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IN GLACIER BAY

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DECADES OFF
THE GRID

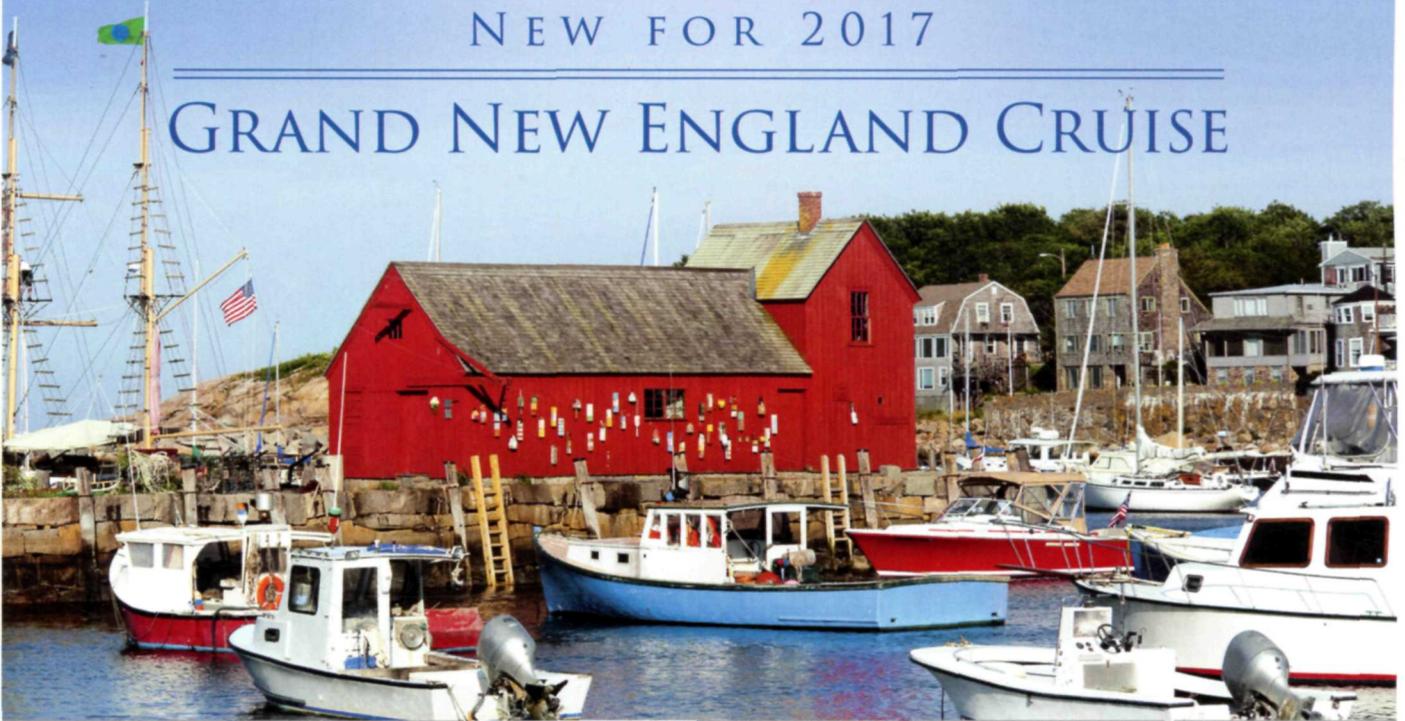
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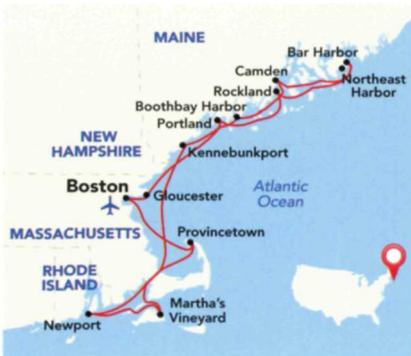
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COVER:
GAZING OUT over Great
Sand Dunes National
Park.

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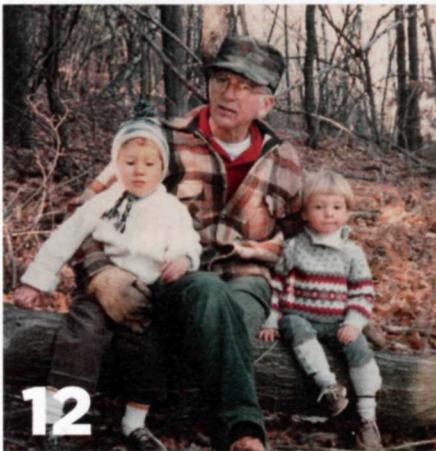
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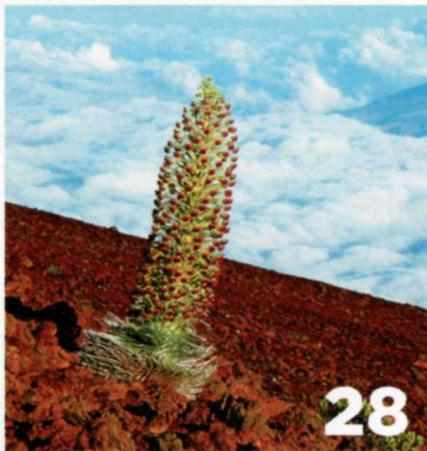
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What Unites Us

National parks are at the top of the list of reasons that international visitors come to our country. Grand Canyon, Yosemite and Yellowstone are visited every year by millions of people from around the globe as well as those of us who live in the United States. And no matter our differences, the vast majority of Americans believe national parks are among what's best about this country.

We are in a time of significant change and uncertainty. It's difficult for anyone to predict what the next year may bring. But one of the things that unites us is our love of national parks and the values they represent. We know that Americans overwhelmingly want a thriving environment with clear air, clean water and healthy wildlife. Americans also want to be sure these places — natural lands and historic and cultural sites — are protected for their children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Time and time again, I have seen concerned people stand up for these values and win important victories when our national parks come under attack. We do this because of our love for these treasured places. Our national parks give us opportunities to grieve and to celebrate, to feel connected to nature and history, to reflect on periods of strife and progress, to experience joy and serenity, and to cherish the very best our nation has to offer.

Now more than ever, we must remember our history and do everything we can to protect this great legacy entrusted to us. We need you with us as we continue to defend our parks from the many threats they face. You give us strength, and our voices together truly have the power to improve our world.

Warm regards,
Theresa Pierno



Editor's Note



NPS

PROENNEKE LIKED to make gray jays work for their crackers.

Off The Grid

Many of us, at some point, dream about getting away from it all. Especially in these turbulent times, when the endless flow of media can feel oppressive, most people can relate to the urge to escape for an hour, a week, a month.

Richard Proenneke's escape lasted 30 years. In May 1968, he arrived at a remote spot on the edge of Alaska's Lake Clark and built a log cabin that he lived in until he was 82. He occasionally had supplies flown in, but he largely lived off the land, spending his days fishing, hiking, canoeing, picking blueberries, observing nature and keeping journals. Proenneke's quiet adventure ultimately became well known through his writings and films about his life, and decades later, his story still captivates and moves people. Alan and Laurel Bennett, who were guides at the cabin for six summers, said some visitors — awed by the feeling of walking straight into a beloved book — broke down in tears when they first saw Proenneke's home in what is now Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. A veteran who made the trip told them that to find some inner calm while in Iraq, he repeatedly had watched a movie about Proenneke, promising himself that he would visit the cabin if he ever made it out.

"To move off and build a cabin in the wilderness and be self-sufficient — Dick's life resonates with many people's dream of what they could do," Alan said.

In this issue, we are publishing an excerpt from the Bennetts' new book, "Dick Proenneke: Reflections on a Man in his Wilderness" (p. 52). A collection of remembrances, the book gives readers a glimpse into a faraway world where life is always unplugged and every day is filled with sweeping beauty and small pleasures.

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NationalParks

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WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT WE DO

NPCA protects and enhances America's national parks for present and future generations by identifying problems and generating support to resolve them.

EDITORIAL MISSION

National Parks magazine fosters an appreciation of the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, educates readers about the need to preserve those resources, and illustrates how member contributions drive our organization's park-protection efforts. The magazine uses the power of imagery and language to forge a lasting bond between NPCA and its members, while inspiring new readers to join the cause. National Parks magazine is among a member's chief benefits. Of the \$25 membership dues, \$6 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Members can help defend America's natural and cultural heritage. Activists alert Congress and the administration to park threats, comment on park planning and adjacent land-use decisions, assist NPCA in developing partnerships, and educate the public and the media. Please sign up to receive Park Notes, our monthly email newsletter. Go to npca.org/join to sign up.

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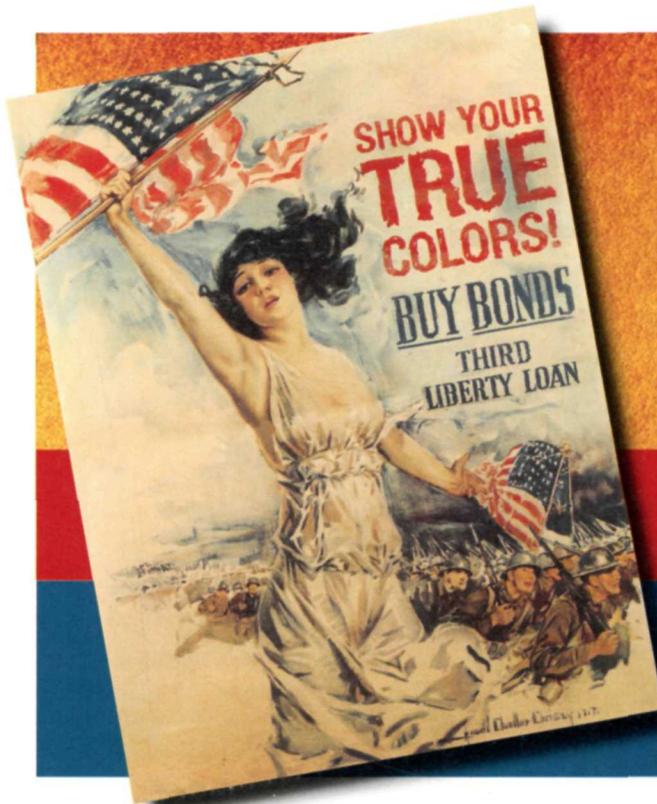
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If you have any questions about your membership, call Member Services at 800.628.7275. On a selective basis, NPCA makes its membership list available to organizations that our members find of interest. If you would like your name removed from this list, please call us at the number listed above.

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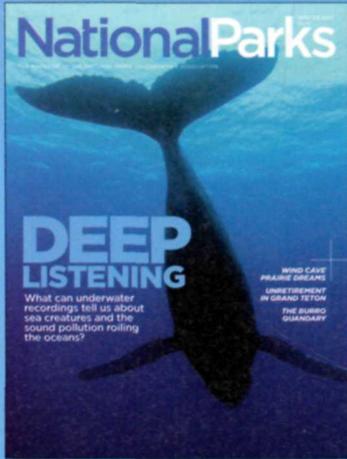
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PRAIRIE MAGIC

I have been a supporter of NPCA for a few years now, and every season, I look forward to receiving National Parks magazine. It is one of the few publications that I still read cover to cover.

For the past 10 years, my wife, Elaine, and I have been on a quest to hike every national park in our system. People often ask us, "Which is your favorite national park?" I feel it is a question I cannot answer. However, I do seem to always mention Wind Cave National Park ["Prairie Portal"]. The cave was fantastic, almost eerie and very cool, but the prairie hikes and the elk ... for some reason,

we both had the type of experience and feeling that stirs emotion years later. To this day, I know both Elaine and I still feel the special magic of the prairie above that cave in South Dakota.

DAMIEN WISSOLIK
Gibsonia, PA

DIVISIVE DONKEYS

I was pleased to see Nicolas Brulliard's article ["The Burro Quandary"] in the winter issue. This article clearly points out the problem of increasing burro populations and the impact on the environment, which will become more severe and costly unless something is done soon!

The article refers to the three-phase removal program that began in Death Valley in 1983. The first two phases successfully removed 5,873 burros, the majority of which were adopted through the Fund for Animals and Wild Horses of America.

In 1987, the park began phase three, which allowed selected rangers to shoot any remaining burros in remote areas, not to exceed three in any one location. If larger groups were discovered, the

BLM was called in. In the next seven years about 200 burros and a few horses were rescued and an estimated 500 were shot. By October 1994, thanks to this successful program and a public relations campaign, the burros had been reduced to about zero!

EDWIN L. ROTHFUSS
Kalispell, MT

The writer is the former superintendent of Death Valley National Park.

I read about the burros in the Winter 2017 issue. They should be left alone. Humans put them there and now, as usual, the animals are supposed to pay for our mistake. It isn't their fault — they are just trying to survive. I know it is complicated, but so often the wildlife gets all the blame for damage when it is really humans who are at fault.

So I vote to leave the wild burros wild.

BONNIE SCOTT
Ravensdale, WA

FOUL OWL

While hiking along the beach at Oregon Dunes several years ago, I really had to go and came across a conveniently located composting toilet ["Killer Com-modes"]. I opened the seat lid and thought I was seeing things. Two big eyes were looking up at me! After an initial shock, my eyes adjusted, and I realized there was a large owl stuck in the vault. Needless to say, I didn't use the toilet. I came across a ranger a while later and informed him. I was worried about that owl for quite some time. I hope he made it out okay.

KEVIN OLDHAM
Shirley, NY

SOME REASSURING WORDS

In reading the latest issue of National Parks, I was hit with an overwhelming sense of hope that, in the end, everything will be all right. In the current landscape

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of political turmoil and hostility, every one of the articles in the issue struck a chord with me. Katherine McKinney's article on Reg and Laurie Wofford and their amazing dedication to Grand Teton National Park spoke volumes about the positivity of connection. Cameron Walker's article on the whitebark pine and Kate Siber's article on the Guadalupe fescue proved that tenacity, even in a small corner of the natural world, goes a long way. I could go on and on, but then you'd be reading for years. Thank you all for doing what you do. Your writings inspire and reassure! Keep it up.

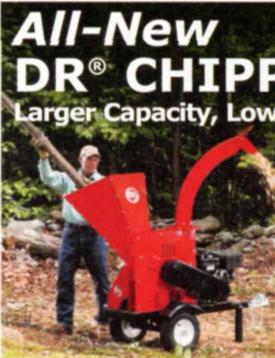
KEEGAN RYAN
Seattle, WA

CORRECTION:

The story "The Burro Quandary" incorrectly referred to a park site in the Caribbean. It's Virgin Islands National Park — not Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument — that has a small population of burros.

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Echoes

We are alarmed at the potential for an already understaffed Park Service to be further challenged to handle the record number of visitors and care for resources that are increasingly falling into disrepair.

John Garder, NPCA's budget and appropriations director, quoted in National Parks Traveler, responding to President Donald Trump's announcement of a hiring freeze on federal jobs. In 2016, Yellowstone (right) logged a record-breaking 4,257,177 visits.

There was a time when we only focused on men on horseback, with swords. We've expanded the definition of what's important, and what's nationally important."

Alan Spears, NPCA's director of cultural resources, speaking to the Washington Post about President Barack Obama's January designation of national monuments recognizing Freedom Riders, the Reconstruction era and Birmingham's civil rights struggle.

Today's final action reflects the wisdom and forward-thinking of business owners, tribal leaders, elected officials and individuals.

Michael Jamison, senior program manager at NPCA, to the Missoulian following the cancellation of the final two oil and gas leases in the Badger-Two Medicine region southeast of Glacier National Park.





THESE LANDS ARE NOW YOUR LANDS

Since 1906, 16 presidents — both Republican and Democrat — have employed the Antiquities Act to designate 157 public lands and historic places. That tradition of conservation continued during President Barack Obama's administration: In his two terms, Obama established 29 monuments using the authority of the Antiquities Act. Here are the National Park Service sites that Obama created, including 13 national monuments and two sites that have since been re-designated national historical parks.

Waco Mammoth, TX

Protects the site where fossils of a nursery herd of Columbian mammoths have been found.

Reconstruction Era, SC

Spotlights a school for former slaves and serves as the first Reconstruction-focused site in the system.

César E. Chávez, CA

Honors the civil rights crusader who co-founded the country's first agricultural labor union.

Belmont-Paul Women's Equality, DC

Honors suffragist Alice Paul and her National Woman's Party.

Freedom Riders, AL

Commemorates the site of a 1961 bus-burning, a galvanizing event of the civil rights movement.

Katahdin Woods and Waters, ME

Preserves more than 87,500 acres along the Penobscot River.

Stonewall, NY

Tells the story of the Stonewall uprising, a turning point in LGBT history.

Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers, OH

Recognizes the soldier, diplomat and civil rights leader.

Pullman, IL

Commemorates the legacy of George Pullman and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union.

Birmingham Civil Rights, AL

Honors the city's fight for equality and the pivotal protests that led to major reforms.

Honouliuli, HI

Recognizes the site of the state's largest WWII incarceration camp.

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, MD

Includes the area where Tubman spent much of her early life.

First State National Historical Park, DE & PA

Represents Delaware's rich history at seven sites in the state and southeastern Pennsylvania.

Fort Monroe, VA

Preserves the site that served as a safe haven for enslaved people during the Civil War.



+14 NATIONAL MONUMENTS

which Obama also established, are managed by other federal agencies.

Fort Ord, CA

Chimney Rock, CO

San Juan Islands, WA

Rio Grande del Norte, NM

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, NM

San Gabriel Mountains, CA

Browns Canyon, CO

Berryessa Snow Mountain, CA

Basin and Range, NV

Mojave Trails, CA

Sand to Snow, CA

Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine

Bears Ears, UT

Gold Butte, NV



THE AUTHOR (left) with his brother and grandfather in the woods of northern Maine. He didn't know it then, but his grandfather, Jon Lund, was (and is) a towering figure in Maine's environmental community.

My Maine

A Maine native reflects on the state's new national park.

It wasn't until I left for college in upstate New York that I discovered how little most people knew about my home state of Maine. A few of my friends had been there, but only to the coast, and all anyone could say about Mainers was that we talked funny and ate lobsters. I took it as a civic duty to educate my peers on Maine's glories and haven't stopped evangelizing yet.

When I first started working at NPCA as our Civil War Associate in 2011, I didn't have much of a chance to flaunt my Maine bona fides. But then in 2012, the organization began working in earnest on a campaign to create a national park in the woods of northern Maine. The effort was led by Roxanne Quimby, the Maine

entrepreneur behind the Burt's Bees cosmetics company, and her son, Lucas St. Clair, who had a vision to purchase land near Mount Katahdin and donate it to the federal government. After years of work and debate among Mainers for and against the proposal, last summer President Barack Obama designated the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

I've seen a lot of good things happen during my five years on staff at NPCA, but nothing meant as much to me as the creation of this national park site — 87,000 acres of deep forest along the East Branch of the Penobscot River. This victory was personal. Participating in the campaign brought me back to my childhood, when my family taught

me a love of nature and inspired me to pursue a career in conservation.

The northern Maine of my childhood was a perfect wilderness. In the car, as we drove north, houses and businesses would disappear from the sides of the highway, and the woods would close in. They were dense and dark and appeared entirely wild. I imagined, as a child, that no human had ever before dared to set foot in them. No one but us, of course.

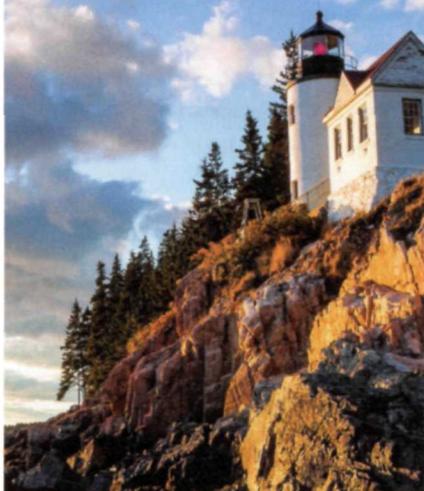
Accompanied by our parents and a cast of grandparents, great-uncles, uncles, aunts and cousins, my brother and I experienced the Maine woods as a four-season playground. I didn't know it at the time, but my grandfather, Jon Lund, was (and is) a towering figure in Maine's environmental community: He played a key role in passing landmark environmental bills during his career as a state legislator and led a number of important campaigns as an advocate. But to my brother and me, he was just grandpa, who taught us proper canoe-paddle technique and took us fishing every morning from his cabin on Cobbosseecontee Lake. The camp was on an island in the middle of the lake, and we were the only ones out there.

We had the run of the place. We'd fish in the early mornings, hooking large- and smallmouth bass from the dock or canoeing out to a rocky point to catch perch. Later, we'd head to the small cliffs on the far end of the island for jumping and swimming, or hunt along the shoreline for arrowheads. I tried to learn how to sail — shelves in

COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

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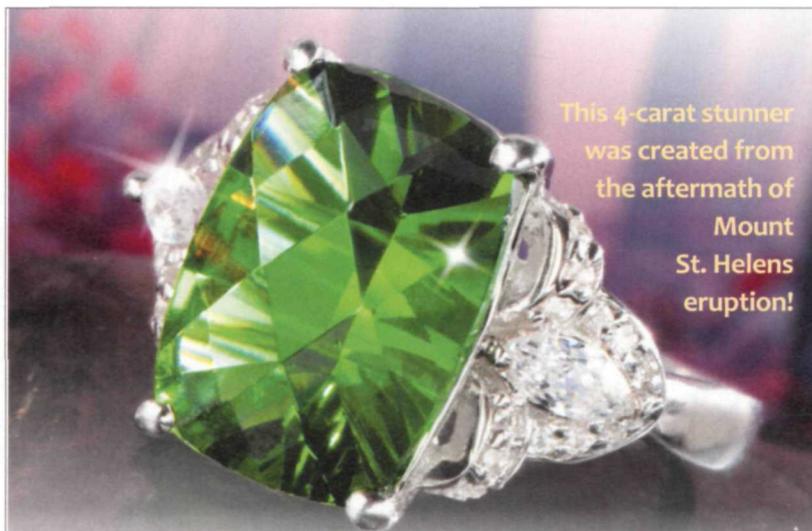
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the camp were lined with silver trophies my dad and grandpa won sailing Sunfish sailboats on the lake in the '60s — but it never took, and I stuck to the canoe, which was easier to fish from.

Fishing was the priority. We knew about a pond where the fishing was so good we were told to keep the name a secret, referring to it only as “No Name

Mount Katahdin I was looking out over what would become Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. The area appeared then as it does now, and as it has for thousands of years: It's a rolling green sea of pine trees, broken only by granite peaks and shimmering lakes. It looked the same to Henry David Thoreau, who described finding “a prim-

American woodcock, black bear, ruffed grouse, mink, otter and Canada lynx, if you're one of the few lucky enough to see them.

It always bothered me that the National Park Service didn't seem to think the Maine woods were as extraordinary as I've known they were since I was young. National parks conserve examples of lots of America's beautiful landscapes; why wasn't there one to protect part of this wild land I loved?

As I would learn, part of the answer is that it's not easy to create a national park, no matter how beautiful the land. It takes people like Roxanne Quimby and Lucas St. Clair, who have a dream and refuse to give up. It takes groups like NPCA, which can help turn desire into action. And it takes thousands of Mainers, raised in the outdoors by families who value wild experiences, willing to speak up for the protection of their land.

My grandfather taught me years ago that Maine's environment doesn't stay wild on its own; rather, it requires ceaseless effort from those who are dedicated to protecting the land. Yet most of the time, that effort is invisible. As kids pulling fish out of Cobbosseecontee Lake or looking out from the top of Mount Katahdin, we had no idea that our experiences were directly linked to the labor of untold numbers of Mainers who had helped to keep the air and water clean, to ensure that wildlife populations were healthy and to set aside land for the enjoyment of others. In time, the struggle to establish Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument will also fade from memory, but the land will remain an inspiration to Mainers for generations to come.

—NICK LUND

My grandfather taught me years ago that Maine's environment doesn't stay wild on its own.

Pond.” To this day, my brother and I compete to catch the biggest bass at No Name (he usually wins), and each of my uncles has some childhood No Name story, involving catching multiple fish on a single lure, or a fish so large it towed the canoe around the lake like a leashed dog dragging its owner. Our winter ice-fishing excursions are immortalized in a photo of me at age 5 holding up an American eel we'd pulled from the lake. I'm stuffed into a snowsuit and crying my eyes out as I wait for the electric shock I felt certain was about to come.

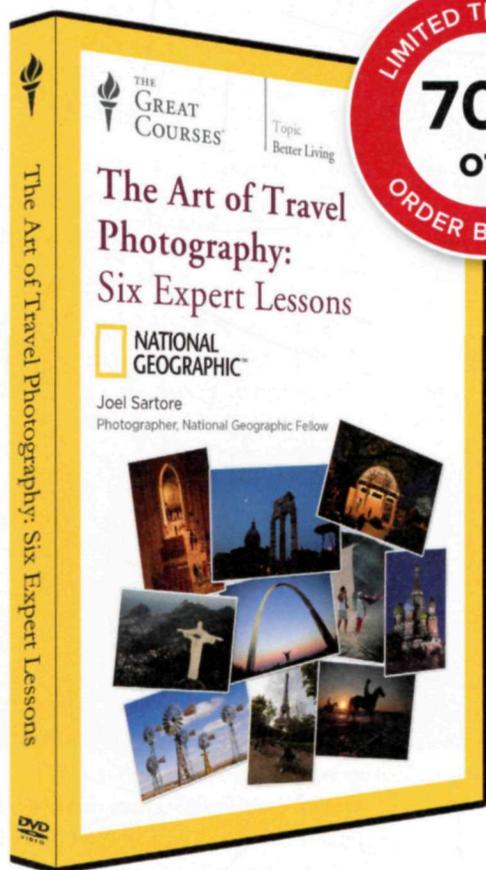
We fished for trout in Baxter State Park, the famous heart of northern Maine, and found it so active in the early spring that we started tamping down the barbs of our hooks to make the fish easier to remove. I was 13 when my family first hiked Mount Katahdin, the tallest peak in the state. Reaching the rocky top was a triumph, especially for my mom, who pushed through her fear of heights and made a slow but dignified hands-and-feet crab-walk across the famous Knife Edge ridge.

As it turns out, from the summit of

itive forest, more interesting” than any other for “a thousand miles westward.” It looked the same to a young Theodore Roosevelt, who took his experiences in the Maine woods and turned them into a life dedicated to conservation.

It can be easy for residents of northern Maine to forget how unusual it is to live in such a beautiful place, just as people living here in D.C. don't give a second glance to the White House on their daily commutes. A common refrain from opponents of the Maine woods national monument was that the area around Katahdin just wasn't special enough to warrant all the attention.

Having left Maine but never seen anything else quite like it, I disagreed. There is simply nothing like the woods of Maine left in the eastern United States. Miles of forest floor covered in a thick bed of pine needles. Stands of fir so dense you need to turn around and use your back to push through. Moose — always so much bigger in person than you imagine — wading through a pond or crashing through the woods. A landscape alive with snowshoe hare,



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Joel Sartore is a professional photographer and a regular contributor to *National Geographic* magazine. His assignments have taken him to some of the world's most beautiful and challenging environments and have brought him face to face with a diversity of wildlife in all 50 U. S. states and all seven continents. He was recently named a National Geographic Fellow for his work on "The Photo Ark," a multiyear project to document the world's biodiversity in studio portraits. His photograph of a lion in a tree was voted the best picture by *National Geographic* magazine in 2011.

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OVER TIME, the city of San Antonio has been built up around the northern missions, but the land adjacent to Mission San Juan Capistrano, pictured here, has remained relatively free of development.



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A Mission to Grow

Reviving ancient farming practices — and feeding the hungry — at San Antonio Missions.

I'm well within the city limits of San Antonio, a few minutes' drive from the throngs of tourists at the iconic Alamo and Riverwalk. But in every direction, fields — dry and brown as they hunker down for the mild Texas winter — stretch until they hit neat, stately rows of trees. Just a few feet from the gravel path I'm walking on, a great blue heron suddenly takes off, rustling the brush it was hiding in before it soars overhead. Next to me, water bubbles down an acequia — a small man-made canal.

"There are few places in the world today that look just like they did in the 18th century, and this is one of them," Susan Snow, archaeologist for the San Antonio Missions National Historical

Park, said about the site.

Beyond one tree line is Mission San Juan Capistrano, one of four missions along a 5-mile stretch of the San Antonio River that, collectively, make up the park. In the mid- to late 18th century, each mission was the center of its own bustling, vibrant and self-sustaining community, surrounded by farmland to grow crops and keep animals. In the years since, the city of San Antonio has been built up around the northern missions, but the land adjacent to San Juan and Espada — the missions that are farthest from the city center — has remained relatively free of development. For decades, the long rectangular fields, called *suertes* after the lottery

system used to dole them out when San Juan was secularized in 1794, have been fallow. But today, the ancient water conduit and the empty farmland are being revived to grow crops once again — this time, to teach history and feed the hungry.

In May 2016, park staff announced a unique collaboration with the local food bank to restore the long-abandoned farmland. In exchange for free access to 45 acres to grow its own crops, the food bank will maintain a 5-acre, historically accurate demonstration farm to educate visitors about the acequia style of farming.

"To be able to use this historic property in a way that can more deeply serve our community is incredibly exciting," said Eric Cooper, president and CEO of the San Antonio Food Bank. "It sounds cheesy, but the missions themselves were making a statement about the importance of community and service, so in a way, we're bringing back

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FOOD BANK STAFF MEMBERS hope to grow half a million pounds of produce a year on the property.

that component of the missions.”

More than a million visitors tour the park every year, drawn to the Spanish colonial-style churches and outbuildings associated with the four missions — Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan and Espada — where padres from Spain recruited natives into Christianity. The architecturally grandiose buildings are fascinating, but part of the narrative has been missing until now, said Mardi Arce, the superintendent of San Antonio Missions.

“It’s a common misconception that the mission was just a church,” she said. “But there was also this cultural landscape; the community, the farming and education were huge parts of that.”

Much of the land previously connected to Mission San Juan had fallen into the hands of private landowners since the decline of the missions in the early 19th century, but over the last two decades, the National Park Service has gradually been accumulating that land to restore farming. In 2015, once the land acquisitions and some accompanying infrastructure improvements were complete, the park partnered with the Texas Conservation Corps

to hire a full-time farmer and make a long-term plan for the suertes.

That farm coordinator, Torin Metz, has now spent nearly two years working to clear the property and begin planting on a small section of the demonstration farm. “A big challenge has just been figuring out how to make this thing work, which is not that simple,” Metz said, as he showed me the few garden rows where he’s rotated corn, peas and lettuce. There’s a constant tension, he explained, between staying historically accurate and producing any significant quantity of crops.

Just getting water to the demonstration field takes patience. The San Juan acequia that runs through the property branches off the San Antonio River 3 miles north of Mission San Juan. A mere 2 feet wide in most places, it is little more than an earthen ditch. In the 18th century, farmers would have redirected the water from this main acequia madre into the fields by piling dirt into the main canal to block it off and then digging out the side channel, said Metz, but an easier sluice-gate system — with concrete edges and wooden barriers at each juncture — is in place today.

Directing the water out of the acequia

madre is only half the challenge. Once the water hits a field, the crops need to be arranged just right — with downward sloping furrows between each row of plants — so that the water can flood the whole area. Though Metz has relied on a tractor to dig the initial furrows, constant upkeep of the garden is done by hand.

“This method of flood irrigation is really labor intensive,” said Metz. “I can get everything set up perfectly, and then it rains and the furrows all get washed away.”

Today, the demonstration farm is well under an acre, and the food bank hasn’t yet started growing on the rest of the sprawling acreage, which will be farmed using a more modern setup. The food bank took over operations from Metz in early 2017, and Cooper said his organization expects to be able to grow half a million pounds of produce a year on the property eventually. Fruit and vegetables from the farm will make up only a fraction of the 62 million pounds of food that the food bank donates to food distribution programs across southwest Texas each year, but Cooper said there’s more to the farm than just the yield.

“Part of our strategy is engaging recipients of food in the process of helping us grow and produce food,” he said. “Getting families out here to learn about where food comes from is a piece of teaching them how to be healthy and self-reliant.”

Many people I talked to about the new collaboration between the park and the food bank and the restoration of the farmland around San Juan said it feels as if things are coming full circle.

“When the mission was established, these fields were here to feed the people who lived there,” said Arce. “To have them back in production is just a wonderful story in that, yes, it will educate visitors, but it’s also now a resource for local people again.”

—SARAH C.P. WILLIAMS

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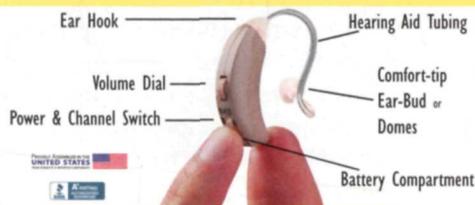
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REAPPEARING ACT

The elusive fisher is making its way back to the Northwest with a little help from its friends.

The crowd buzzed with anticipation as Hanford McCloud, a member of the Nisqually Tribal Council in Washington, pulled open the door of a simple wooden box. Inside crouched a rare forest predator the size of a large house cat. The audience, about 100 locals, biologists, tribal members and First Nations visitors, watched with smartphones ready.

It was an overcast December day, and they had come to see biologists from the National Park Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Conservation Northwest reintroduce fishers to Mount Rainier National Park for the first time. From inside the box, the fisher — which came from Canada — surveyed its new home: a damp, mossy forest fragrant with decay. After a moment, with just a little coaxing, it bolted and vanished into the woods.

“It was awesome to see ‘em scamper out of there, a little scared, a little unsure,” said McCloud. “They took to the terrain with such speed that all you saw was a furry blur.”

Other than 23 individuals released the previous winter in Gifford Pinchot National Forest, fishers hadn’t roamed the southern Cascade Range in more



A CROWD WATCHES as one of 10 fishers is released into the wild at Mount Rainier National Park.

than 70 years. The reintroduction, which NPCA strongly supported, is part of a multiyear effort to return them to their old grounds in three national parks and across the state.

“I never get tired of watching them,” said Jeff Lewis, a biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. “It just feels like a really good thing. We’re fixing something we didn’t do right before because we didn’t know better.”

Before the arrival of European Americans, fishers roamed low- and mid-elevation forests from coast to coast, but it’s been a rough two centuries for them. Hunters and trappers killed them for their luxurious pelts while development and logging shrank their habitat. More recently, farmers

illegally growing marijuana (largely in California) have poisoned fishers by using pesticides to control rats. Unlike other mammalian predators, fishers also have an unusual problem: Because they’re elusive, few people know enough about them to care about their fate. “It’s just super rare to see them,” said Lewis. “They’re incredibly secretive. It’s like seeing a leprechaun.”

Once you get to know them, however, these weasel relatives are charismatic. They’re scrappy, agile hunters, preying on small and midsized mammals as well as carrion, birds and insects, and they’re one of the few animals that can take down a porcupine without turning into a pincushion.

- In 1998, the fisher was listed as endangered by the state of Washington after 60 years of protection from trapping hadn't boosted the population. In 2008, the Park Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Conservation Northwest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and British Columbia Ministry of Environment teamed up to reintroduce fishers to Olympic National Park. Over a three-year period, 90 fishers were released. Since then, the population has spread through the peninsula and spawned multiple generations. By the time the Candian trapping season ends this year, the agencies will have released a total of around 70 fishers in the southern Cascades. This fall, they will begin to release an additional 80

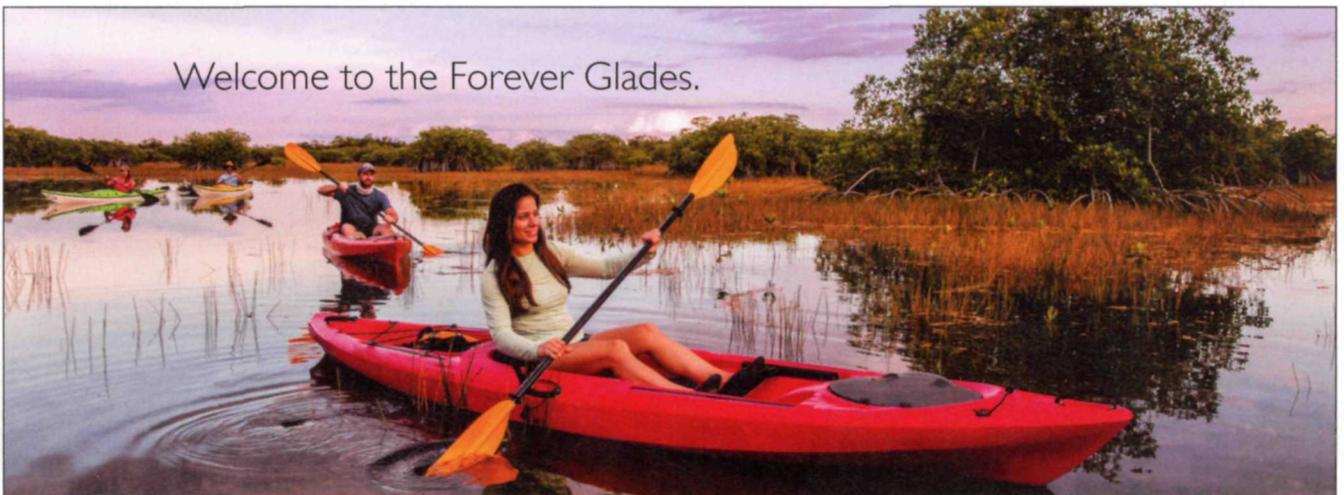
animals in North Cascades National Park and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, a project that will take two years to complete.

The program's success has inspired other agencies in Oregon, Washington and southern British Columbia to consider reintroducing fishers using the same methods, which are effective but not easy. Biologists hire fur trappers in central British Columbia to capture the animals, offering between \$700 and \$900 for a healthy fisher — by comparison, a pelt would fetch \$40 or so. A veterinarian checks each one and implants a radio transmitter the size of a shotgun shell. Then a driver escorts the fishers 16 hours south to Washington. (It's not uncommon for a customs agent to have no idea what a fisher is.)

After they're released, biologists track them from a plane. If they believe a female is using a den during the birthing season, they travel into the wilderness on foot to set up cameras and determine whether she has kits. Last spring, they did not observe any kits — common for the first year of reintroduction — but they were encouraged by the fishers' survival rate. For Lewis, the de facto granddaddy of fisher biology in the state, the efforts already have been worth it.

"The only thing stopping this from being a super-duper feel-good thing is not a lot of people know about fishers," Lewis said. "Inch by inch, we're hoping they're falling in love with them."

— KATE SIBER



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AN ADULT DRAGONFLY at Alaska's Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, one of the parks participating in the dragonfly mercury project.

sometimes turns into a competition of sorts. Researchers are happy if they can collect 15 specimens from any given site, but it can take as little as 30 minutes for a group of five students to catch 100 larvae.

"We don't have all of them analyzed," said Stainton, chuckling. "We put most of them back!"

The yearly ritual at the Vermont school is one small part of a nationwide effort. What started as a pilot project at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller in 2010 has spread to more than 60 park sites in the Lower 48 and Alaska, and more than 2,500 citizen scientists — students and other visitors — have participated in the sampling campaign. Volunteers receive detailed instructions on how to find the nymphs, identify and measure them, and pack them for shipping, as well as guidance on the types of observations to record about the site's environment. Some participants also collect water and sediment samples. "Given those tools, they do a really good job," said Collin Eagles-Smith, a researcher with the U.S. Geological Survey who coordinates the project. "They really are providing meaningful and valuable information besides collecting dragonflies for us."

Mercury is a metal that occurs naturally in rocks, including coal. Emissions from coal-fired power plants and the burning of other fossil fuels and certain waste are the primary sources of mercury pollution, but it is also released into the atmosphere through natural events such as volcanic eruptions and forest fires. The pollutant can remain in the atmosphere for years and travel thousands of miles before falling to the ground in the form of raindrops or dust, so even isolated

Mercury Rising?

How dragonflies are helping scientists understand mercury pollution in parks.

EVERY SEPTEMBER, SCIENCE TEACHER JENNIFER Stainton leads 30 to 50 of her Woodstock Union High School students on a field trip to nearby Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. After a 15-minute hike from the park's parking lot, they arrive at the Pogue, a man-made pond surrounded by hemlocks, beech trees and sugar maples.

Wearing waders, the students enter the boggy waters and use their dip nets to scoop up peat-like muck from the pond floor. They're looking for brown, alien-like larvae that can grow up to one-and-a-half inches long and eventually turn into one of the pond's most scintillating residents: dragonflies.

Before they morph into their adult form, these larvae can spend years underwater. During that time, they gobble up smaller insects and accumulate mercury, a toxic metal that can have a devastating impact on wildlife. So year after year, Stainton's students sift through the mud, collect dragonfly nymphs and ship them to scientists for mercury testing. The hunt

© J. MILLS/NPS

wilderness areas can be affected. Bacteria then combine carbon with mercury to create methylmercury, a compound that is ingested by creatures large and small. Because fish and other wildlife eliminate mercury very slowly, their contamination levels increase over time as they continue to feast on mercury-rich prey. Though not at the top of the food chain, dragonfly nymphs are subject to contamination just like their fellow predators. “They will eat anything that they can put their mouth parts on,” said Sarah Nelson, an associate research professor at the University of Maine who initiated the project at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller. “I have a colleague who used to call them micro-monsters.”

Many mercury studies focus on fish, but researchers involved in the project say dragonfly larvae are more appropriate candidates for a nationwide sampling effort. Dragonflies can be found in bodies of water where no fish are present, they’re easier to catch

TOXIC PANTHERS

In 1989, scientists found a high concentration of mercury in a dead Florida panther that had been living in Everglades National Park. The animal had preyed mostly on raccoons, which ate large quantities of mercury-contaminated fish. Thanks in part to reductions in mercury emissions from industry sources in South Florida, mercury levels in the Everglades’ fish and birds have since dropped by 60 to 70 percent.

“I have a colleague who used to call them micro-monsters.”

and the various species — hundreds in North America — are relatively similar to each other, physiologically speaking. “It makes for an easier apples-to-apples comparison,” Eagles-Smith said.

Monitoring mercury levels across the National Park System is crucial, because the pollutant can significantly affect the health and behaviors of wildlife in a variety of ways. High mercury exposure can make birds more likely to abandon their nests when disturbed, for example, and contaminated fish are slower to detect the presence of predators. These behavior changes can have a detrimental effect on entire animal populations, Eagles-Smith said.

Humans are vulnerable, too. In Minamata, Japan, decades of mercury pollution and the consumption of contaminated fish by the local population resulted in an outbreak of severe neurological disorders. Almost everyone has trace amounts of methylmercury, but the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each year more than 75,000 newborns in the U.S. are at increased risk of developing learning disabilities because of their exposure to the pollutant while in the womb.

So far, the mercury picture provided by the dragonfly nymphs shows how widespread mercury is in the environment, and how much local conditions can influence contamination levels in these creatures. Some sites with high concentrations of mercury in fish also

have relatively high concentrations of mercury in dragonfly larvae, confirming that those are valuable indicators on a national scale. The analysis phase of the project starts in earnest this year, and researchers hope that the combination of mercury tests, water chemistry data and observations about the habitat will shed some light on the factors causing variations in mercury levels, even within very small areas. The goal is to understand what drives high mercury concentrations and provide that information to policymakers, Eagles-Smith said.

Every year, Stainton’s students complete their own scientific project. They receive their test results from a lab at Dartmouth College, analyze them and present their findings to local researchers and the general public some four months after first getting their hands dirty at the Pogue. Stainton said the experience challenges her students’ notions of what science can be. It’s not only lab work conducted in isolation but also can involve working as a group, contacting researchers and communicating about the results. At the end of the project, the students told her they feel like actual scientists, Stainton said.

“This is information that real scientists need and are using,” she said. “The authenticity is what I love about it.” **NP**

NICOLAS BRULLIARD is associate editor of National Parks magazine.



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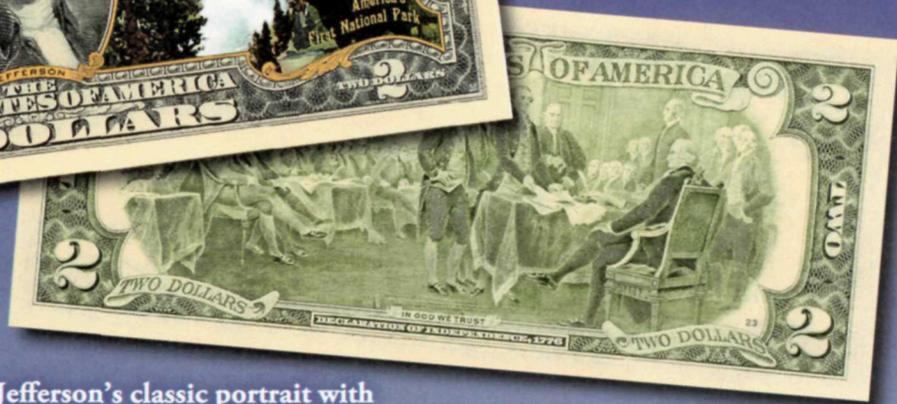
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HALEAKALĀ SILVERSWORDS live only at the top of the Haleakalā volcano on the Hawaiian island of Maui.

Sunny days like this are typical high on the mountain, but they weren't always so common. In the past, the trade wind inversion, a weather phenomenon that traps clouds at low elevations and exposes high elevations to blazing sun, was regularly punctuated by intervals of clouds and rain. Current trends show significantly fewer breaks in the inversion, resulting in scant rainfall for the silverswords.

"This can push them over a threshold," said Paul Krushelnycky, an ecologist at University of Hawai'i-Mānoa who has studied silverswords since 2007. "If these current climate patterns continue, the silversword is going to have a really tough time."

The silversword is the product of evolution in island isolation. Several million years ago, a California tarweed seed traveled 2,000 miles across the Pacific to Hawaii. This single species evolved into the "silversword alliance," a group of more than 30 species endemic to Hawaii that range from scraggly shrubs to ground-clinging cushions.

Haleakalā silverswords — *'āhinahina* or "very gray" in Hawaiian — live only in a 2,500-acre area at the top of the Haleakalā volcano, a moonscape pocked by cinder cones and spattered with volcanic bombs. They have developed an adaptation toolkit to cope with this harsh environment: The fleshy leaves are coated with tiny silvery hairs to break the wind, prevent desiccation and collect cloud moisture.

At the end of its life, which may last over 90 years, the silversword grows a flower stalk upward of 6 feet tall. Hundreds of maroon flowers produce a luscious, pungent fragrance. Endemic winged pollinators swarm the blossoms, while damaging crawling insects are repelled by sticky

Silversword Fight

In Haleakalā National Park, a charismatic plant battles for survival.

MY BOOTS CRUNCH THROUGH THICK HOARFROST as I hike uphill on a narrow trail, my collar turned up against a biting chill. The world is stretched below me in a blanket of pillowy pink clouds catching the dawn light. Beneath those clouds, the soft sands of Maui's beaches will soon be beckoning to tourists; above the clouds soars 10,023-foot Haleakalā, a dormant shield volcano comprising most of the island.

The Hawaiian alpine ecosystem is a land of extremes — surprisingly cold at night and mercilessly exposed by day. Plants and animals that call this place home balance on a thin line of survival. The line is getting even thinner for one of these plants: the Haleakalā silversword. As I pass one by the park's visitor center, its namesake leaves bristle as if on the defensive against the threats it faces.

© THORSTEN INDRA/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

hairs on the stalk. Because silverswords cannot self-pollinate, they must bloom synchronously and rely on pollinators for successful reproduction. After the plant dies, seeds are scattered by the wind, and a new cycle of life begins.

The silversword has shown itself to be one tough plant. Like many native Hawaiian species, it has faced threats brought from other parts of the world. During the 1700s, goats and cattle from Europe prospered by devouring native shrubbery. In Haleakalā's spartan landscape, silverswords provided some of the only food for the plunderers.

In the early 1900s, Haleakalā started to attract adventurous tourists. Hikers gleefully tore up silverswords to roll them downhill or bring them back to the beach as triumphant proof they had reached the summit. Eager to look closely, they trundled around silverswords, unaware their steps crushed the delicate roots spread beneath the cinders. The plant was also turned into wedding garlands, and on at least one occasion, hundreds of silverswords adorned a parade float.

Silversword populations had dropped

On at least one occasion, hundreds of silverswords adorned a parade float.

dramatically by the 1920s and '30s, dipping down to fewer than 20,000 plants in 1935. The Maui Chamber of Commerce, concerned about the possible extinction of the plant, petitioned the federal government to save the silversword. Park rangers tried to keep feral goats at bay and coached tourists in appropriate silversword etiquette. In the 1980s, the National Park Service strung fencing along the park's boundary and eradicated thousands of goats.

Afterward scientists tracked a remarkable comeback, and for years the silversword was viewed as a conservation success story, rebounding to perhaps over 90,000 individual plants. But in the early 1990s, the species took another downward turn as days of fog and drizzle decreased. Researchers dove into climate studies but also focused on an up-and-coming threat: the Argentine ant.

Hawaii is thought to have no native ants, but today over 60 ant species roam the islands. The Argentine ant was first documented in Haleakalā in 1967 and poses a significant threat to the park's biodiversity and ecosystems. Haleakalā's insects — including silversword pollinators such as ground-nesting yellow-faced bees — evolved without ant predation and are now being preyed upon by ants, which also compete with native critters over resources. Studies of the effect of ants on silversword pollination have been inconclusive, but some researchers

think the ants will continue spreading into silversword habitat.

Today, 40,000 silverswords remain. Though this number may sound impressive, it represents a worrisome 60 percent decline since 1992, when the plant was listed as a threatened species. This is especially significant given the species' limited range. To boost the population, Haleakalā's botanist Patti Welton and horticulturist Michelle Osgood maintain a greenhouse of seedlings. In 2016, schoolchildren planted 1,200 of these silverswords in the park.

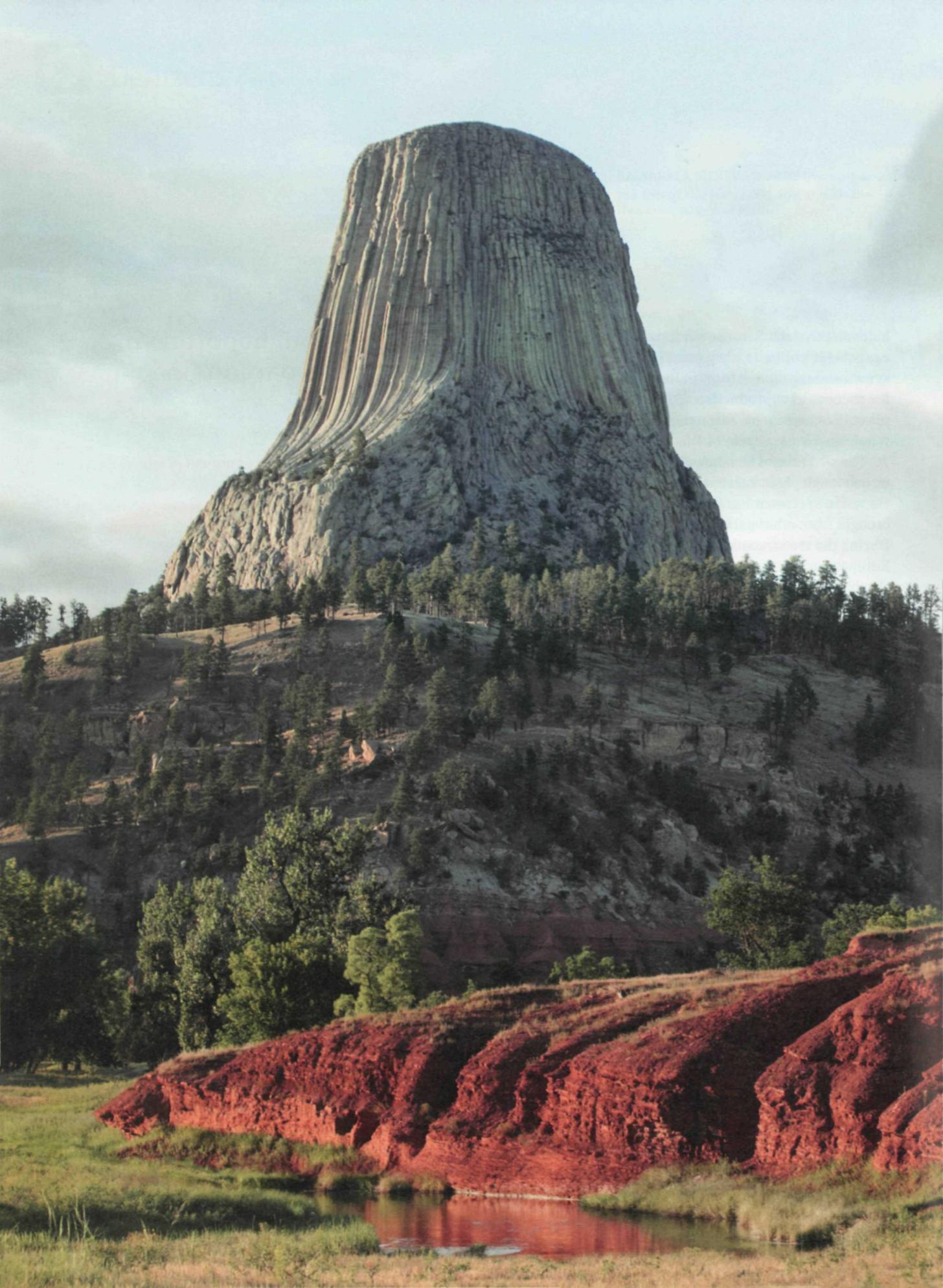
This winter, Krushelnycky and park staff are planting silverswords in new locations to increase and diversify the distribution. "We want to see if wetter areas can help mitigate increasing temperatures and overall drying on top of the mountain," he said.

As I hike home at the end of the day, clouds still shroud the bottom of the island. If scientific models prove correct, the line between clouds and sun will be moving downhill, leaving silverswords high and dry. I am worried about the future of this park's iconic plant, but I also know that for centuries, the silversword has not only held on but rebounded when given the opportunity, and that gives me hope. **NP**

EMILY MOUNT has worked and volunteered at 10 national parks, including Haleakalā. She now is a naturalist, photography instructor, freelance writer and photographer.

THE RACE TO SAVE

Haleakalā National Park has more endangered plants than any other national park, said park botanist Patti Welton. Those include Hawaiian red-flowered geraniums and rare species of mint. Welton hopes to establish a long-term seed banking program with the University of Hawai'i for species at risk.



MEASURE YOURSELF ON A MUCH LARGER SCALE.

Where do you stand on adventure? Here in Wyoming, it reaches epic proportions. Like the challenge of scaling the iconic columns of Devils Tower. Some 85 stories of mysteriously formed igneous rock that seem to be asking, what are *you* made of?

That's WY



A group of people, including children and adults, are seated in a long, narrow red canoe on a calm body of water. The canoe is filled with people, some wearing traditional hats and others in modern outdoor gear. The water is still, creating a clear reflection of the canoe and its occupants. The background is a soft, misty landscape with a low horizon line. The overall mood is serene and historical.

Opening a tribal
house and closing a
divide in Glacier Bay
National Park.

The Long Way Home

By Kate Siber

Barely a ripple disturbed the sea as three hand-carved red dugout canoes glided through a cove in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve one serene morning in August. In each canoe, nine or 10 Huna Tlingit, in colorful vests and cedar-bark hats, plied the water with paddles they'd crafted themselves, singing.

On shore, some 800 tribal members, park staff and visitors waited. Dense fog blanketed the land and water, and they could hear the paddlers' voices long before the canoes' silhouettes came into view. It had been centuries since the Huna made the 30-mile journey by canoe from their current village, Hoonah, to their ancestral homeland in Glacier Bay National Park. They were ceremoniously returning to celebrate the dedication of a new Tribal House, the first to be built on these lands in hundreds of years.

That day, the canoes floated gracefully to shore amid chant-

jumped and whooped, decked head to toe in colorful regalia.

"On that grand opening, this building was pounding, it was just throbbing with drumming and dancing," said Tom Vandenberg, chief of interpretation for Glacier Bay National Park. "The atmosphere overwhelmed you. It was like, this building is now alive, it's found its true place. Now it's complete. I'll never forget that."

Officially opened in August, the Huna Tribal House now stands on the wooded shores of Bartlett Cove, the only developed

area in the park, as a reminder to all who visit that this is Huna Tlingit homeland. More than 20 years in the making, it is a symbol of healing and a milestone in an effort to repair the long-troubled relationship between the tribe and the park.

Archaeologists have found Huna Tlingit artifacts in the Glacier Bay area from as early as 1250, and according to the tribe's lore, their people have inhabited the region much longer than that. For early inhabitants, the bay was a land of abundance that provided good lives: Forests offered berries and an array of medicinal plants. Salmon clogged the rivers, and the ocean teemed with seals, fish and kelp.

In the mid-1700s, during what's known as the Little Ice Age, the Grand Pacific Glacier steamrolled down the valley so fast it chased the Huna Tlingit 30 miles south to their present-day home, where about 450 tribal members still live. (An additional 650 live outside of Hoonah.) The glacier stretched all



the way out to the ocean, reaching 100 miles long and 8 miles wide, before retreating mere decades later, leaving a radically different land. The salmon river was gone, and in its wake was an expansive, bare, rocky valley scoured of life and running



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HUNA TLINGIT in Glacier Bay in 1899 (above). In August, hundreds gathered to greet the Huna people who had paddled from Hoonah to their ancestral homeland in the park. Previous pages: Arriving by canoe for the grand opening of the Huna Tribal House.

ing, drumming and singing. Clan elders burned cedar and spruce chips and poured seal oil over them to thank the trees that gave their lives for the construction of the house and canoes. During a naming ceremony, clan leaders called out *Xunaa Shuká Hít, aa!* as the crowd

repeated it, a tradition believed to breathe life into the vaulted wooden structure. Later, in the long light of an Alaskan summer evening, some 300 people crammed into the 2,800-square-foot Tribal House, which smelled deeply of cedar. They danced and



NPS

“We wanted something tangible that would show that this was the Huna homeland.”



with silty glacial meltwater. As the glacier shrank to its present size — 35 miles long and 2 miles wide — plants and animals started to return. And around the 1830s, the Huna did, too, setting up seasonal camps to fish, hunt, collect gull eggs and pick more than a dozen berry species that, to this day, still speckle the forest floor in shades of gray, red and blue.

Now, about half a million visitors see Glacier Bay every year, 95 percent of them from the decks of multistory cruise ships. I wanted to immerse myself in these forests and rocky coastlines, so I arrived from Juneau on a puddle-jumper and stayed at the only accommodation in the park, Glacier Bay Lodge, on Labor Day weekend,



AROUND 300 PEOPLE crammed into the Tribal House for the opening ceremony (top). Above: At the grand opening, many of the Huna participants wore colorful vests and cedar-bark hats.

just before the visitor center closed for the long winter. Early one morning, I hopped aboard a 150-passenger catamaran that takes independent travelers on eight-hour trips up the enormous bay. From the deck of the Baranof Wind, I gazed over mist-clad ridgelines serrated with spruce trees that appeared dusty blue with distance. On South Marble Island, sea lions rocked and shoved one another off cliffs, roaring in the frigid September air. Sea otters popped their heads above water, and mountain goats negotiated bald cliffs. I even spotted a brown bear lumbering up a stream. Occasionally the thunder of calving glaciers filled the air, a monstrous sound I could feel in my gut.

Although the Grand Pacific Glacier obliterated most signs of habitation from the last two centuries, trained observers can still find rock cairns, old smokehouses, house posts, house pits and trees stripped of bark that could have been used for markers, baskets or shelter. But hidden on shore and in the forests, these remains go unnoticed by most visitors, and the land can feel empty.

One evening, I explored the woods in Bartlett Cove on foot. Sun reached the forest floor in bands of light that filtered through

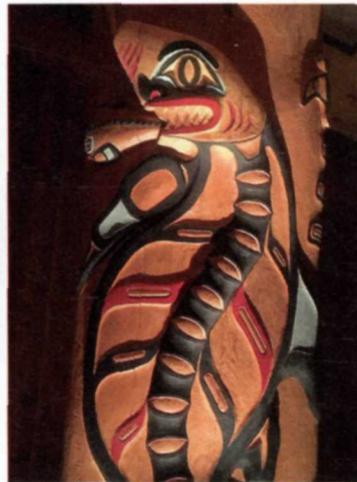
the thick canopy. I watched a raven swoop through trees blanketed in moss. At times, it was so still, I swear I could hear the flap of butterfly wings. Though I couldn't discern any signs of civilization other than the trail I was on, something about the deep wet forests felt welcoming and human-scale.

The beauty of the area has touched many other travelers. Capt. George Vancouver was the first European American to note the bay, in 1794, when he sketched a map depicting an enormous glacier. John Muir made several visits between 1879 and 1899 and rhapsodized about it in his book, "Travels in Alaska." And in 1916, Minnesota plant ecologist William S. Cooper visited and was so inspired by the wild seas and forests that he lobbied to have them protected. In 1925, Glacier Bay became a national monument. It was expanded in 1939 and again in 1980, when it became a national park and preserve.



magistrate in Juneau. Around the same time, the Park Service began conversations about phasing out commercial fishing, and the tribe's fury bubbled over. That year, tribal members gathered in the park on the Bartlett Cove shore for a peaceful demonstration and ceremony, which ultimately led to discussions about ways to repair the frayed relationship.

"It was a long shot, but we wanted recognition," recalled Ken Grant, then president of Hoonah Indian Association, the tribal government of the Huna Tlingit, and one of the organizers of the ceremony. "We wanted something tangible that would show that this was the Huna homeland." In 1997, the Park Service officially adopted the idea of building a Tribal House in Glacier Bay. "It sounded hollow at the time," said Grant, who later worked for the park as a boat captain and is now employed as a management assistant there. "But we just kept pushing — and pushing."



GORDON GREENWALD, a Huna carver, began working on the project in 2010 (far left). Left: A Wooshkeetaan shark figure from an interior post.

When the monument was founded, the Huna Tlingit probably were unaware of this administrative decree from a far-off government. They were not consulted. Many tribal members didn't speak English, and the National Park Service had little presence in the area other than an occasional visit from a ranger or two in Bartlett Cove. Tribal members largely continued to use the bay to hunt, fish, trap and collect traditional foods.

Over the decades, however, the Park Service became more involved and started to enact and enforce regulations that prohibited traditional activities. In the 1930s, the agency restricted firearm use to protect brown bears, and 10 years later, all hunting and trapping was outlawed. The Park Service continued to allow Huna Tlingit to hunt seals, but in 1976, the agency banned seal hunting entirely.

By the 1970s and '80s, outsiders started to visit in greater numbers. As the Huna Tlingit watched cruise ships ferry passengers through their ancestral lands while they were barred from practicing their long-held traditions, deep resentment and anger grew. In October 1992, rangers cited a Huna man for shooting a seal that he intended to bring to a potlatch. They confiscated his rifle and the carcass and ordered him to appear before a federal

The main obstacle was a perennial issue throughout the Park Service: funding. On the park's long wish list of projects, the Tribal House never rose to the top. Wayne Howell, the cultural resources specialist at the time, continued to search for funding, but the project didn't really take off until 2013. That's when superintendent Susan Boudreau decided to allocate concessionaire franchise fees, which are normally used for things like scientific studies and special visitor programs, to the construction of the Tribal House. The \$2.9 million project, a partnership between the Park Service and Hoonah Indian Association, aimed not only to create a home for the Huna in Glacier Bay and a resource for visitors, but to rekindle traditions and tribal knowledge that had eroded under the pressure of churches, schools and acculturation efforts.

In 2010, well before construction began, the tribe hired Gordon Greenwald, a tall, white-haired Huna carver, to begin work on the project. Carving is a traditional Huna Tlingit art, but the practice had been ebbing away when Greenwald, a former educator, became interested in teaching it to his students in the 1970s. Over the years, he studied with local elders as well as Huna and non-native carvers in other areas of Alaska, British Columbia and Washington.

Greenwald agreed to work part-time over about five years to carve the totem poles, the interior posts and floor-to-ceiling wooden screens for inside and outside the Tribal House. He convinced carvers Owen James and Herb Sheakley Sr. and apprentice Louie White to join him, and together they transformed an old shop next to the school in Hoonah into a carving shed. It soon became a local hangout. Kids took classes from the carvers and simply dropped by after school to watch progress. A

leaving a part of himself in the work, said James, adding that to carve well, you must clear your mind and be fully present. In their efforts, it seemed the carvers were aware of a sense of interconnection — among generations, Huna Tlingit and Park Service, and players seen and unseen.

“To think it could have been derailed so many times in so many ways — and the sacrifices that not only our own people made but sacrifices within the park system, it’s just hard to even fathom it,” said Greenwald. “To have the park do something like this, welcoming us back home, it’s huge.”

In April 2014, about 200 Huna Tlingit performed a groundbreaking ceremony, and the following year, construction began on the structure that would house the screens and posts. Aspects of the building are much different than they would have been centuries ago. Modern lighting beautifully illuminates the carvings, and the building is wired for the internet. The fire pit in the center of the floor runs on gas and can be controlled by a remote. In the past, each clan, essentially an extended family, would construct its own house; this Tribal House represents all four clans within the Huna Tlingit tribe, an idea that was controversial at first but has come to be accepted. The carved interior screen, which occupies one side of the space, depicts complex stories featuring the Grand Pacific Glacier, icebergs and all four clans, each in a separate canoe. A fifth canoe represents all other people; it is loaded with figures that hold their paddles vertically, in a sign of friendship. The house posts feature colorful human and animal figures from Huna Tlingit stories. In the spring, the carvers will deliver the last three exterior totem poles, representing the raven people and the eagle people — the moieties, or social groups, of the Huna Tlingit — and the turbulent relationship between the park and the tribe. That final story is intended as an emblem of healing.

“I don’t know of anything like it in the park system,” said Tom VandenBerg. “This is the direction the Park Service is going with diversity and connecting people with their history and their culture. It’s the perfect example of broadening the definition of ‘park.’” Park Service staff and tribal mem-

bers hope that the project could act as a model for other parks that still have tense relations with local American Indians, who in some cases were chased out to make way for protected areas.

There are still plans to be worked out, such as how exactly the structure will be used by the tribe and what visitor programs



© ART WOLFE/ART WOLFE STOCK

coffee pot often brewed, welcoming elders, who stopped in for a cup. Eventually their work space became a primary stop for cruise ship passengers visiting the tribal-owned Icy Strait Point port just outside Hoonah.

From time to time, Greenwald and the other carvers sat with tribal elders and listened to stories of his people’s history, which he then transformed into sketches and eventually transposed onto the poles and screens using only hand tools and not even a scrap of sandpaper. Eventually the elders sat together and agreed upon a name for the house, which would help guide the carvers: Xunaa Shuká Hít. It roughly translates to Huna Ancestors’ House, but the meaning is more nuanced, suggesting the thread that connects past and future generations.

When I visited the carving shed on a rainy September morning, Greenwald and James had one large exterior totem pole done and two to go. Amid an array of tools, equipment and wood shavings, the mesmerizing, rhythmic sound of the adze on wood echoed throughout the two-story shop. Every Native carver has a unique style and, in a sense, is

GETTING THERE

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (above) is reachable by boat or plane. From Juneau, take a short flight or a ferry with the Alaska Marine Highway to Gustavus, the gateway to the park. Bartlett Cove is 8 miles northwest; overnight visitors can stay there at a campground or in the 1960s-era Glacier Bay Lodge, which runs shuttles to and from Gustavus.

A STELLER sea lion colony in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

will be offered. Some Huna grumble about the fact that the Tribal House is so far away, in Glacier Bay, which most Huna Tlingit visit only occasionally to fish or attend Park Service-sponsored events. Issues over resource management also continue to percolate, even though slow gains have been made. Hunting on parkland is still illegal, but in July 2014, President Barack Obama signed the Huna Tlingit Traditional Gull Egg Use Act. The bill, which NPCA strongly supported, will allow gull egg collection by Native people once harvesting regulations are in place.

“Both the Park Service and the Huna people have worked hard to mend relationships and move beyond past hurts,” said Mary Beth Moss, cultural anthropologist for Glacier Bay National Park, who is stationed in Hoonah and married to carver Owen James. “I don’t anticipate that the Tribal House will resolve all our differences, but it’s a bridge — a very important bridge.”

Even with its detailed carvings, the Tribal House itself couldn’t possibly tell all of the stories of the Huna Tlingit — the winter nights with feasts of smoked fish, seal meat and berries preserved in seal oil; the loss and devastation as European disease ripped through their communities — nor does it preserve the poetic nuances of their beautiful, endangered language. But inside the house on a rainy, mist-shrouded day, I could sense the connection between land and people. I imagined what it must have been like here during the opening celebrations, with all the bodies jumping and chanting in their finery. Even in the dim light and solitude of a fall afternoon, it really did feel as if the Huna had breathed life into this building, named after ancestors who had walked this very shore and gazed over the wading herons, the tide pulled out to sea and the mountains veiled in fog. Every tribal member I spoke with expressed how healing and validating it felt to be part of the celebration and how unique it was to be there together.

“It was real good to be able to have some acknowledgment from the Park Service,” said Fred Fulmer, a carver from Juneau who participated in the opening ceremonies. Fulmer’s mother grew up visiting Glacier Bay to gather berries and gull eggs. “It was great to be there, to be able to bring out the regalia that belong to our ancestors. I got to wear an old blanket and a bear



© ANDREW PEACOCK/TANDEM STILLTS + MOTION

hat made out of cedar. It was my great-grandfather who made that. It was awesome. It was an honor.”

KATE SIBER is a freelance writer based in Durango, Colorado.

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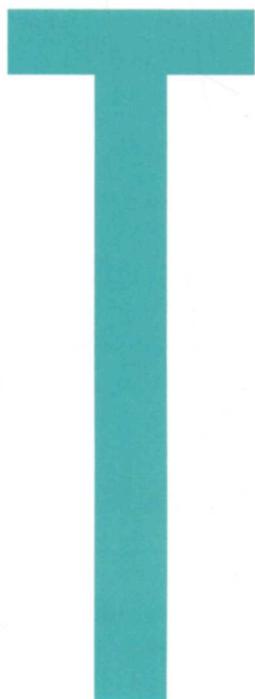


SLEDDERS CAN reach speeds of 40 mph on the dunes. "Start slow," the clerk at the rental shop advised.



HIGH-ALTITUDE PLAY AT GREAT SAND DUNES

BY MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN ✦ PHOTOS BY MORGAN HEIM



The day I set out to climb the tallest sand dune in North America began with a gift from above. As I slithered from my warm sleeping bag before daybreak, a light suddenly shone onto my tent. I unzipped the door, poked my head out, looked left, looked right. Then I peered upward. The heavy clouds had shifted to reveal a brilliant crescent moon.

The campground at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in southern Colorado was quiet as I fumbled around, shivering, dressing in what I supposed would be appropriate sand-hiking attire. Wearing gloves,

I packed gorp and four bottles of water. A faraway owl cried, “Hoo-hoo!” Outside, the dark dunes stretched out, inviting me closer. The moon lit my path. It was going to be a good day.

When I planned a trip to Colorado for a reprieve from D.C.’s steamy summer weather, I wasn’t picturing spending time in a landscape straight out of Lawrence of Arabia. I imagined mountain hikes and bike rides, rocky terrain and picturesque forests. And that’s what it was like for several weeks last August,

when I explored the Rocky Mountains. Then, a friend in Boulder told me about her family’s trip to see the giant sand dunes at a little-known national park just north of the New Mexico border.

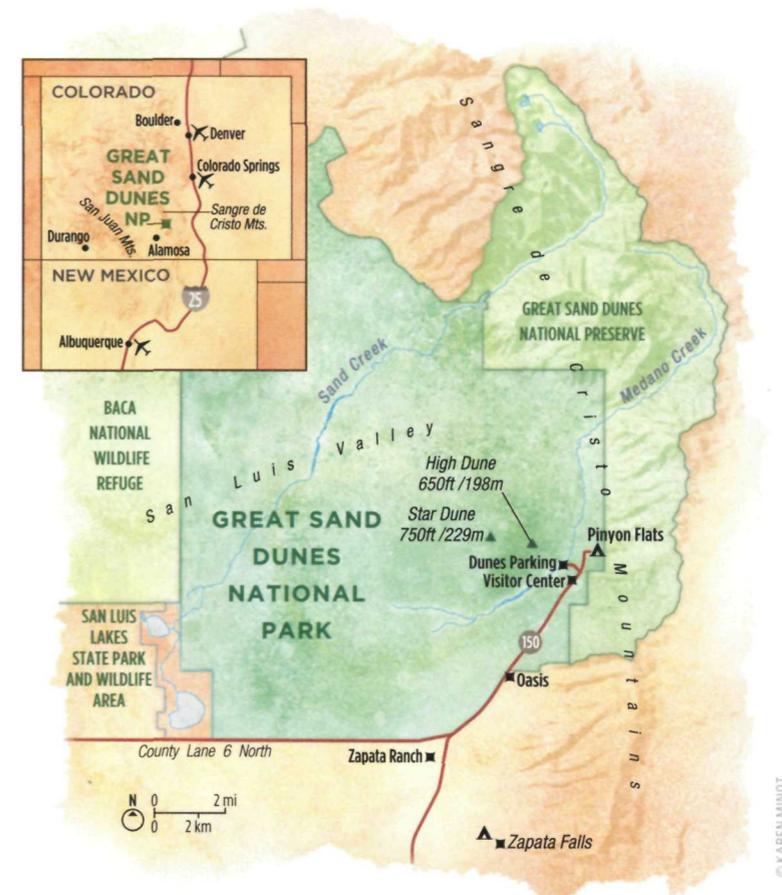
“Great Sand Dunes is super fun,” she emailed, attaching a picture of her family jumping down a steep dune, airborne. “It turns adults into kids again. And the sand makes a farting sound when you land — how can you not smile?”

I couldn’t. I packed my car and headed south for some super fun.

Large sand dunes and I share some history. Years ago, I loved hang gliding off dunes in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Then there was the assignment in Qatar, where I went “dune bashing,” as the locals call it, and became so carsick that after only a few ups and downs in our SUV, the driver insisted on turning back.

On the mid-Atlantic coast of the U.S., I — like most beach-goers — am conditioned to stay off the dunes, which are home to many plants and animals and protect the coast from storms. But at the giant sandbox known as Great Sand Dunes, visitors are encouraged to walk, jump, sled, roll and draw as they wish.

“This is one of the few parks where we tell people, ‘Go ahead and write your name in 15-foot letters on the sand dunes,’” said Fred Bunch, the park’s chief of resource management. Rather than remind visitors to stay on the trails, he encourages them to make their own. In his 28 years at the park, Bunch has seen a few wedding proposals written in sand, and then,



THE MOSCA PASS TRAIL offers extraordinary views of the park and its aspens, evergreens and prairie (left).

THE NEXT MORNING. THE CRESCENT MOON LIT MY PATH OUT OF THE CAMPGROUND AND TOWARD THE DUNES.

like the shake of an Etch A Sketch, the next wind erases it all. “Here,” he said, “prints from human activity never last very long.”

It was late afternoon when I first drove toward the park the day before my hike. From a distance, the dunes looked like ant hills next to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Jumbo clouds hovered low, grazing mountain peaks as though dangling from the ceiling in a school play.

I stopped by the visitor center for an art class with a young ranger and artist named Graham Oden. In a room with bay windows looking out to the dunes, he handed out watercolor paper, junior ranger pencils and tempera paints.

“The dunes are very amorphous forms,” Oden told us. “Start off with a brush and water, and move it across the paper where you want your crests. Then add pigment.” He painted alongside us, making light brushstrokes with indigo and maroon. I looked out to the dunes and back to my decidedly abstract painting. As a final touch, I sprinkled flecks of yellow on the bottom of the page, for flowers on the high desert valley floor.

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

covers about 150,000 acres in all. The dunes account for only a fraction of that, yet they’re the focal point for day visitors and provide an exquisite backdrop for overnights. After art class, I drove to the park’s campground, which sits 8,200 feet above sea level. I found a corner site with an unobstructed view of the dunes and asked my neighbor, Richard, if he had dune-hiking advice. He suggested climbing the tallest one, Star Dune: “Pick the least steep slope and go!” He told me to carry a walking stick and take rain gear because afternoon storms are common. “Batten down the hatches,” he hollered as I pitched my tent.

The sun set behind the dunes in a purple sky, and I strolled through camp, chatting with a man from Texas who had built his own teardrop trailer. He was

inspired to visit the park after seeing a CBS News segment about the park’s acoustics (to which my Boulder friend had charmingly referred), a rare phenomenon called booming sands. In certain conditions, small human- or wind-generated avalanches will make the dunes sing in a very low tone that some compare to the sound of a cello.

The next morning, the crescent moon lit my path out of the campground and toward the dunes. The sky was a dark gray, but the south horizon glowed baby blue. Birds began their morning chatter. Thirty square miles of dunes stretched before me, and I felt like running. I took my first step onto the sand.

Millions of years ago, the San Luis Valley was a lake. Nomadic Paleo-Indians hunted mammoths



INDIAN RICEGRASS and blowout grass grow at lower elevations and are important food sources for some park inhabitants, such as Ord's kangaroo rats.

THE DUNES BELOW WERE NOW SO FAR AWAY AND SO SMALL. THEY REMINDED ME OF THE PINCHED EDGES OF PIE CRUST.

and prehistoric bison here more than 10,000 years before Spanish explorers arrived. Through the ages, the dunes have swelled and receded in an endless cycle: Erosion of the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo Mountains creates sediment; snowmelt feeds spring-time streams, which carry the sand into the valley like a conveyor belt; and opposing winds blow the grains of sand into dunes and push the piles skyward. With every wind storm and flash flood, the landscape changes.

High Dune, which rises to around 700 feet, is the most popular destination in the park, partly because

it's relatively easy to access from the parking lot. Star Dune, with four distinct ridges, is the tallest on the continent, at 750 feet. That was where I was headed.

I walked along the ephemeral Medano Creek. Typically, the water has disappeared by August, but unexpected rains yielded a late summer stream with strands that twisted together like a bundle of nerves. As the water moved over the sand, it babbled softly. A black-billed magpie called from a tree. Wild sunflowers glowed from pockets of sand.

The previous day, a ranger had told me that if I walked to the end of the creek, Star Dune's distinctive ridges would be in plain sight. They were. I began up a face of the dune, the first footprints of the day.

Walking was exhausting. My calves ached, my feet sank deep and my boots filled with sand. Though I'd been acclimating to the altitude for several weeks, ascending Star Dune took my breath away.

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

Great Sand Dunes National Park is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The high desert offers much in the way of dark night skies and long, barren landscapes, but few dining options or gas stations. Fuel up when you see either.

To reach the park, fly into Denver International Airport (256 miles north), Colorado Springs Airport (170 miles north) or Albuquerque International Sunport (240 miles south).

The park's busiest times are late May and early June, when the Medano Creek flows highest and children can ride its pint-sized waves (a phenomenon called surge flow). Plan weekday visits to avoid traffic and crowds. July and August are the warmest months — the creek has typically retreated or disappeared, days are in the 80s, nights can dip to the 40s and afternoon thunderstorms are common. Pack layers, because Rocky Mountain weather can change quickly. Great Sand Dunes is particularly Fido-friendly: Dogs on leashes are allowed in the most popular areas of the dunes and creek. Be sure to protect their paws (and yours) in the summer, when sand can reach temperatures upward of 150 degrees. Check the weather (and Medano Creek condi-



tions) on the park's website or call the visitor center (719-378-6395).

The visitor center and campground are 8,200 feet above sea level, and some hikes reach 13,600 feet. Consider spending a couple of days in Denver, Boulder or Albuquerque before your visit to acclimate to the elevation.

Pinon Flats Campground is open April through October (\$20 a night). Free backcountry permits are available for camping in the dunefield. Just outside the park, camp at Oasis, Zapata Falls or San Luis State Park and Wildlife Area. The closest towns with lodging and restaurants are Crestone, Alamosa, Monte Vista and Del Norte. Rent sandboards and sleds at Oasis (719-378-2222), for \$20, or Kristi Mountain Sports (719-589-9759), for \$18. Sand wheelchairs for adults and children are available at the visitor center.

Soon, I righted myself atop the ridgeline, spoiling the perfect pointy edge with each step. Sun rose above the mountains, and I contorted my body to make shadow shapes on adjacent dunes. I was feeling like a kid already! Stopping for a water break, I turned around and sat, stretching out one leg on each side of the ridge. One slope was soft and perfectly flat; the other was firm, rippled by the wind.

Dune climbing is very different from hiking in the mountains. Here, I wasn't worried about perilous

descent. With each step on the ridge, sand tumbled down the sides in mini-avalanches. I stopped to look at what were probably coyote tracks, and I crouched down to examine a lively circus beetle, one of seven insects found only at this park.

After lunch, I headed to the often overlooked side of Great Sand Dunes — the preserve. This section used to belong to the U.S. Forest Service, and hunting and fishing are permitted there. I hiked a 3.5-mile trail to Mosca Pass, high in the Sangre de

SANDBOARDING is a very popular activity; visitors can rent boards and sleds just outside the park.



climbs, hard falls, poisonous plants, large animals or losing my bearings. Though I was alone in the wide-open dunefield with no map or compass, I felt invincible. I could see the campsite far below, and the only bad thing that could happen, it seemed, was that I'd drop my camera or notebook, and it would tumble hundreds of feet down the dune.

Two hours and five miles after I left my tent, I summited. The dunes below were now so far away and so small, they reminded me of the pinched edges of pie crust. I sat at the top of the soft mountain, the sound of my breath muted by the wind.

Bounding down the dune made for a quick

Cristos. The partially shaded path follows a stream and winds through forests of aspen and evergreens. I passed purple and red wildflowers, and as I made my way back, I could see a sliver of dunes framed by the colors of the forest.

Early the next morning, I met a British woman, Wendy, in the campground bathroom, and we exchanged bleary-eyed pleasantries. Shortly after, she and her family stood near my campsite to watch the sun rise, and we chatted until the air warmed. I ran into them again in the dunefield, after we'd all rented sleds and hiked up the slopes. At the rental shop just outside the park, a gray-haired man had



BE PREPARED to get your shoes wet on the hike to Zapata Falls, which is a short drive from the park.

warned me about sledders reaching speeds of 40 miles an hour. “We say, ‘start off slow,’” he said. He handed me a puck of wax for the bottom

of the wooden sled.

Great Sand Dunes Superintendent Lisa Carrico told me that 90 percent of the park’s visitors come to play in the creek and on the closest dunes. She grew up in the park in the 1970s; her dad was superintendent of what was then a national monument, and her family lived in a house that today serves as park headquarters. The site officially became a national park and preserve in 2004, but she said otherwise, the place hasn’t changed much.

“It’s Colorado’s high-altitude seashore,” Carrico said. “People set up canopies and bring coolers, dogs play in the creek. In the summer, close your eyes, and it sounds like a beach.”

My first few runs on the sled weren’t pretty — picture doughnuts, tumbling and pockets full of sand. The sporty British family suggested I drag my fingers behind me, like rudders, to stay on a straight path, which made all the difference. They’d made a

SIDE TRIP

Great Sand Dunes is an ideal base from which to explore about 400,000 acres of preserved land in the San Luis Valley. The Baca National Wildlife Refuge, a stopover for migratory birds and home to thousands of elk, offers monthly summer tours (719-256-5527). Zapata Ranch (719-378-2356), a 103,000-acre working cattle and bison ranch, is owned by The Nature Conservancy and sits on land the Park Service is in the process of acquiring. Thirty-foot Zapata Falls is a refreshing must-visit after a hot day on the dunes. (Take note: The 3.5-mile drive to the trailhead is extremely bumpy, and the hike to the falls involves scrambling over slippery rocks.) San Luis State Park and Wildlife Area (719-378-2020, \$7 entrance fee) is a haven for waterfowl; check out the tables by the lake for a picnic lunch.



DURING THE BUSY SEASON, the dunes can resemble a neighborhood hill on a snow day

competition of it, drawing a line where their sleds stopped at the bottom. Wendy quickly surpassed them all, and soon the family moved on to steeper slopes.

The dunes looked like a neighborhood hill on a snow day — kids somersaulted and squealed, grown-ups huffed and puffed as they shuffled back to the top, and tracks crisscrossed the sand. The sand was still cool, so I kicked off my boots and took a few more exhilarating runs, perfecting my technique until I sledged — smugly — straight past the Brits’ lines. On my way back to the parking lot, I walked through the gentle creek, running warm. Kids played with inflatable toys, and dogs splashed. I closed my eyes. Carrico was right.

The San Luis Valley, in many ways, is like a slice of West Texas. Big skies dominate the horizon, John Deeres dot the landscape, mariachi bands play on the car radio and oncoming vehicles are scarce. That afternoon, sand still in my ears from sledging, I drove into the closest town, Alamosa. The farmers market sold large sacks of green chilies and roasted pinon nuts by the bag.

In the evening, my British pals invited me to their campsite. While the kids made s’mores, the parents handed me a microbrew they’d picked up in Durango. “To sand sledging,” I toasted. We agreed it felt wonderful to be physically exhausted and lamented our departure the next day.

After going to hear a bluegrass concert at the amphitheater, we said goodbye and talked about meeting at another park one day. We hugged like old friends.

On my final morning, I tried to stretch out the minutes before leaving. Perhaps one more day of sledging, I thought, would ease the transition back to adult responsibilities. But it wasn’t possible — as soon as the day had begun, I was back on a schedule. While I was mourning the end of what felt like a three-day recess, a pack of coyotes howled. I scrambled out of my tent, hoping to see them in the dunes. Instead, I saw four mule deer walking alongside my campsite. A bunny the size of a grapefruit scampered by and stopped for a moment next to my tent. I tried to hold the coyote song in my head.

Back home, I wrote an email to my mom. Occasionally, when I send her photos, she paints them, so I attached a few shots of the dunes under a pastel sky. In one image, radiant sunflowers stood in the foreground. For a moment, I paused to remember the thrill of speeding down a dune. I’d had sand in my ears and hadn’t even cared.

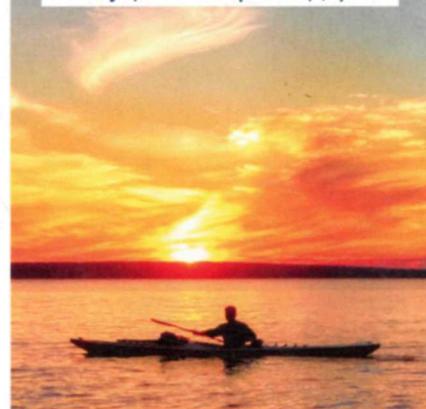
I wished I were sledging.
I hit send.

MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN is a Washington, D.C.-based writer.

MORGAN HEIM is a photographer and documentary filmmaker based in Colorado.

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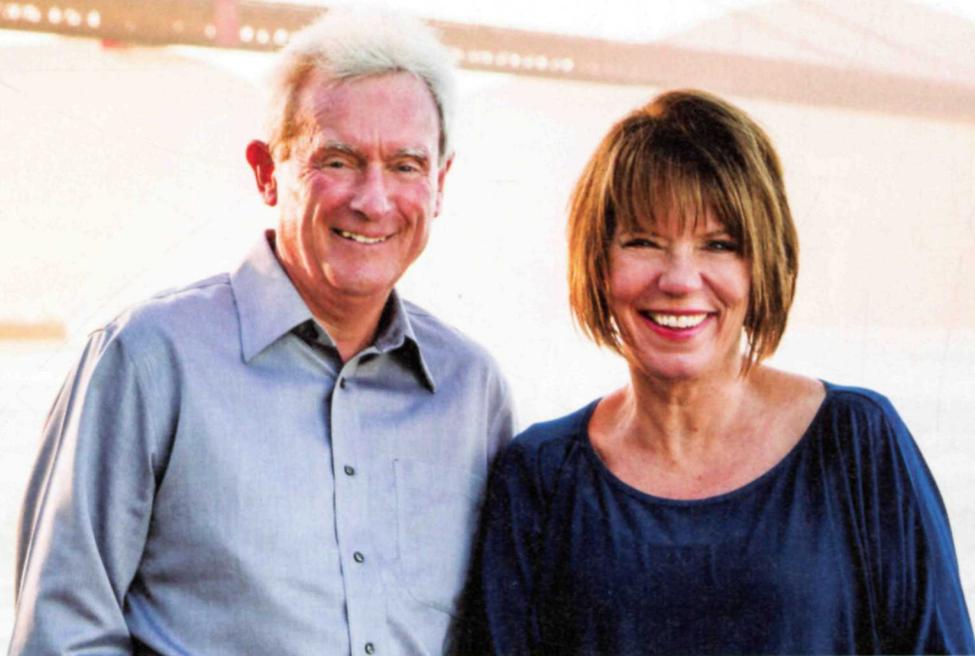


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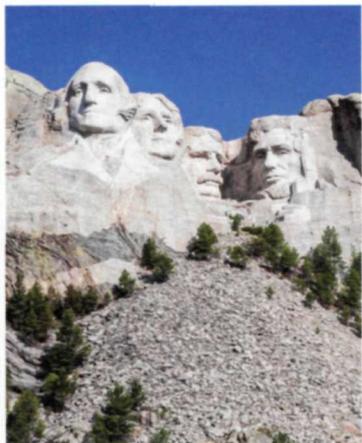
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HIKING IN the mountains above Upper Twin Lake in 1986.

REFLECTIONS ON A MAN IN HIS WILDERNESS

Remembering Richard Proenneke

In 1968, Richard Proenneke — a 52-year-old Iowan who'd fallen in love with the Alaska outback — headed to a remote spot in the southwestern part of the state to test himself. Using simple hand-held tools, many of which he'd fashioned himself, he constructed a log cabin on the edge of Upper Twin Lake and went on to live in his expertly crafted home, alone, for the next 30 years. His quiet life and wilderness ethic — the belief that wildlife should not suffer for his presence — could easily have gone unnoticed, but his story became widely known in 1973, when Sam Keith published the book "One Man's Wilderness: An Alaskan Odyssey," based on Proenneke's daily journal entries and photographs. Eventually, large swaths of the diaries, more than 250 steno pads in all, were published in three edited volumes, and several filmmakers used footage Proenneke had shot in biographical movies.

To read "One Man's Wilderness" is to be swept into a slower, simpler world. Fans of the book (and the other publications and films) admire Proenneke's self-sufficiency, close observations of nature and unencumbered, off-the-grid lifestyle. He wrote: "I have found that some of the simplest things have given me the most pleasure. They didn't cost me a lot of money either. They just worked on my senses. Did you ever pick very large blueberries after a summer rain? Walk through a grove of cottonwoods, open like a park, and see the blue sky beyond the shimmering gold of the leaves? Pull on dry woolen socks after you've peeled off the wet ones? Come in out of the subzero and shiver yourself warm in front of a wood fire? The world is full of such things."

Proenneke left Twin Lakes in 1998, when he was 82, to move in with his brother in California. He donated his log cabin and most of his possessions to the National Park Service, which had managed the area since 1978, when it became part of Lake Clark National Monument. (He never had valid title to the land, but some park administrators consider the cabin a gift nonetheless.)

Proenneke died in 2003, but his journals continue to find new audiences, and every year, visitors make the long journey to the Richard Proenneke Site to see his carefully preserved home in what is now Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

Alan and Laurel Bennett knew Proenneke from their time working at Lake Clark, and after they retired, they served as volunteer guides at his cabin for six years. During those summers, from 2008 to 2014, they found that many visitors asked them a variation of the same question: "What was Dick really like?" It actually wasn't all that hard to answer: Although he lived by himself, Proenneke interacted with many people — pilots, hunters, fishermen, neighbors, park rangers — and as his legendary status grew, more and more visitors traveled to the far reaches of the park to meet him. Everyone, it seemed, had a story about him, and the Bennetts decided to collect some of them before it was too late. In October, the couple published "Dick Proenneke: Reflections on a Man in His Wilderness," a compilation of essays written by (or drawn from interviews with) his friends and admirers.

Proenneke would have turned 100 last year; we are pleased to mark the anniversary by publishing some remembrances adapted from the book.

—Editors



© DICK PROENNEKE

A CUP OF TEA

I first met Dick in the summer of 1979. I was one of 19 rangers from the Lower 48 who had been selected and sent to Alaska to watch over the new Park Service monuments covering 48 million acres that had been designated by President Jimmy Carter. I was the first and only field ranger assigned to Lake Clark National Monument that year.

That summer, during my patrols, I flew over and landed at Twin Lakes a number of times. I was not sure it was true, but I had been told that if Dick liked and accepted you, he would invite you for a cup of tea. My first meetings with Dick were a bit formal because of a certain amount of posturing by both of us. I am sure Dick was probably wondering just what was in store for him and his cabin with the new national monument. But on the third visit, he invited me to have a cup of tea, and the courtesy was extended every visit thereafter. I think we both recognized we were on the same side concerning the protection and preservation of the wildlife and natural resources in the new park site.

Dick always left a map of the area on the cabin table and a flagged pin to show exactly where he intended to go that day. To my knowledge, the cabin door was never locked. I asked him why he placed the pin on the map and he jokingly responded, "So if anyone is interested enough, they would know where to look for my body!" On a more serious note, visitors who had business with him could see where he was and perhaps, how long he might be gone. The map was so full of holes from past pin

placement that it looked like one of those old-time punchboards.

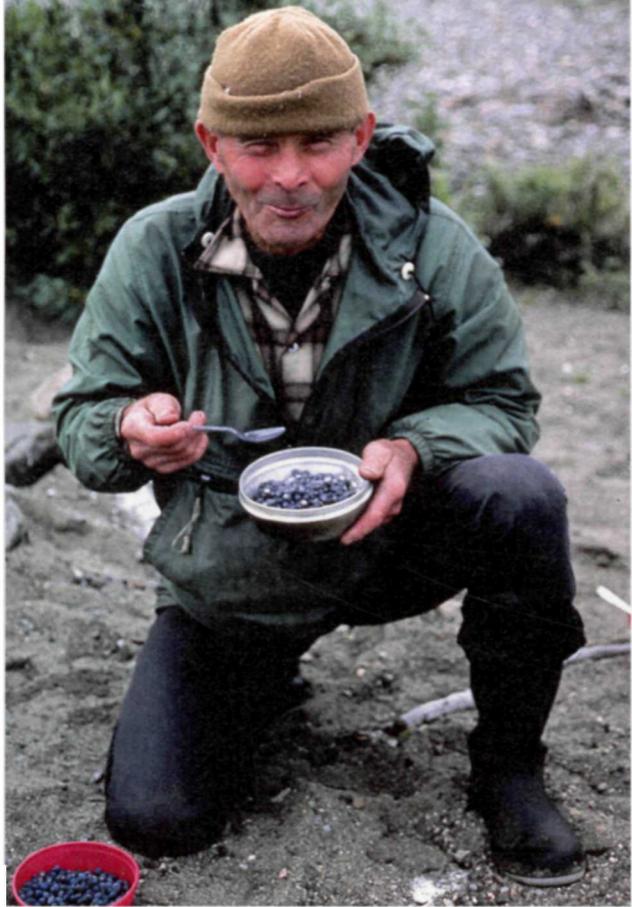
I remarked one time about how clean his cabin's gravel floor was. He said, "Well, you arrived just after spring cleaning." "How so?" I asked. Dick explained that he scooped up the gravel from the floor one bucket at a time, took the bucket to the lake shore, washed the gravel, then spread it back on the floor of the cabin.

He followed the practice of waste-not-want-not. Once when we visited, I noticed a fish line in the lake with what appeared to be fish intestines carefully threaded on the hook. I asked him

I was not sure it was true, but I had been told that if Dick liked and accepted you, he would invite you for a cup of tea.

why he was using intestines for bait. He said that he had caught a lake trout that morning and rather than throw away the insides, he put them on a hook and figured he would catch a burbot for another meal.

After I left Lake Clark at the end of the summer, I made up a large package of assorted teas and sent him a surprise bundle



© MAGGIE YURICK



TOM GRAV/NPS



© DICK PROENNEKE

A VIEW OF the cabin and raised storage shed from the lake (left). Above: Eating fresh blueberries in a spot along the Chilikadrotna River. Top right: Filming the 1977 production "One Man's Alaska" at Emerson Falls. Bottom right: Proenneke would stomp out a runway for pilots during the winter.

with a thank-you note for helping to educate this park ranger. I considered it an honor to have met and spent some time with this remarkable man.

Stu Coleman recently retired from a job working among the bison and bears at Yellowstone National Park.

VISITING THE SEAMSTRESS

One afternoon, the inseam of Dick's pants tore from his foot clear up to his crotch. His pants were just flapping in the wind where the seam used to be. He

and Will Troyer, a park wildlife biologist, were in the middle of a caribou calf count at Turquoise Lake. The wind was getting stronger, and the noise of Dick's flapping trousers was getting louder. Finally, Will asked, "What are you going to do?"

Dick replied, "Oh, I'm going to go visit a seamstress." He handed his clipboard to Will, turned toward the lake and took off. An hour passed, and Will looked up to see Dick coming back with his pants neatly sewed up. Astonished, Will asked, "Well ... how did you do that?"

Dick explained that he'd gone down to the creeks at the head of Turquoise Lake. He knew that sport fishermen used that area during the summer and invariably somebody got a snag in their line, so they would just cut the line off and throw it on the beach

or in the bushes. He searched the area and soon found some monofilament fishing line and a discarded beer can. Next, he used his knife to cut a narrow wedge-shaped piece of metal out of that beer can, and he rolled it up tight in the shape of a needle. Finally, he used his knife to drill a hole in the wider end of the needle. Then it was a simple matter of threading the needle with the line and getting on with the business of sewing his pants.

A week or so before Dick's 80th birthday, I flew up to deliver his mail. As I nosed the floats onto his beach, Dick came down, and I asked if he had any plans for his birthday. He said, "I've been practicing chin-ups so that on my birthday, I can do 80."

He was up to 60 when I landed, and he said he was adding two to four a day. Sadly, I missed his birthday, but I did get up to see him a week later. First thing I asked him was, "Did you do those 80 chin-ups?"

"Oh, I felt good that morning," Dick said. "I got up and did those 80 chin-ups." Then he paused. "I felt so good," he continued, "I just went ahead and did 100."

When he was still a teenager, Glen Alsworth Sr. began flying to Proenneke's cabin to deliver his mail. He went on to become a well-known Alaskan pilot and the mayor of the Lake and Peninsula Borough.

THE FISH KNEW WE WERE HAVING A PARTY

I think of Dick as a kindred spirit. I grew up here in Alaska. My backyard was a mountain, my front yard was a river and my best

Once, when we were canoeing, I asked him, "Do you get lonely, or is this enough?"



PROENNEKE BUILT his cabin using only hand tools, many of which he fashioned himself (top left). Bottom left: Proenneke wrote regularly in his journal; he filled hundreds of steno pads, many of which the Park Service now owns.

friends were the trails. Dick loved those things as much as anybody I'd ever met.

Canoeing with Dick was easy. We paddled at a steady but slow pace. Being together was always very comfortable, whether conversation came or not.

Once, when we were canoeing, I asked him, "Do you get lonely, or is this enough?"

He said, "I never get lonely."

But then he wrote me a letter afterward and said, "After you left, I felt lonely."

One fall, I came to visit Dick over my birthday. It's always a beautiful time of year there, and he made my birthday a very special day. We got ready to go on a long hike, but before we left, we did my favorite kind of fishing. He took some line and threw it in the lake with a hook, and then we headed up behind his cabin. Way back up.

At the upper end of the valley, Dick said, "See that glacier over there? That glacier doesn't have a name. I'm going to name it Alison Glacier." I don't know if it's official or not, but years later, I learned that the Park Service stuck that name on its map.

When we got back to Dick's cabin, we found a very large lake trout on the line, and Dick made much of it. He said, "Oh, the fish knew that we were having a party today."

The day after my birthday, we went to the other side of the lake and picked blueberries. Those blueberries were the best ever. I'd love to go back just to pick blueberries.



© DICK PROENNEKE

NPS

Alison Woodings never returned to Twin Lakes, but she corresponded with Dick for

many years. Before settling in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley where she grew up, she taught school in Tanana, Ketchikan and Fairbanks.

SMALL MOMENTS

I've never known a person who could put as many miles on his legs as easily as Dick. He commonly walked the legs off people half his age, even as he approached his 80th birthday. After one tiring hike up and over Low Pass to the Kijik area with my sister and Dick, who was then 79 years old, we returned to soak our feet in the lake in front of Dick's cabin and eat his famous blueberries with Tang. After a moment, he asked, "Well, girls, where are we going to hike tomorrow?"

On my last visit to see Dick, in the late 1990s, he wanted to show some visitors the Teetering Rock above Hope Creek. By then, he was more frail but still able to make his way up the trail to his favorite rock. After a little while, it was clear the visitors from California wanted to keep moving, so they quickly left to make their way down the mountain and back to their boat. It occurred to me that they had just missed out on one of the most unique moments of their lives — to spend some quality time with Dick. If they had only slowed down to savor the moment. But they were still on California time, rushing about and trying to see and do everything they could.

I knew when I flew out that I might not see him again, and that turned out to be the case. We continued to exchange letters for a few more years, even as Dick's health failed more and more. His letters are some of my most cherished possessions — words of wisdom from a man I loved and admired.

Although it's been years since Dick's passing, I still think of him whenever I see something unusual or interesting in the natural world. How I wish I could tell him about it in a letter and seek his thoughts.

Chris Degernes was Proenneke's nearest neighbor at Twin Lakes for many years. Today she lives at Cooper Landing on the Kenai Peninsula.

CALL ME DICK

I met Dick Proenneke in 1982 when I was a seasonal park ranger on my first summer assignment in Alaska. My partner, Tim Wingate, and I would be flown to Twin Lakes for a variety of assignments. We'd always check in with Dick whenever we



© DICK PROENNEKE

FALL OF 1979 at Twin Lakes.

were up there. He was very welcoming and very friendly, and he helped us out with all kinds of things. I was always amazed at his cabin, cache and woodshed — how immaculate they were and the craftsmanship they exhibited.

One day I learned that Dick did have a sharp side to his personality. The early 1980s must have been an anxious time for Dick and many others who lived inside the boundaries of newly created parks and preserves. His cabin was illegal at the time, though of course we gave him five-year leases and ultimately a lifetime lease. But it's understandable that back then, Dick was apprehensive whenever high-ranking park officials came to his cabin.

That year, two associate regional Park Service directors flew in to meet Dick. High-level park administrators, although well intentioned, can sometimes seem a bit arrogant. Maybe it rubs off on them during their stints in Washington, like spruce pollen on a moose.

I was at Dick's place the day the associate directors visited. After they left, I asked Dick, "So how'd it go?" He instantly lit into them. He said, "Well, they got off that airplane, introduced themselves as director this and director that and then called me by my first name like we went to school together."

It offended him that they wanted respect because of their lofty titles, yet they didn't extend the same level of esteem to him. For me, this event was quite a good lesson in etiquette and the importance of treating everybody with utmost regard.

Tom Betts is currently superintendent of Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument.

THEY GOTTA WORK FOR IT

When I moved back north to Alaska in 1992 to work as the pilot for a fishing lodge, I'd frequently take guests to see Dick. We would just show up, and if he was there, Dick would give us a little tour of his place, explain his daily routine and pose for pictures. He loved the photo sessions and knew exactly where he wanted everyone to stand to take advantage of the sun. He always liked to have people get pictures of themselves looking out through the top of the Dutch door of his cabin. We still do that today.

"His birds" — gray jays — were always part of the visit. If the jays hadn't already been drawn in by the sight and voices of lodge guests milling around the cabin, Dick would call them. "Hey, guys, come on, you guys." Dick's jay calling is etched in my memory. When they came in, he would pass out crackers and tell visitors, "Now hold the cracker tight. Don't just give it to them." He'd really make them peck and pry to pull it out of his hand. Some guests would be a little timid at the prospect of a screaming gray jay landing on them, and they would just place the cracker in the palm of their hands. "No, oh no," Dick would quickly command. "You want to hold it tight. They gotta work for a living."

Bush pilot and fishing guide John Erickson has been flying visitors to Twin Lakes for almost 25 years. Since 2012, he has worked for Operation Heal Our Patriots, flying wounded veterans in to see the Richard Proenneke Site.

BETTER FRIENDS

When I worked at Lake Clark in the summers of 1990 and 1991, Dick and I would check in with each other on the radio most mornings.

"Lower Lake, Upper Lake," he'd say.

"Upper Lake, Lower Lake," I'd respond.

"What are ya gonna do today?"

"Well, maybe take the Klepper kayak over to the other side and see if berries are ripe. What are you doing?"

"I'm cooking beans."

"OK. Give you a berry update later."

Dick never changed his clock for daylight savings time and thought it was dumb when Alaska merged all its time zones. So his clock was behind mine. If we checked in at 10 a.m., it was only 8 a.m. for him.

Dick had scores of fans from all over the U.S. and beyond. One of his admirers didn't live too far away and, in fact, owned the small lodge that had been built in the only private non-native inholding in the Twin Lakes area. Chris Degernes made Dick



© JOHN BRANSON

PROENNEKE aboard his "Tom Sawyer" raft on Lachbuna Lake.

chocolate peanut clusters a few times a year. Afraid he didn't have the discipline to keep from eating the whole box at once, he stored them in an abandoned cabin he used as storage. Once in a while, on a visit, we would walk down and each get two — one for eating right now and one to take back. His smile was always one of childlike joy, like we were getting away with something.

One sunny day, Dick and I were relaxing on his well-raked beach enjoying a little chat. I took off my boots and Dick noticed how callused the balls of my feet were. Something about the callusing had created a really tender spot, and I was rubbing it.

"You need to do something about that, Pat," Dick told me. "You have to take care of your feet."

"What should I do?"

"Lemme see," Dick replied. Off he went to his tool shed and back he came with a fine wood file. As I leaned back on my elbows, knees bent, he took first one foot, then the other and began to rub off the calluses, gently but persistently.

I remarked, "None of my other friends would do this for me."

Dick responded with a twinkle, "Then you need better friends."

Patty Brown, who was a park ranger in Alaska and California for 20 years, worked at Lower Twin Lake from 1990 to 1991. She went on to spend another 20 years teaching science, math and other subjects in Alaska.

TO PURCHASE a copy of "Dick Proenneke: Reflections on a Man in His Wilderness," edited by Alan and Laurel Bennett, go to richardproenneke.com or amazon.com.



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Texas longhorn steer in rural Utah
Courtesy Johnny Adolphson, Shutterstock

WATFORD CITY, NORTH DAKOTA

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The New York Times has placed Theodore Roosevelt National Park fifth on its list of the "Top 52 places to visit in 2016."

With miles of rugged badlands and rolling grasslands dotted with majestic wildlife, the North Unit of the park sits just 12 miles south of Watford City, a small-town getaway with big-city amenities.

The gateway to internationally acclaimed adventure, Watford City residents have enjoyed the natural beauty of the area for decades. Surrounded by the Yellowstone River, Lake Sakakawea, the Missouri River and the Little Missouri River, the area prides itself on being home to 500,000 acres of beautiful public land for exploring and miles of shoreline for boating and fishing.

With all that wide-open space to enjoy, Watford City is poised to accommodate all types of adventurers. With more than 700



A Bison in Theodore Roosevelt National Park
Courtesy Diane Kay Photography

available and newly constructed hotel rooms, a variety of cabins and campgrounds, unique shopping, diverse dining and newly built, construction-free highways to get you there, you can enjoy a vacation that's as rugged or as relaxing as you like!

The Theodore Roosevelt National Park is North Dakota's playground right in *your* backyard, and Watford City wants to help you experience what has the nation inspired. The badlands are just the beginning of the adventure! Watford City: we're not the same, we're better. Come and see for yourself! Your adventure awaits on the New Frontier. To learn more, visit visitwatfordcity.com.



Diane Kay Photography

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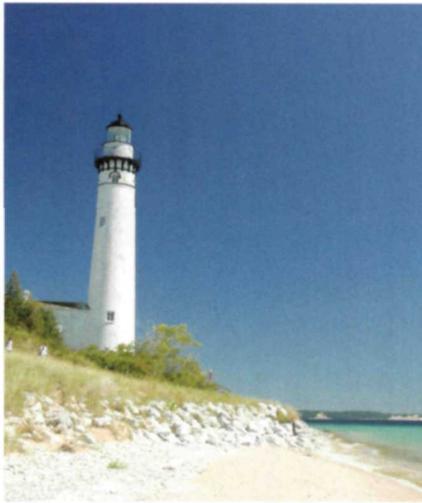
Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois
Courtesy Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau

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South Manitou Lighthouse
Courtesy Mike Norton

TRAVERSE CITY: Michigan’s “True North”

The gateway city to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Traverse City is a colorful resort community on the shore of Grand Traverse Bay. For most of the 19th century it was a colorful frontier town whose inhabitants included Native Americans and missionaries, lumberjacks and fishermen, mariners and farmers. All left their imprints on the landscape: lonely lighthouses and humble mission churches, grand old hotels,

quaint summer colonies and the palatial homes of lumber barons.

Visitors can sample this historical richness by taking a cruise aboard the Manitou, a working replica of a 19th-century schooner, exploring the lighthouses of South Manitou and Mission Point, strolling historic “Silk Stocking Row” in Traverse City’s Central Neighborhood or wandering through the fascinating Village at Grand Traverse Commons—a former mental asylum now being transformed into a community of shops, boutiques, restaurants and apartments.

Surrounding Traverse City are charming lakeshore villages, from the idyllic settlement of Old Mission, founded in 1839 as a joint venture by leaders of the local Ottawa Indian tribe and a wiry Presbyterian minister named Peter Dougherty, to Leland’s quaint Fishtown district whose weathered docks, shanties and net-drying sheds are now a popular shopping and browsing destination.

Traverse City is home to Michigan’s oldest restaurant—Sleder’s Family Tavern, built in 1882 by homesick Bohemian millworkers—and its oldest continuously-operated hotel—the picturesque Old Mission Inn, founded in 1861 as a steamship stop at the mouth of the bay. Both are open to visitors, and well worth the visit!



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Hiker Exploring The Wooded Trails of Morgantown
Courtesy Michael Forte

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Greater Morgantown is an extraordinary land of natural beauty. Miles of picturesque trails serve as guides to explore the soul of the great outdoors. Here, in forests that have never seen paved roads, you can ride the mighty roller coaster rapids of Class III whitewater, zip line through a canopy of trees, and hike to a breathtaking 1,200-foot-high overlook that opens into a mile-wide gorge.

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This cool destination has a secret: a wealth of Appalachian culture that is reflected in art, antiques and farm-to-table culinary creations. Make the most of every minute: call our Visitors' Center at 800-458-7373.



Mountain Biking through Maah Daah Hey Trail, North Dakota
Courtesy Tyler Stableford

CLAIM YOUR ADVENTURE IN NORTH DAKOTA

An Unforgettable Panoramic View

Theodore Roosevelt's time in North Dakota inspired many things, including the National Park Service and the park in the Badlands that bears his name. Today, you can follow in his footsteps and find legendary adventures in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Roosevelt's journey included boat thieves, cattle drives and big game, and outdoor enthusiasts can still find adventures that await them within the park today.

Families can explore the visitor centers at Painted Canyon on I-94 or the South Unit park entrance adjacent to the Maltese Cross Cabin in Medora. The park offers up a 36-mile loop drive winding its way through wind-carved

buttes, past herds of bison and wild horses, prairie dog towns and scenic vistas.

Adventure seekers can explore the epic Maah Daah Hey Trail which weaves a 144-mile, single-track trail connecting the North and South units of the park. This nationally recognized mountain biking and hiking trail passes by the remote Elkhorn Ranch, the former site of Roosevelt's working ranch. Outdoor enthusiasts can marvel in the scenic wonders on the trail and relax by a campfire under a canopy of flickering stars.

Head up to the North Unit located south of Watford City and enjoy a scenic 14-mile drive through deep canyons and onto the grasslands for a panoramic view of the Little Missouri River.

Theodore Roosevelt made a path in North Dakota that won't soon be forgotten. Now it is time to claim your North Dakota adventure.

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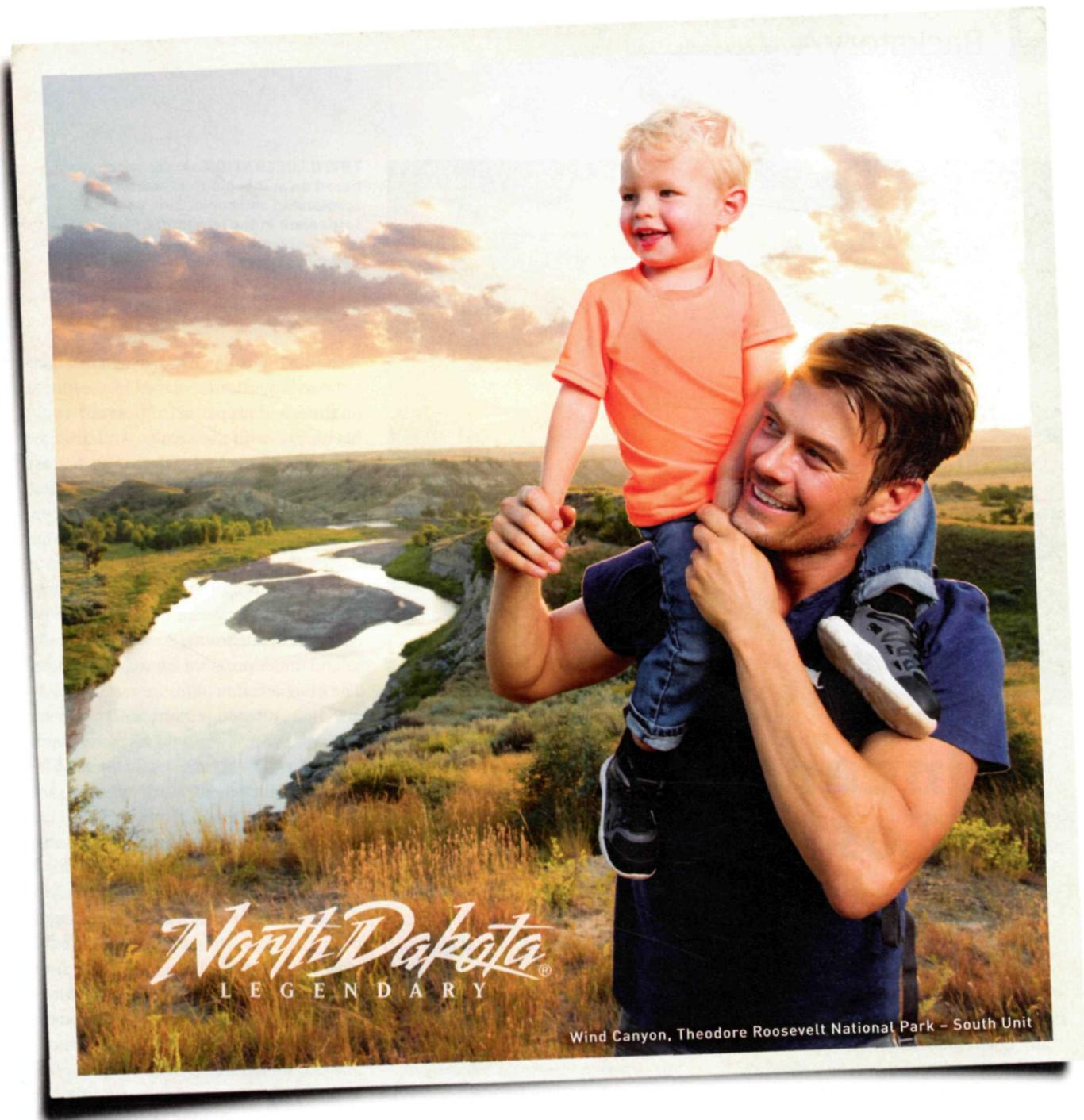
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— Josh Duhamel —

UNREHEARSED

North Dakota native Josh Duhamel and his son, Axl, have something in common with President Theodore Roosevelt: a love for the Badlands. After spending time here, Roosevelt was instrumental in starting the National Park System. Discover the beauty of North Dakota's most popular attraction, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and visit us online to find more of Josh's favorite North Dakota places.

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THIS ILLUSTRATION of Werowocomoco, based on archaeological research, scholarship and conjecture, shows the settlement in the late 1500s. Capt. John Smith met Chief Powhatan and his daughter, Pocahontas, there in 1607.

recounted how Powhatan's men brought out two large stones, placed his head on them and prepared to "beat out his brains" with their clubs. At that moment, Pocahontas, "the king's dearest daughter," successfully intervened. She "got his head in her arms and laid her own upon his to save him from death."

Smith returned four more times to Werowocomoco to meet with Powhatan. Then, just over a year after his first encounter with Smith, Powhatan moved inland under pressure from the colonists.

The exact location of his former home, one of the most important Indian sites in the region, was eventually forgotten, and it wasn't until 15 years ago that archaeologists rediscovered Werowocomoco. After nearly a decade of excavations, they found not only evidence of contact between the Powhatan Indians and the English colonists but artifacts suggesting that Werowocomoco, which translates from Virginia Algonquian language to "a place of leadership," had been a significant spiritual and political place for four centuries before that. The National Park Service acquired the site last June and will soon develop plans to open it to the public.

"It has the potential to share a very powerful story, to help us better understand the Old and New World coming together and provide some of that story through an American Indian lens," said Chuck Hunt, superintendent of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, who will oversee the planning process.

Using maps from the early 17th century, including one drawn by Smith himself, historians hypothesized that Werowocomoco was situated in Purtan

Unearthing a Lost City

The Park Service plans to shed light on pre-Colonial Indian society at the site where Pocahontas met John Smith.

IN DECEMBER 1607, six months after the founding of the English settlement of Jamestown, Capt. John Smith was captured by a relative of Powhatan, the leader of a chiefdom based in what is now eastern Virginia. After detours through several Indian settlements, Smith was finally taken to Werowocomoco, the residence of Powhatan himself. Smith's first impression of the Indian leader was that of an "emperor" displaying a "grave and majestic countenance." According to Smith's writings, the two proceeded to exchange information about their respective homelands.

What happened next is still a matter of great debate 400 years later. In an account published almost two decades after the event, Smith

Bay, a small cove on the York River just 15 miles from Jamestown. In the early 1970s, Randolph Turner, then a young archaeologist, decided to investigate.

After surveying the area, Turner set his sights on a property overlooking the bay, but each time he stopped by, the owners weren't home. Finally, in 2001, two of his colleagues met with owners Bob and Lynn Ripley. When the archaeologists saw the extensive collection of stone points and pottery fragments Lynn had gathered on walks by the river, they immediately contacted Turner, by then a regional director for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Shortly after, he saw the artifacts himself and knew instantly they dated from the right period. "I realized that it really was Werowocomoco," he said.

Before excavating the site, archaeologists reached out to local tribes to obtain their consent and solicit their input. During an initial meeting, tears flowed freely, Turner recounted. It was the first time that some had been given the chance to participate in that kind of investigation of their past. Also, this was a place of extraordinary significance for them. When she first walked the grounds of Werowocomoco, Rappahannock Chief Anne Richardson said she had a spiritual experience.

"You can feel the spirit of the land," she said. "It's a great place that renews you and makes you feel like you're not alone in the world."

Archaeologists started surveying the site in 2002, and digging began the following year. On the river bluff, they found evidence of seasonal settlements dating back more than 2,000 years.

"It's a great place that renews you and makes you feel like you're not alone in the world."

Pottery, pieces of corn and a fragment of a single bean, as well as imprints of ancient house posts, revealed the existence of a sizable town established four centuries before Powhatan moved there.

Inland, the excavation team came across artifacts that were very different from those close to the river: tobacco pipe fragments and a high concentration of copper pieces. Tobacco smoking typically took place during diplomatic and ceremonial events, and the chemistry of the copper found at Werowocomoco is similar to that of copper bits found at Jamestown, said Martin Gallivan, a professor at the College of William and Mary who led the excavations. Archaeologists also found the remains of a house they suspected might have been Powhatan's residence because of its size, structure and location. The area near the river and the ceremonial space inland are separated by two parallel trenches extending for hundreds of feet — the only monumental-scale Indian feature found in the region.

Ashley Atkins, a member of the Pamunkey tribe and a graduate archaeology student at William and Mary who has worked at the site, said Werowocomoco is part of the tribe's "cultural patrimony," but it can also serve a political purpose. "It's a tool for us to show the outside world that we're still here," she said. "We never went away, and we have this rich history that we're still connected to."

The excavation project ended

in 2010, and in 2012 Kathleen Kilpatrick, then director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, negotiated a conservation easement with the owners that guaranteed permanent protection for Werowocomoco and later paved the way for the Park Service to acquire the site. Hunt, the superintendent, said the planning process will include extensive collaboration with local tribes.

"It's important that we get it right," he said, "and it's important that we share the site in a way that the Virginia Indians are very supportive of because it's their story."

Archaeologists may continue excavating the site down the road, but they are unlikely to settle the arguments over what really happened between Smith and Pocahontas. Some scholars think Smith misinterpreted what they suspect was an initiation rite. Richardson, the Rappahannock chief, believes Powhatan wasn't trying to kill Smith but to bring his colony into his chiefdom. Turner noted that Smith conveniently waited until the other protagonists were dead and could no longer contradict him to publish the story of the rescue.

"If you look through his writings, this is not the first time a fair maiden appeared in a time of crisis," he said. "I personally believe that John Smith made the story up." **NP**

NICOLAS BRULLIARD is associate editor of National Parks magazine.



That Was Then



SPRUCE AND CEDAR TREES NEAR THE HOH RIVER, Olympic National Park, 1936.

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