art attractions at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, for instance, is a portrait gallery of influential figures from the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federal periods. The core of the exhibit is the



**Independence NHP holds the largest collection of Peale’s museum portraits, including this one of Thomas Jefferson.**

largest collection of Charles Willson Peale’s museum portraits.

Yellowstone National Park, on the other hand, has custody of watercolors and other works by Thomas Moran, who traveled with early explorers to the uncharted Yellowstone region and whose images helped fuel the movement to create the park. A dozen of the Moran watercolors were showcased in a retrospective launched at the National Gallery of Art in 1997, during Yellowstone’s 125th anniversary celebration.

Weir Farm in Connecticut, a third example and the only site in the park system dedicated to American painting, has the beginnings of a collection by Julian Alden Weir, one of the originators

of American Impressionism. The beauty of the farm, Weir’s summer home and workplace for 40 years, is said to have played a part in the portraitist’s conversion to the Impressionist style.

Some of these and other collections are not widely known or sought out by visitors to the parks—another characteristic that distinguishes NPS paintings from those at traditional museums. Most people touring Independence, for example, don’t even go into the marble Second Bank of the United States building that doubles as a gallery, says Karie Diethorn, the site’s chief curator.

Even the Park Service has much to learn about its paintings and their significance. As a small proportion of the 78 million natural and cultural objects under NPS care, paintings are accounted for and managed at individual park units. Last spring, the agency was working on an aggregated database that would make all collections, including paintings, more accessible for research purposes and generally better understood. On the basis of a 1976 out-of-house survey, however, NPS Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock estimated that more than 2,700 oils, watercolors, pastels, and other paintings are exhibited or stored servicewide. Though a large number are at the historic sites of the East, these treasures are found in parks in all geographical regions.

The paintings undeniably add richness to and support the integrity of these sites, but, like all NPS museum collections, they represent a significant challenge to the agency, which has the responsibility of preserving them without enough money to do the job.

The process of preservation is twofold: keeping the artworks in structures that can meet their special needs, and conserving the paintings themselves. Although NPS has a long-term strategy to improve housing for museum collections nationwide, at requested funding levels, it doesn’t expect to resolve identified problems until 2026.

Paintings are fragile objects with components that may expand or contract in fluctuating temperatures and relative humidity. They may be vulnerable to drying or changing color if exposed to natural and artificial light, and

NPS/INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

## PAINTINGS Continued

if mishandled or improperly hung or stored, they may become scratched, torn, chipped, stained, or otherwise damaged. Ideally, paintings should be kept in environments in which light, temperature, and, especially, relative humidity are kept within prescribed ranges and where fire protection and security systems are in place.

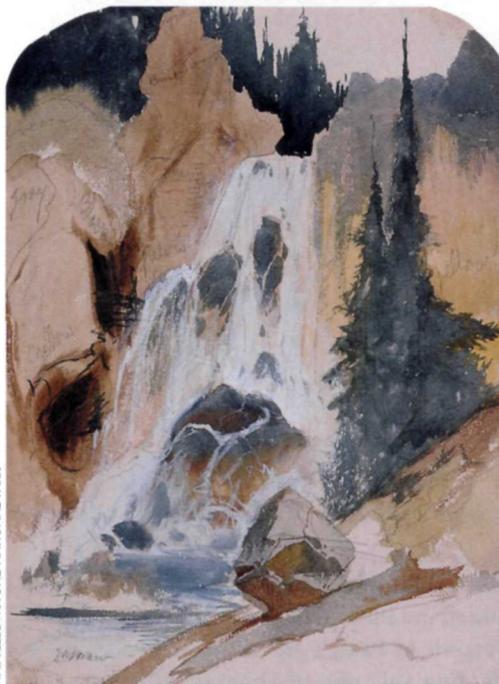
The Second Bank in Philadelphia, the building that once housed one of the most influential financial institutions in the world, may today be one of the most stable settings for paintings in the park system. Situated close to Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was adopted, the Greek Revival structure keeps the portraits of many of the document's signers. In all, the collection includes about 172 portraits of government and military leaders, along with explorers, scientists, and artists. Targeted for a \$5 million utilities upgrade in 2001—including the installation of a fire suppression system—the bank, for the moment, boasts an environment within an adequate range to support its paintings, but the building's mechanical systems are beginning to fail, Diethorn says.

Other historic sites, like Longfellow House, are more problematic; optimal conditions for the collections and their structures sometimes conflict. As part of its \$1.6 million renovation, Longfellow House will gain a museum-quality storage environment in the basement. But in a compromise to protect the 18th-century mansion—it was headquarters for Gen. George Washington during the American Revolution—environmental controls for the upper levels will not be as strict. As site manager James Shea explains, historic structures could weaken if sealed for strict regulation of climate. To avoid that possibility while maintaining the house's historical beauty, it was decided that only weather-mitigating mechanisms would be installed.

The issues of managing paintings are much the same for all of the park system's museum collections, which encompass everything from fine arts to archives to archaeological and ethno-

graphic objects and biological and geological specimens and more. The cost of paintings management is included in the servicewide museum program, which spent \$15.3 million on collections in 1997 and \$17.3 million in 1998. Out of that amount, roughly \$2.5 million went each year to address what is now a 50 percent backlog in cataloguing objects.

For more than a decade, NPS has also targeted resources to solve problems in collections preservation and protection. In 1997, however, the agency recognized that only 60 percent of conditions met professional standards in storage, exhibition, museum environment,



**Crystal Falls, in Yellowstone National Park, inspired Thomas Moran to paint this delicate watercolor.**

security and fire protection, housekeeping, and planning. A goal was set to increase that to 64 percent this year.

While she can't quantify it, Hitchcock believes that paintings as a group may actually be better off than the numbers imply. The art collection, unlike some other varieties in the National Park System, is mostly catalogued. And because paintings are more likely to be displayed at sites, they may have attracted more regular attention than pieces tucked away. There is also a human element that may affect their care, she says, because of the inherent

respect most people have for paintings.

Fears resonate within the system, nonetheless, that at least some paintings may be threatened. Collections managers at Weir Farm National Historic Site and Yellowstone, for instance, worry about paintings and other works of art in storage. Both parks are awaiting new centers promising professional storage, but completion dates are years away. As tight as budgets are, there is also little money at parks to pay for paintings' "treatments," a term that describes everything from stabilizing a painting to its complete restoration. Stabilization may mean reattaching paint to a canvas or wood support or adding a fabric reinforcement to a canvas. Restoration involves removing clumsy repairs of paint or filling in paint where it is missing.

At Independence National Historical Park, curator Diethorn says the \$10 million park budget never stretches far enough for all conservation needs. That means a picture that could use revarnishing or a frame missing gilding may be backburned because damage is not life-threatening. "Those problems don't necessarily prevent me from exhibiting the object, so it's not a high priority from the parkwide standpoint," she explains.

Varying levels of staff training at park units also cause concern. Since downsizing in the mid-1990s, NPS has not had a paintings conservator on staff. Now it relies either on park curators or personnel with curatorial duties to recognize when paintings need to be examined by private conservators and, when necessary, repaired.

Hitchcock says the use of contract conservators is cost-effective and a good way for the parks to establish partnerships in their surrounding communities. The problem is finding the money to pay the specialists, who charge \$55-\$90 an hour.

Martin Burke, who is in charge of conservation at the Park Service's Harpers Ferry Interpretative Design Center, points out that most paintings in the system were treated during the 44 years NPS had paintings conservators on board. "Now the issue is those

that haven't been treated and those that haven't been treated since," he says.

Without sufficient funds to manage collections, parks are continuing to count on outside sources for help. The Longfellow House funding pool began with a \$150,000 challenge grant from Fidelity Foundation of Boston; by last spring, donors had come forward with \$90,000 in matching funds. The money won't cover all the site's conservation needs, according to Shea. But in the Longfellow paintings collection, some sorely needed attention will go to restoring 19th-century frames. This is essential to preserve the historical value of the frames as well as to protect the paintings they hold.

Whether through generosity or creative management, Yellowstone benefited from releasing its Morans to the exhibition tour organized by the National Gallery and Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Museum curator Susan Kraft says discussions with the National Gallery yielded museum-quality remating and reframing of the 21 watercolors it considered for display.

The National Gallery also gave Yellowstone photographs produced at the National Geographic Society to display in place of the original watercolors on exhibit in the park. Two Moran sketchbooks used in the retrospective also were photographed. Out of the arrangement, Yellowstone received color transparencies, slides, black and white prints, and digital images, a boon to park efforts to make the Morans better known and more accessible without handling, Kraft says.

For the watercolors, the National Gallery interest may have come just in time. On display at Yellowstone for more than half a century, they showed obvious fading when old mats were removed during reframing. Though they were displayed in dim light at Mammoth Hot Springs visitor center since 1979, Kraft says, conditions were much brighter at an earlier park exhibit.

The watercolors, each insured for \$500,000 when released for exhibit, now are protected by ultraviolet-filtering acrylic in their new frames. Nevertheless, Kraft says, they are now being preserved in dark storage and will be brought out for only time-limited ex-



NPS/WEIR FARM NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

**Julian Alden Weir, an originator of American Impressionism, was inspired, as the artist pictured here, by the grounds surrounding his home at Weir Farm.**

hibits, a strategy common to museums.

At Weir Farm, out-of-service funding is as essential to building the collection as to protecting what it owns. The park is unique in the system because it cannot use NPS monies for art acquisitions.

As it is now, the site encompasses Weir's home and studio as well as 60 acres of the rocky southwestern Connecticut landscape that inspired Weir's painting and that of other pioneers in American Impressionism. Yet, with a limited number of paintings and drawings in its possession, the park lacks an exhibition to complete the story.

Expanding the Weir collection is tied to establishing the new visitor center, which will be built with proper climate and space. The \$4.5 million project will depend, at least partly, on private funds, says Superintendent Sarah Olson.

Weir Farm Trust, the park's private partner group, will use an upcoming Weir exhibit as a platform to launch fundraising. The trust has joined the Park Service in planning the display from mid-April to mid-September next year. It opens at Parrish Art Museum in Southampton, New York, and travels to Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Connecticut. Weir Farm will be a satellite venue throughout, displaying some of the artist's etchings and dry point prints

as well as some personal items.

Different avenues of private support appear critical to the future of paintings and other museum property, and NPCA's Woodford believes they may be more easily explored as NPS collections come into better focus through cataloging and assessment.

As the public learns more about the parks' treasures, it may be more inclined to help protect them, Woodford says. NPCA and NPS staff need to make the connections in private art circles and other specialty interests so new partnerships can be made.

The Park Service is always eager to enter partnerships that fill gaps in funding and management, according to Hitchcock. But generally she sees the private support as a supplement, not a basic, although for some parks, partnerships are a mandated part of their operations. The preservation and protection of the museum objects speak to the very mission of the Park Service, she says. "These are federal government collections, and the federal government has a responsibility to manage them."

**BESS ZARAFONITIS STROH** lives in Gales Ferry, Connecticut, and last wrote for National Parks about the best parks for viewing autumn foliage.

# By LEAPS and BOUNDS

An exploding population of white-tailed deer has denuded fields and reduced the number of woodland nesting birds in some places along the East Coast. Controlling the herd size of this popular animal presents a challenge for park managers at 50 national park units.

BY CONNIE TOOPS

**A**T SHENANDOAH NATIONAL Park in the mid-1970s, campers would often gather at Big Meadows Visitor Center at twilight, hoping to spot a white-tailed deer meandering into the meadow to graze. Last summer, at this 200-acre Virginia mountaintop, a wary doe emerged from the forest, ears twitching, nose testing the wind as slanting rays of sunlight gilded the grasses. A pair of spotted fawns frolicked behind her. Two bucks, antlers rimmed in glistening velvet, ambled through shoulder-high grasses. Then a yearling bounded across

Skyline Drive. Cars pulled onto the road shoulder, and visitors with children and cameras trekked into the meadow for a closer look. The deer, apparently accustomed to this evening ritual, continued to pour out of the woods. Just before dark, nearly four dozen contentedly munched asters, goldenrod, and blackberry leaves.

Across the United States, the numbers of white-tailed deer have soared during the past few years, with current estimates placing their numbers between 20 and 25 million nationwide. As a consequence, what was once a rare pleasure has become, in many places, a

problem—with no easy solutions.

White-tailed deer populations have fluctuated over time, depending on their relationship with the human and natural environment. Inhabiting much of the United States and southern Canada, except for the Great Basin and California, they favor habitats where field and forest meet. Realizing this tendency centuries ago, Native Americans periodically burned Big Meadows to revive sun-loving herbs and encourage the growth of blueberries. Deer followed the fires to browse on tender new shoots. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, an estimated 2.3 million Native

Americans lived within the white-tail's range. Each Indian used two or three deer annually for food and clothing.

America's colonists also learned to rely on deer for meat and hides. But as more settlers arrived and homesteaders cleared extensive tracts to farm and to supply wood for industry, white-tails became scarce as their habitat disappeared. By the late 1800s, many states had outlawed deer hunting and established preserves for the few remaining animals. Deer were gone from Virginia by around 1905, but they returned in 1934 when 13 transplants were released in what is now Shenandoah National Park.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated Shenandoah in 1936, much of the timber had been cut, and many mountainside pastures were overgrazed. After protection, the fields reverted to a natural succession of shrubs, pine, locust, oak, and hickory. Shenandoah's deer prospered on this second-growth, as they have in many other areas where marginal farmland has returned to a mosaic of woodlands and pastures. Provided with adequate food



ROB & ANN SIMPSON

**Heavy browsing by white-tailed deer has affected the habitat of red-eyed vireos and other understory-dwelling birds.**

and protected from poaching or predators, deer populations can double in a year. Dominant bucks impregnate several females every autumn, and yearling does bear single fawns while older does typically produce twins. By 1955 Shenandoah's herd numbered 600; it may be four to five times that size now.

Besides increased protection, the deer have benefited from a shift in urban to suburban lifestyles. Wooded home sites have replaced dense forests, and the resulting habitat fragmentation, complete with lush lawns and tasty shrubbery, provides perfect forage for white-tails. Many subdivisions even include recreational green space, and with increased emphasis on wildlife-watching rather than hunting, these areas become deer refuges.

And therein lies part of the problem, for although suburban residents are enchanted the first few times they see deer in their yards, the charm fades when Bambi and his family devour gardens and costly landscaping. Safety is also an issue. Nationwide, 500,000 traffic accidents and a hundred deaths a year result from deer-human collisions. Deer-borne ticks can carry Lyme disease, a debilitating, sometimes fatal infection

**The 20th-century shift from urban to suburban lifestyles has boosted the size of white-tailed deer populations.**

ERWIN & PEGGY BAUER

that has spread in proportion to growing deer herds.

Suburban neighborhoods are not the only places affected by too many deer. A recent survey of potential resource management conflicts indicates that about 50 National Park Service areas also face problems because of high deer populations.

The impact on vegetation, for instance, can be severe. In 1992 biologist Emily Baxter of James Madison University, studying wildflowers, ferns, and shrubs native to Shenandoah's Big Meadows, found that 35 plant species, including formerly abundant beardtongue, boneset, fireweed, Angelica, Monarda, and sumac, had disappeared since 1975.

Deer have consumed blossoms of tall coneflower, Canadian burnet, and wild sarsaparilla while leaving unpalatable yarrow, common milkweed, deerberry, and thistle to proliferate. Other plants formerly found in a "profusion of flowering and colors that gave the meadow its unique and attractive appearance," says Baxter, are now "rarely or never found in flower." She described a portion of Big Meadows "that in 1991 contained thousands of Turks' cap lily seedlings and older plants, all of which were browsed to the exclusion of any flowers. In August of 1992, there were no remaining Turks' cap lily plants at this site."

"Deer are definitely impacting the meadow," confirmed Shenandoah's botanist Wendy Cass, "but they are not the only cause for loss of meadow species and richness." Lack of fire and the natural succession of shrubs, which now cover about a fifth of the meadow, compound the problem. In past decades, mowing and burning were used to keep the meadow open. Cass is studying ecological changes at Big Meadows and will ultimately make management recommendations.

Another deer-affected area is Catoclin Mountain Park, where researchers from Maryland's Hood College monitor deer impacts on vegetation. "Exclosures," plots protected by deer-proof fences, are located near similar plots to which deer have free access. Catoclin's resource manager Jim Voigt reports that herbaceous plants are more diverse and



## DEER Continued

tree seedlings are robust inside the exclosures. Outside, deer devour young trees, shrubs, and wildflowers including mayapple, bloodroot, and jack-in-the-pulpit. "You see a definite browse line on the mountain laurels," Voigt says. "Below 4.5 feet, there's nothing green left."

Initial observations by William McShea of the Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, Virginia, suggest that heavy deer browsing has reduced acorns and low-growing vegetation available to squirrels, chipmunks, and woodland mice. McShea also noted that understory-dwelling birds such as red-eyed vireos, hooded warblers, and wood thrushes were more numerous in plots that rebuffed deer. A Pennsylvania study indicated that understory bird diversity was reduced by 27 percent in forests with intense deer use. Compared with healthy woodlands, deer-impacted forests had only two-thirds the number of birds nesting in the understory.

In Wisconsin's old-growth forests with heavy deer use, University of Wisconsin botanist William Alverson found that hemlock and white cedar seedlings are eaten so readily that no trees are available to renew the next generation. David Augustine of Syracuse University and Lee Frelich of the University of Minnesota studied deer in old-growth forests of southeastern Minnesota. In areas with high deer populations, they observed that up to 75 percent of the mature trilliums—succulent wildflowers that are a favorite deer food—were eaten. In areas with balanced populations, fewer than 25 percent of the trilliums were consumed.

Initial studies using exclosures at Cuyahoga National Recreation Area in northeastern Ohio indicate that deer there are browsing heavily on trilliums and other spring wildflowers. "The big problem is how much is too much," says Garree Williamson, Cuyahoga's resources management specialist. "How much damage can you tolerate before you control deer?"

A given habitat can support only a certain number of healthy deer over an extended period of time. This biological



JOHN K. GATES



JOHN K. GATES



ROB & ANNE SIMPSON

**Deer devour wildflowers including bloodroot (top left), jack-in-the-pulpit (top right), and wood lily.**

carrying capacity depends upon the amount and quality of food available to deer, particularly in winter when forage is scarce. When more deer occupy an area than the habitat can support, vegetation is over-browsed. Individual deer become gaunt and susceptible to disease. Reproductive rates drop.

In urban and suburban areas, social tolerance is also a factor. Cultural carrying capacity determines the maximum number of deer that can coexist in harmony with local human populations. Even in places with enough food to support deer, when complaints from home gardeners, farmers, or drivers of vehicles involved in deer collisions reach a point of intolerance, deer numbers may be too high.

Yet even as deer proliferate, municipalities face hard decisions regarding management options. These problems are shared by parks from Fire Island National Seashore to Valley Forge and Morristown national historical parks, which have become islands of natural vegetation in a sea of ever-expanding suburbs.

Some favor "letting nature take its course," perhaps not realizing that humans have interfered with nature for

generations. Deer reproduce prolifically as an evolutionary response to predation by wolves, cougars, bobcats, coyotes, and to centuries of hunting by humans. However, we have upset the natural predator-prey balance by eradicating wolves and cougars, and most remaining habitats are too fragmented for successful predator reintroduction. Humans have also altered plant communities on a huge scale, replacing native vegetation with exotic crops and landscaping species. In a place such as Shenandoah National Park, the deer population may expand beyond the habitat's ability to support them, leaving the animals vulnerable to starvation and disease.

Erecting tall fences or using repellents that make vegetation unpalatable to deer—another possible solution—will usually keep them out of home gardens, but these measures are expensive and limited in the size of area they can protect. More than a decade ago resource managers at Catoclin installed fencing around a few purple fringed orchids, a threatened state species growing in the park. Unfortunately, the solution was limited. "Wire cages have helped protect individual specimens," Jim Voigt says, "but the deer just move on to other species."

Another possible solution, trapping and relocation, depends upon finding a suitable area to release captured deer. Years ago when deer were scarce, state game agencies were happy to reintroduce the animals. These days, however, few communities want them. Deer are actually "stay-at-home" creatures with territories of about one square mile. When transferred, stress may cause 55 to 85 percent of the animals to die. Trapping is also expensive; relocation costs \$400 to \$600 per animal.

Contraceptive programs show some promise as a solution in small-scale, physically isolated populations, such as those on Fire Island, which the Humane Society began to study in 1993. About 130 does there were darted annually with a vaccine that blocks their ability to become pregnant. Researchers have enlisted Fire Island residents to help identify and monitor the deer so they can be given annual booster shots.

Unless contraceptives can be injected once for the life of the animal, however, the necessity of follow-up treatments makes this method too costly and time-consuming to be practical on a large scale. Contraceptives have been tested elsewhere, but no way exists to ensure that free-ranging deer visit bait stations daily to ingest birth control drugs. Also of concern is what effect the drugs may have on humans if deer are subsequently shot and eaten by hunters.

Historically, the least expensive and most efficient means of regulating deer populations has been to cull the herds, managed by state or federal agencies. For decades most states have enforced deer hunting regulations and gathered biological information at hunter check stations, making deer control one of the most-studied aspects of wildlife management. Hunting allows game biologists to modify the size and composition of herds by adjusting the length and timing of hunting season, the number of permits issued, and the size and sex of animals targeted.

A liberal hunting season can help manage deer herds, but hunting is not permitted in national parks except in the few areas where it is specifically authorized by Congress. Hunting deer on rural land can be effective, but bringing deer hunters into heavily visited parks or suburban neighborhoods is unsafe. In these situations, sharpshooters have been employed to reduce deer numbers. The shooters are typically park wildlife specialists or game management professionals. Deer are baited into a secured area and often dispatched at night so that danger to human visitors or residential neighbors is reduced.

This method of control is proving successful at Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania, which preserves a significant Civil War battle site, and adjoining Eisenhower National Historic Site, which is managed to perpetuate the historic scene during the era President Eisenhower owned his farm. Two decades ago resource man-

agers noticed that deer were browsing these woodlots so heavily that young trees were not regenerating. The animals were consuming corn and other crops before they matured, resulting in losses to farmers operating under park permits. Research had shown that a herd of 80 deer would achieve the desired conditions to promote the historic scene at



**Deer contraception has been tested on Fire Island, New York.**

the park, but in 1995 the area's deer population was 14 times greater.

After studying various options, park resource managers are cooperatively managing the herd with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, which promotes hunting outside the parks. No public hunting is permitted at Gettysburg NMP or Eisenhower NHS, so trained Park Service employees dispatch targeted deer on winter nights in areas away from visitor use. Since 1995, 934 deer have been removed from the park in this way. The venison is donated to homeless shelters and certain organs are used for scientific research. By the second year of the reduction program, farmers were once again able to grow corn and milo in the historic areas. The Gettysburg herd now includes fewer

than 200 animals, and after planned reductions during the winter of 1999-2000, the herd should be kept in check by removing 20 to 40 deer annually.

As they evaluate available deer management options, Park Service decision makers must choose actions that fit the purpose for which each park was established. At Gettysburg, for instance, the goal is to evoke the scene of the 1863 battle. Cuyahoga, on the other hand, provides a rural setting for hiking, biking, and other nature-based recreation, while Catoctin and Shenandoah conserve the diverse flora and fauna of the Appalachian Mountains. As a guideline for managing natural areas, biologist A. Starker Leopold authored a 1963 policy statement that influences NPS natural resource actions. He stated, "Above all other policies, the maintenance of naturalness should prevail." When nature is unable to accomplish the task alone, Leopold believed, NPS managers should maintain, restore, or recreate natural systems using "the utmost in skill, judgment, and ecologic sensitivity."

"Ecological intervention must always be done with humility," adds Bob Krumenaker, former chief of resource management at Shenandoah, now NPS Deputy Associate Northeast Regional Director. "The NPS must not be afraid to take action when scientific information clearly indicates it is necessary to restore ecological integrity."

As human populations continue to expand and land use patterns outside parks change, it is certain that costly, controversial, and time-consuming decisions affecting deer populations lie ahead. In some cases, the time, effort, and funding focused on deer control could probably be better spent on other pressing issues. Nonetheless, over the next few years, parks can be expected to go through the process on a case-by-case basis as managers grapple with the problem of too many deer.

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CONNIE TOOPS lives in Frederick, Maryland, and last wrote for National Parks about snowshoeing in the national parks.



# Getting the Picture

*A national parks photographer takes us on a photo tour of four sites in the Southwest.*

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY LAURENCE PARENT

**A**S THE SKY BRIGHTENED in the east at Big Bend National Park, I pulled into the Santa Elena Canyon parking lot. I hopped out, donned my pack, and walked briskly down to the bank of the Rio Grande in the cool morning air.

A canyon wren's descending trill echoed off the canyon walls as I mounted my 4x5 camera on a tripod. As the sun peeked over the horizon, its light painted the 1,500-foot cliffs that tower over the river with pink. I shot frame after frame of large format slide film until the light became too harsh.

Although I photograph National Park System areas all over the country, I always return to the Chihuahuan Desert parks of west Texas and southeastern New Mexico. I spent much of my childhood at Carlsbad Caverns National Park exploring the backcountry and underground areas of that park as well as its sister national park, Guadalupe Mountains. As my photographic career became established, I returned often to photograph these parks along with Big Bend National Park and Fort Davis National Historic Site. Drawn by the endless variety of photographic scenes, I have produced two books on Big Bend and every year produce calendars featuring the parks.

September and October are among my favorite months and early and late in the day, when the heat is most bearable, are usually the best times to photograph

the parks. The summer monsoon season tapers off in September, but dramatic skies linger, and the rains bring blooming wildflowers and add some green to the desert. The parks are usually only lightly visited in early fall. Big Bend, Guadalupe Mountains, and Fort Davis all lie partly in cooler mountains, but by mid-October temperatures are pleasant everywhere. The four parks make a great photographic trip; if possible, allow two weeks for a thorough tour.

## Big Bend

Start your trip at Big Bend National Park, a more than 800,000-acre park lying on a curve of the Rio Grande in a remote corner of west Texas. The river

has carved three major canyons on its path through Big Bend. The mouth of Santa Elena Canyon catches the sun's first light, offering dramatic shots of one of the park's best-known landmarks, and the mouth of Boquillas Canyon, reached by an easy walk, looks best in evening light. Mariscal Canyon requires driving a long, rough dirt road and, for the best photos, a hot, strenuous hike up to the canyon rim. It may be best left until winter. However, if time and money allow, consider taking a river trip to get the best photos. Light is often dim at sunrise and sunset at these canyons; be sure to use a tripod and a slow speed film with saturated colors for best results.



LAURENCE PARENT is a professional photographer who lives in Manchaca, Texas.

If it gets too hot by the river, move up into the foothills of the Chisos Mountains. The Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive offers great views of jagged Mule Ear Peaks, Sotol Vista, and the reddish-brown cliffs of the western ramparts of the Chisos. Even higher in the mountains, cooler temperatures and additional rainfall foster a scrub forest of pine, juniper, and oak. The slopes are often lush with grass and wildflowers in late summer and early fall, including the bright scarlet blooms of shrubby mountain sage, prolific blue dayflowers, and the candelabra-shaped yellow-flowered stalks of agaves. In the Basin, in the heart of the mountains, the Window Trail leads down to Oak Creek, where a small stream winds through a scenic narrow canyon, pouring over cascades before ending in a high waterfall.

Some of the best sunset photos of the park capture panoramic views of mountain and desert from the Lost Mine Trail. It requires a moderately difficult hike, but the reward includes a dramatic landscape of rugged mountain peaks, deep canyons, twisted pines, and pinnacles of eroded red rock. If you wish to photograph sunset on the trail, be sure to take a good flashlight and keep an eye out for rattlesnakes in the cool of evening.

Fit photographers may want to consider the long, strenuous climb to the

South Rim, where the high mountains fall away abruptly in massive cliffs. Classic views encompass the Rio Grande more than a vertical mile below and mountains far away in Mexico.

Big Bend has three campgrounds that are open year-round and primitive car-camping sites on backroads. The lodge in the Basin is open all year. Reservations are recommended. Motels, restaurants, and river outfitters lie just outside the park in Study Butte, Terlingua, and Lajitas. For more information, visit the Park Service website at [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) or call 915-477-2251.

### Fort Davis

From Big Bend, head north to Fort Davis National Historic Site, which lies in the foothills of the Davis Mountains, where the days are warm and the nights cool. Oaks, pinyons, and junipers dot the lush, grassy volcanic hills, which in early September can be filled with wildflowers. Billowing thunderclouds offer a dramatic addition to photos of this historic frontier fort. The 460-acre park protects the best preserved U.S. military fort in the Southwest. About 20 percent of the original buildings have been restored. The geometric rows of officers' quarters and barracks make great photo subjects against a background of grassy mountains. For the best light, plan to arrive as soon as the park opens

in the morning or stay until it closes in the evening. I usually use color slide film, but the old buildings of the fort often tempt me to shoot some black and white, especially if the sky has dramatic clouds.

The charming little town of Fort Davis adjoins the park. It has several motels and bed and breakfasts and most other services. Davis Mountains State Park adjoins the historic site and has plenty of oak-shaded campsites. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) or call 915-426-3224.

### Guadalupe Mountains

In September, Guadalupe Mountains National Park can still be fairly hot, but the slopes are usually lush and green and thunderstorms add drama to the skies. By mid-October, grasses have turned gold and gone to seed and autumn color has begun.

The park is probably most famous for its colorful big-toothed maples in rugged McKittrick Canyon, and the soft light of gray days often gives you the best images of scarlet and gold. The deep, sheer-walled canyon gets heavy use during fall color, especially on weekends. Most areas of the park require hiking, but some trails, such as the one up McKittrick, are easy. During the height of color, an early start is advised to avoid the crowds. Stay on the



The photographer used a Linhof 4x5 for all of these pictures. LEFT: A 360 mm lens caught this view at Big Bend an hour after sunrise. ABOVE: An early morning view of Fort Davis using a 90 mm lens. RIGHT: A late afternoon shot of El Capitan Peak using a 240 millimeter (mm) lens.





## EXCURSIONS

continued

trail; the canyon's delicate vegetation cannot withstand much trampling.

Smith Spring also has good autumn color and fewer people. A relatively easy 2.3-mile loop trail leads to a delicate oasis shaded by maples, oaks, pines, and madrones, whose smooth pink bark offers interesting close-up shots. A stream tumbles into a fern-lined pool under a twisted old maple. Smith Spring offers the best photo opportunities in the soft light of cloudy days.

The towering limestone cliffs of El Capitan Peak, shaped like the prow of a massive ship, are one of the most recognizable landmarks of the Southwest. Unlike many of the park's other destinations, no hiking is necessary. Great images can be obtained along U.S. Highway 62-180 on the south side of the park. The peak turns multiple shades of pink and gold at sunrise and sunset.

Photographers in good condition can hike up into the park's high country. In

stark contrast to the desert slopes below, the mountaintops hide a forest of pine, fir, and a few aspen. In early September, the 8,000-foot high country is lush, green, and cool. Wildflowers abound in the meadows. Views from the peaks, especially Guadalupe Peak, Texas' highest point, are unsurpassed. An overnight backpacking trip may be necessary to get sunrise or sunset photos in the high country.

The park maintains two year-round campgrounds, Pine Spring and the more remote Dog Canyon Campground. The closest motels and restaurants lie some distance away in White's City and Carlsbad, New Mexico, and Van Horn, Texas. Visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov), or call 915-828-3251 for information.

### Carlsbad Caverns

Carlsbad Caverns National Park lies an hour away from Guadalupe Mountains National Park and preserves a lower sec-

tion of the same mountains. Enormous limestone caverns lie hidden beneath the stark desert surface.

You will have many opportunities for photos on the three miles of paved trails through the caverns. The existing electric cave lighting used during tours of Carlsbad Caverns changes color on film, so time exposures tend not to work well. Without a lot of lighting equipment and a tripod (not allowed on most tours), it is difficult to photograph large chambers. Try using a faster film and concentrate on photos of formations and small scenes not more than ten to 20 feet away. To create more depth in your photos, use a synch cord and hold your flash several feet away from the camera. Remember to stay on the trail; cave formations are very fragile.

Tours of Slaughter Canyon Cave, located in a remote part of the park, follow a strenuous dirt trail and require flashlights. The area around the Clans-

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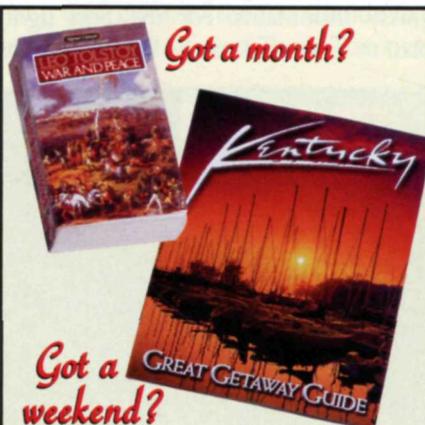
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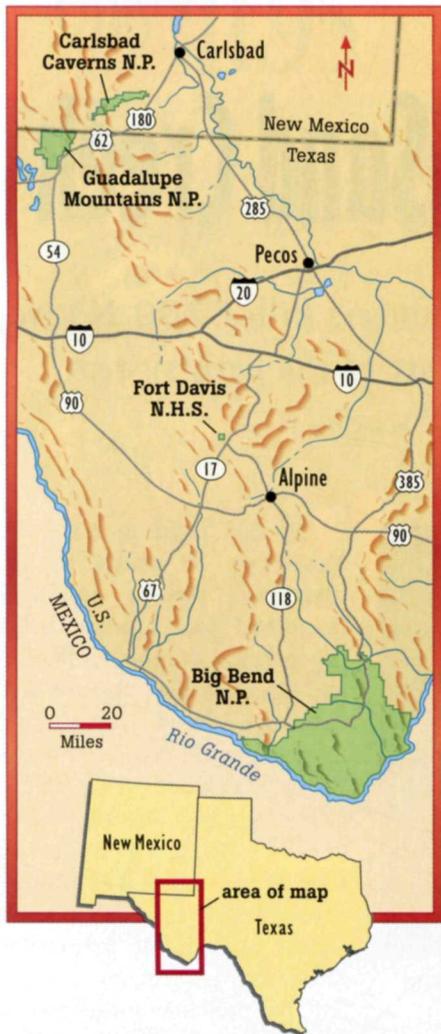
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MATT KANAKA

man and Christmas Tree formations offers the best photo possibilities of the tour. The eerie Clansman resembles a skull draped with white robes, while the larger Christmas Tree sparkles with thousands of tiny calcite crystals. Reservations are advised for Slaughter Canyon Cave trips.

For surface shots of the park, hike the little-used trails up Slaughter or Yucca canyons into the backcountry. Deep, sheer-walled canyons beg to be photographed, particularly if you are blessed with a dramatic sky. Drive the gravel scenic loop that starts near the visitor center late in the afternoon for more possibilities. The overlook of Rattlesnake Canyon offers the best views on the drive.

Restaurants are in the park; all other services can be found in nearby White's City and Carlsbad. For more information, visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov) or call 505-785-2233.

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# Massacre at Sand Creek

The site where Colorado volunteers killed 200 Native Americans may become part of the park system.

BY KATURAH MACKAY

**O**N NOVEMBER 29, 1864, Lt. Col. John Chivington of the First and Third Regiments of the Colorado Cavalry and 700 troops descended on the camp of Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle on what is now called Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado. As the day dawned, Chivington and his troops slaughtered approximately 200 men, women, and children who believed they slept under the protection of the U.S. flag.

Today, under the direction of Congress, the National Park Service (NPS) and descendants of the Cheyenne and Arapaho who died in the massacre are trying to locate the exact site to properly memorialize it.

Legislation introduced by Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colo.), who is a member of the Northern Cheyenne Council of Chiefs and the only American Indian in Congress, directs NPS to locate the site, conduct an archaeological survey, and complete a special resource study to determine feasibility for inclusion in the park system, a move NPCA supports. The legislation became law October 1998. If Congress agrees on the site's suitability, it must allocate the funds to buy the land, now privately owned.

"The Sand Creek Massacre effectively began the hostilities that triggered the

---

KATURAH MACKAY is former news editor for National Parks magazine.



This painting depicts the massacre at Sand Creek where 200 men, women and children were killed.

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY/ARTIST, ROBERT LINDREUX

Indian wars across the plains, and created an atmosphere of enormous distrust between the tribes and the government," says Christine Whitacre, NPS historian and team captain for the Sand Creek Massacre project. "To this day, it remains one of the most emotionally charged events in our history."

When the U.S. Army began its campaign to subdue Indian tribes, Lt. Col. John Chivington, a former Methodist minister, offered his services.

Chief Black Kettle had met with the federal government seeking peace negotiations. He was instructed by the Colorado governor and territorial officials to move his people to Fort Lyon. When Black Kettle arrived, the fort was crowded with hundreds of Indians. He informed officers that he would camp 40 miles away on Sand Creek, where he would wait with other Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs until the government could devise peace agreements.

On the frigid morning of November 29, some Indian men were present, although many had gone hunting, leaving mostly women, children, and elderly in the village. When the attack ensued, eyewitnesses reported hundreds fleeing up the dry creek bed. Many frantically dug holes into the banks of Sand Creek, trying in vain to hide from the gun and cannon fire. Amidst the seven-hour attack, Black Kettle reportedly raised an American and a white flag, but they flew unheeded.

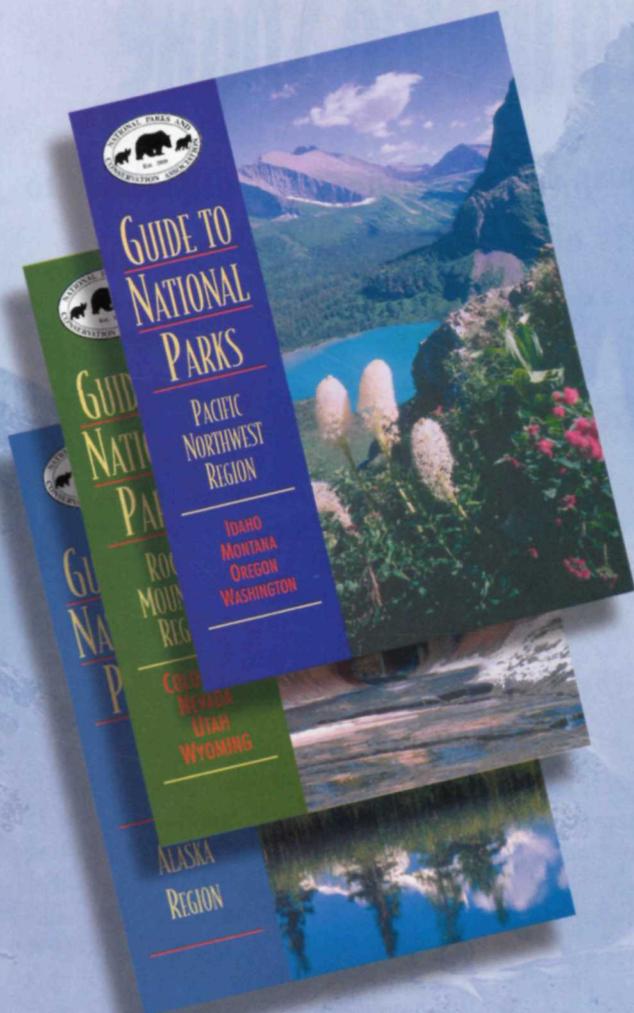
"In a single devastating strike, the Colorado troops had eliminated all of the Cheyenne chiefs who had favored peace," writes NPS historian Jerome Greene in the draft statement of significance to Congress. "The site comprises sacred ground, consecrated by the blood of lost forbears and venerated by descendants and friends of those who died as well as of those who survived."

The archaeological survey concluded in May, yielding arrowheads, period military ammunition, hide scrapers, camping equipment, and personal ornaments—the condition of which led archaeologists and historians to identify Black Kettle's camp.

"Sand Creek is very sacred to the Cheyenne," says Laird Cometsvah, a Southern Cheyenne chief and president of the Southern Cheyenne Sand Creek Descendants who participated in the National Park Service survey. "History will be preserved for our children and grandchildren." 

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# Eastern Indigo Snake

Within Canaveral National Seashore, scientists race to find answers about a rare snake's needs.

BY ELIZABETH G. DAERR

**W**HETHER TOURING NASA's Kennedy Space Center or watching a space shuttle launch, millions of people arrive annually at Cape Canaveral, Florida, to learn about the unknown—space. But as millions of dollars worth of technology rocket skyward, a little understood creature that relies on habitat within Canaveral National Seashore may glide to extinction for want of a few dollars.

Canaveral is the primary place where recovery research on this threatened creature is happening, and because of limited federal funds, researchers have just three years to create a recovery program to save the reptile.

The eastern indigo snake project began in 1998 after an anonymous donor pledged money for a three-year study. So far, 41 of the snakes have been captured, implanted with radio transmitters, and tracked across 1,276 square miles, and not a single nest or hatchling has been found. A year and a half into the project, 17 snakes have been lost to a variety of causes or mysteriously disappeared, leaving scientists to speculate whether the animals were killed or snatched for a private collection outside the transmitter boundaries.

Scientists believe that the noticeable decline in eastern indigos began in the 1960s and 1970s and was caused by a combination of increasing develop-

ELIZABETH G. DAERR is news editor for *National Parks magazine*.



JOE McDONALD

**The eastern indigo's docile temperament has made it a target of the commercial pet trade.**

ment, poaching, and habitat fragmentation. Once found from Alabama to Georgia and south through Florida, the Eastern Indigo is confined mostly to central Florida, where its remaining habitat—upland sandhills and brushlands—is in demand by developers. The snake has been spotted in Everglades and Biscayne national parks but is not common. Because so few hard data are available on the snake, estimating the population is difficult for scientists.

In the past, the eastern indigo's docile temperament, shimmering bluish-black skin, and nonpoisonous status made it a popular specimen among amateur herpetologists, who caught them as pets or sold them for commercial trade. Meanwhile, as some eastern indigos were being snatched up, others were being run down. Whether on purpose or by accident, road fatalities have been and continue to be the snake's most common cause of demise. Another phenomenon, rattlesnake round-

ups—the unfortunate and now illegal practice of flooding ground burrows with gasoline to force out rattlesnakes from their resting places—continues to take a toll on this rare snake. The practice not only kills non-targeted eastern indigos, which also use the burrows for protection and food sources, but makes the dens uninhabitable for future residents.

Herpetologists know basic information about the Eastern Indigo: they eat birds, young turtles and frogs, and other

snakes; they may live nine to ten years in the wild; and they can produce five to ten eggs—possibly every year. But the bigger questions that are crucial to their survival, such as just how much habitat is required to sustain a viable population, how often they reproduce and under what conditions, and how adaptable they are to their changing environment, have yet to be answered. Opinions vary as to whether it is a lack of federal funding or a deep-seated fear of serpents that has made the eastern indigo's recovery a low priority.

Becky Smith, one of the project's ecologists, worries that the progress that has been made in the last year may become moot if funding does not continue. Three years' research will not provide enough data to create the federal recovery program on which the snake's existence depends. "There's a lot of work that could be done for many, many years," she says. "This is just the beginning."

# Call It Silence

Nature's own brand of noise can be one of the attributes that defines the wilderness.

BY T. H. WATKINS

**H**ERE IS WHAT we usually say when we offer up reasons for the preservation of the wild: the diversity of species it holds and nurtures drives the engine of evolution, and without that diversity, life—including human life—will become attenuated and bleak; its forests help to clean the water and air of the poisons our civilization produces; it provides the opportunity for recreation, from hunting and fishing to rockclimbing and kayaking; its beauty gives joy to the eye and its solitude gives comfort to the soul.

Good reasons all, and it never hurts to repeat them. But there is something else that wild country gives us. This quality is not often cited as a reason to come to the defense of wilderness, but I think maybe the time has come to include it, for it is as rare a thing in our modern world as the most endangered of endangered species—and without it, we would be lost forever in our own dithering cacophony of noise. Some call it silence, but I think that is a misnomer that derives from our long exposure to the discordant yammering with which we live in the workaday world. Any environment uncorrupted by the beeping, pounding, whining, roaring, growling, and screaming of civilization may by comparison appear to be free of sound.

There is nothing silent about the

T.H. WATKINS is Stegner Professor at Montana State University, former editor of *Wilderness* magazine, and author of numerous books of history and conservation.

wild. In fact, its own brand of noise can be seen as one of the attributes that defines the wilderness. Consider Wallace Stegner's famous essay, "The Sound of Mountain Water," in which he recalls his first encounter with a mountain river in full force. However beautiful, it is not merely the look of the river that fixes the moment in his memory; it is the sounds it gives him, from the "undiminished shouting" of its "falling



DOUGLAS MACGREGOR

tons of water" to "a whole symphony of smaller sounds, hiss and splash and gurgle, the small talk of side channels, the whisper of blown and scattered spray gathering itself and beginning to flow again, secret and irresistible, among the wet rocks." Like Stegner, when I think about my own wilderness experiences, it is impossible for me to remember them without the sounds that helped to define them. I cannot re-imagine those moonlit nights I knew as a boy in California's Mojave Desert without hearing the poetry of coyotes that filled the void. When I recall my first encounter with the high plains of eastern Montana along the Missouri

River 25 years ago, it is the sound of the wind as it moved through the grass that makes the memory real, a sound unlike any other I had ever heard, wild and whispery, as if it carried stories beyond human comprehension. When I think about a night camped along the Dirty Devil River in Utah a few years ago, I remember most vividly the cries of a mountain lion drifting ghostlike down the canyon from somewhere in the distance, and it is the memory of the passionate trilling of spring peepers echoing off the redrock walls of the Upper Paria River Gorge of Utah a few weeks ago that gives the experience its essential reality for me.

Indeed, I find that my memory is a wilderness soundbox: the rush of wind in the treetops of a glade in the Smokies, the indefinable noontime buzz of insects in a mountain meadow in Yellowstone, the snuffling and grunting of a grizzly on the Coastal Plain of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, the angry chattering of squirrels in Olympic National Park, the muted gurgle of the great wide river that oozes through the sawgrass and palmettos of the Everglades on its way to Florida Bay, the elemental thunder of the surf at Asateague Island National Seashore, and everywhere, the sounds of birds, always the birds—the high screams of eagles, the thin whistles of hawks, the ethereal night calls of owls, the tender, tumbling-down notes of canyon wrens, the inelegant squawks of magpies, the ragged, heartbreaking songs of mead-

owlarks wafting through the air as if they were pieces of the wind torn loose and randomly cast out into the world—these and a thousand other beautiful noises haunt my memory and continue to give me joy.

I think the same is true of most people who find themselves at home in the wilderness. The sounds that annotate our solitude and amplify our delight are as precious to us as the sight of a serrated peak against a cloud-ridden sky, the taste of wild river water, the feel of hand against ancient rock, or the smell of mountain sage.

Not silence, then, but a voice. Take it from us and you take with it much of what wilderness means. And, increasingly, it is being taken—or at least being overwhelmed by the decibels we produce with such wholesouled enthusiasm. I may have been lulled into sleep by spring peepers in the Upper Paria River Gorge last May, but I was awakened the next morning by a mysterious growling that grew louder and louder

until it was all that I could hear as a family group of recreationists came roaring down the riverbed on their ATVs, muddying the river, stinking up the air, and transcending anything nature might have had to say. I wanted to throw rocks at these probably perfectly decent people, but only glowered as they roared on by me, waving cheerfully.

My reaction then was immoderate, perhaps, but I think understandable. It is the same anger many people feel when they hear the ghastly whine of snowmobiles in Yellowstone and Voyageurs national parks, the outrageous buzz of dirt bikes in Mojave National Preserve, the ominous clatter of sightseeing helicopters over Grand Canyon National Park, sonic booms from military flights over Death Valley National Park, the rumble of tour buses in Denali National Park, or the rooster-tail clamor of Jet Skis on any body of water in the United States large enough to float a rubber duck. It is the same kind of anger that inspires people to write their congress-

people, call for legislation, and otherwise raise all manner of hell.

I am all for the anger, but perhaps a little pity should be joined to it. For if the noisemakers occasionally violate the wilderness experience of people like me, consider what they are doing to themselves all the time.

Did the family from Kanab gain anything lasting from its day of tearing up and down the Paria River on ATVs? Does a man ripping across the landscape on a snowmobile experience the true character of a Yellowstone winter? Do airborne Grand Canyon tourists learn anything about the astonishing world below their big Plexiglas view windows that they could not have gotten at an IMAX theatre?

I think not, for by experiencing the wilderness only from the other side of a great wall of human-made noise, they are shutting themselves off from earthly conversations—and when the voice of the Earth is stifled, so is the hope of understanding our place in it. 

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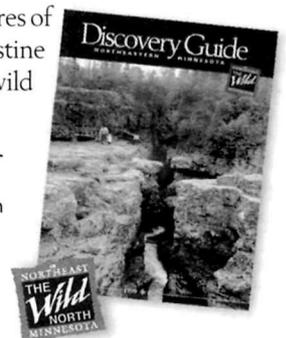
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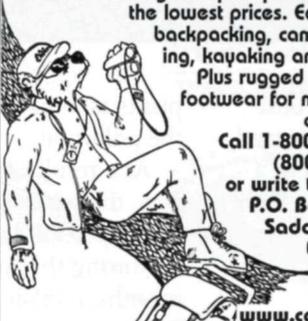
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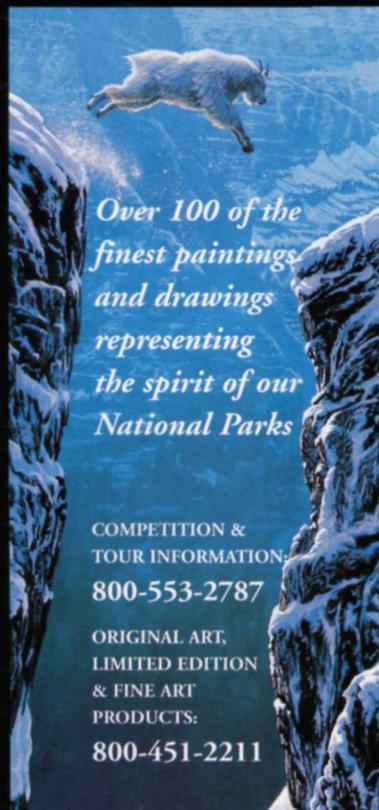
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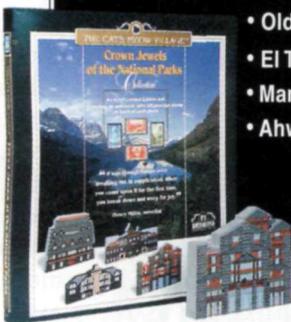
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BY WILLIAM A. UPDIKE

## Diversity Forum Begun Online

►NPCA recently launched an online discussion on race, culture, and diversity in the National Park System. The forum is designed to allow *Mosaic in Motion Conference* participants, members of the *Community Partners Program*, and other interested individuals to share their thoughts on issues of diversity in the National Park System as NPCA and the National Park Service (NPS) continue to develop programs and projects that address this important topic.

The forum at [www.npca.org](http://www.npca.org) features a question each month regarding diversity and the national parks. Responses will be provided to the Park Service as it works to broaden the parks' appeal.

## Today Show Features NPCA Representative

►On June 22, Eileen Woodford, NPCA's Northeast regional director, was interviewed by Matt Lauer on the *Today Show*. The subject was a controversial NPS proposal at Gettysburg National Military Park to move the visitor center one-half mile from its current location.

Some Gettysburg business owners are concerned that the construction of a new center will affect their livelihoods. However, the current center is in a tragic state of disrepair.

"The current visitor center is a disgrace to the memory of the men who fought and died there, and it's a disgrace to the public," said Woodford.

The visitor center's interpretive capabilities are also in question.

"[Visitors] don't learn about the causes of the Civil War," said Woodford. "They don't learn about the consequences of the Battle of Gettysburg."

NPCA supports the construction of a new center.

## Press Events Focus on Air Pollution

►On June 29, NPCA participated in press conferences in Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee, announcing the release of *Clearing the Air: Protecting a National Jewel*. The report identifies air pollution as one of the most significant problems affecting Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) coal-fired power

plants as a major source of the pollution.

As a result of air pollution, the park has suffered an 80-percent loss of visibility during the summer months, rainfall that is five to ten times more acidic than natural rainfall, and unhealthy ozone levels. Last summer the park set a record of 44 unhealthy air days and the highest ozone levels ever recorded within park borders.

TVA coal-fired plants are the largest single industrial pollution source in the Tennessee River Valley and one of the top emitters of pollution in the country.

"We looked at TVA's impact not only because it operates some of the biggest and dirtiest coal-fired plants, but also because it is a federal agency responsible for protecting our public lands," said Danielle Droitsch, Southeast regional associate director. "This report demonstrates that with respect to sulfur dioxide, TVA's coal-fired plants have become dirtier since the passage of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990."

The report was prepared for the Tennessee Clean Air Task Force, of which NPCA is a member. It was made possible through the generous support of the Energy Foundation.

## Environmental Journalism Academy Meets

►NPCA co-sponsored the 1999 Environmental Journalism Academy June 14–19 in Washington, D.C.

The goal of the academy, which was sponsored by the National Environmental Wire for Students (NEWS), a program of the Center for Environmental Citizenship, is to help provide students with the skills to write about the environment.

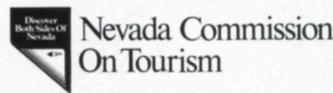
About 100 students from throughout the country and Canada attended the event.

Katurah Mackay, former news editor for *National Parks*, and Chris Corwin, NPCA's communications associate, ran a workshop titled "Biodiversity II—Our National Park System." Corwin and Mackay had five objectives for their panel: to present a history of national parks and the commitment to protect biodiversity; to describe laws and regulations relating to biodiversity in the national parks; to discuss current threats to biodiversity; to examine means of communicating the science behind biodiversity in the national parks; and to discuss ways to explain biodiversity in the national parks to the average reader.

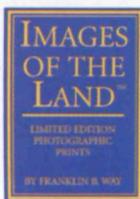
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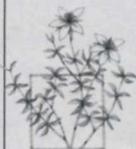


WILLARD CLAY

**H**IKERS MUST HIRE a Navajo guide to explore this park's 83,840 acres of canyons and cliff dwellings built between A.D. 350 and 1300. Part of the "Grand Circle," the largest concentration of national parks, monuments, and recreation areas on Earth, the park is actually owned by the Navajo Nation, not by the Park Service. One of only two ratified treaties between the Navajo and the U.S. government was signed here. Have you visited this park? Do you know which one it is? [ANSWER ON PAGE 10.]

# The Desert That Glistened With Water.

Southeastern New Mexico is  
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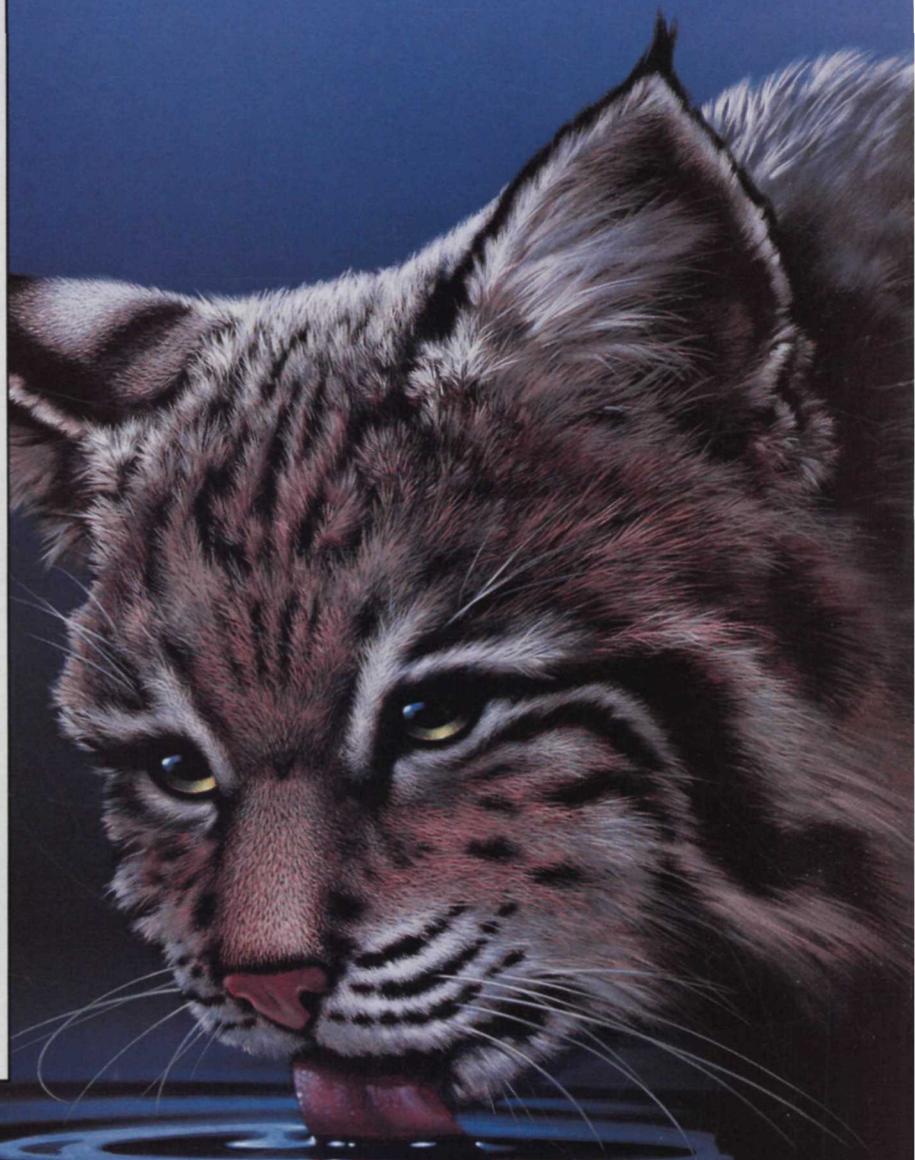


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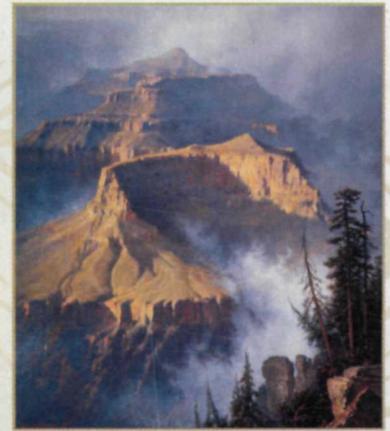
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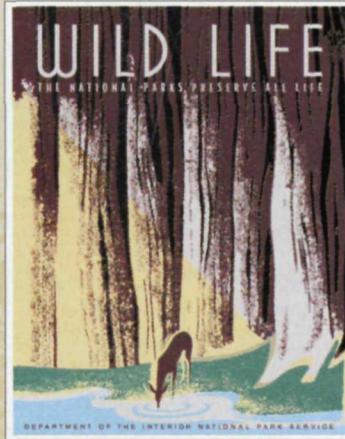
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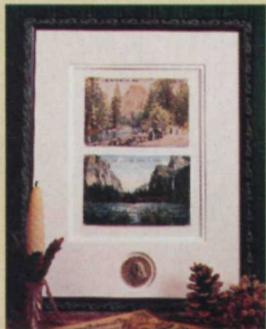
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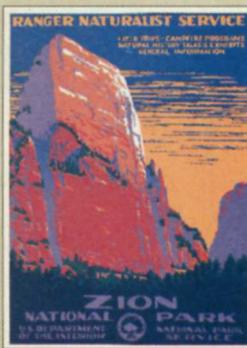
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