

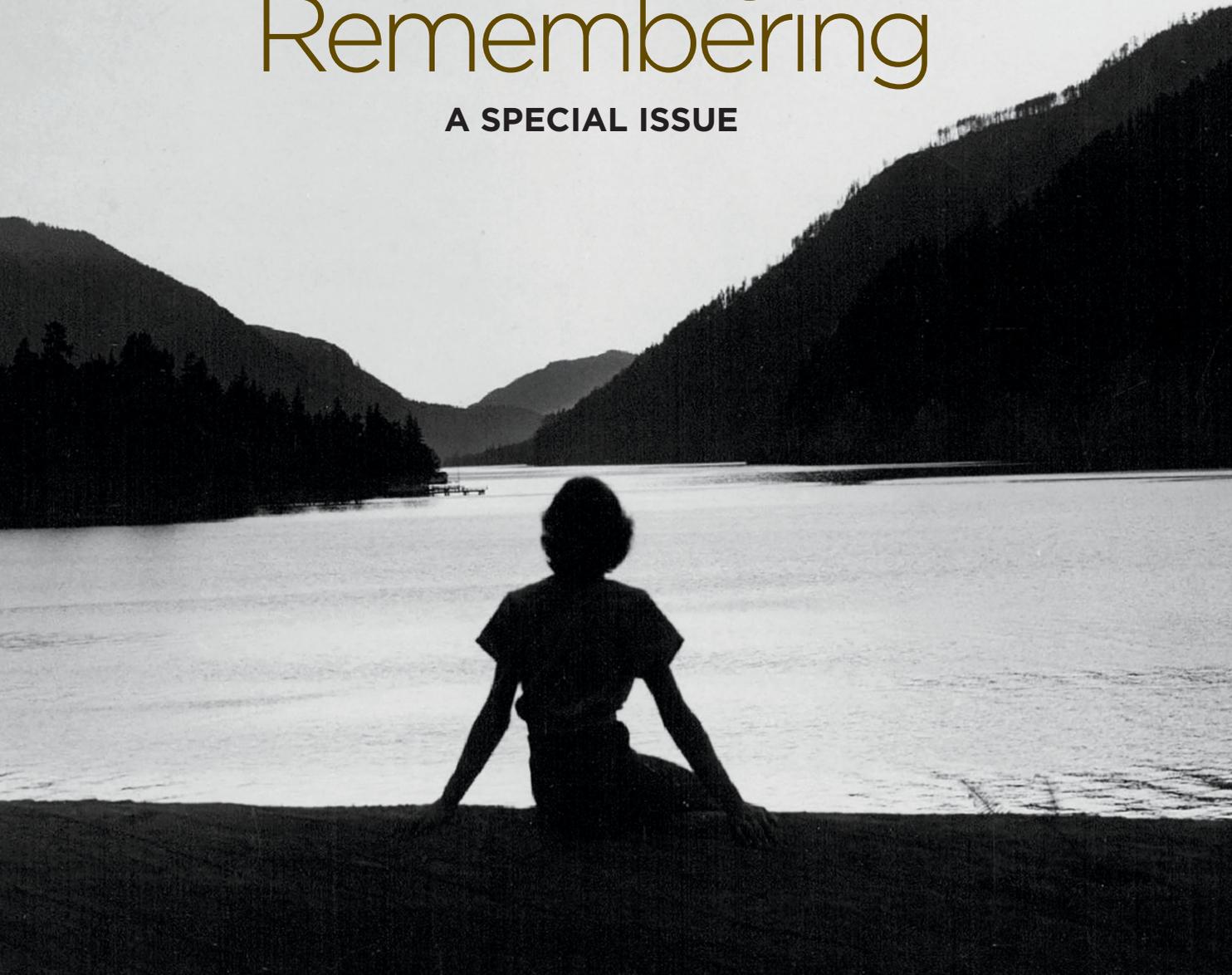
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SUMMER 2020
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THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Dreaming, Reflecting & Remembering

A SPECIAL ISSUE



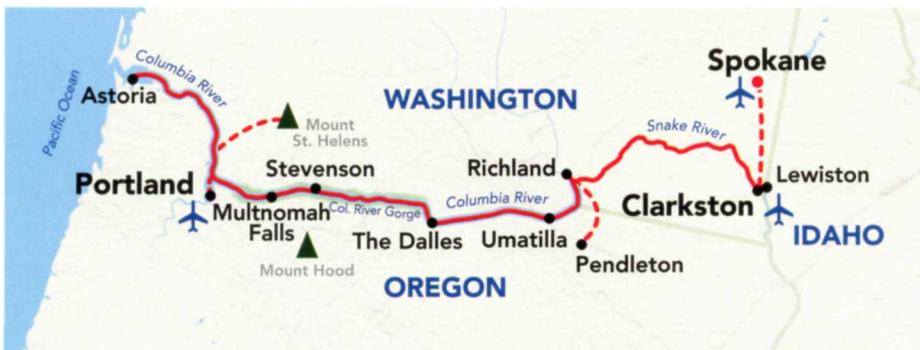
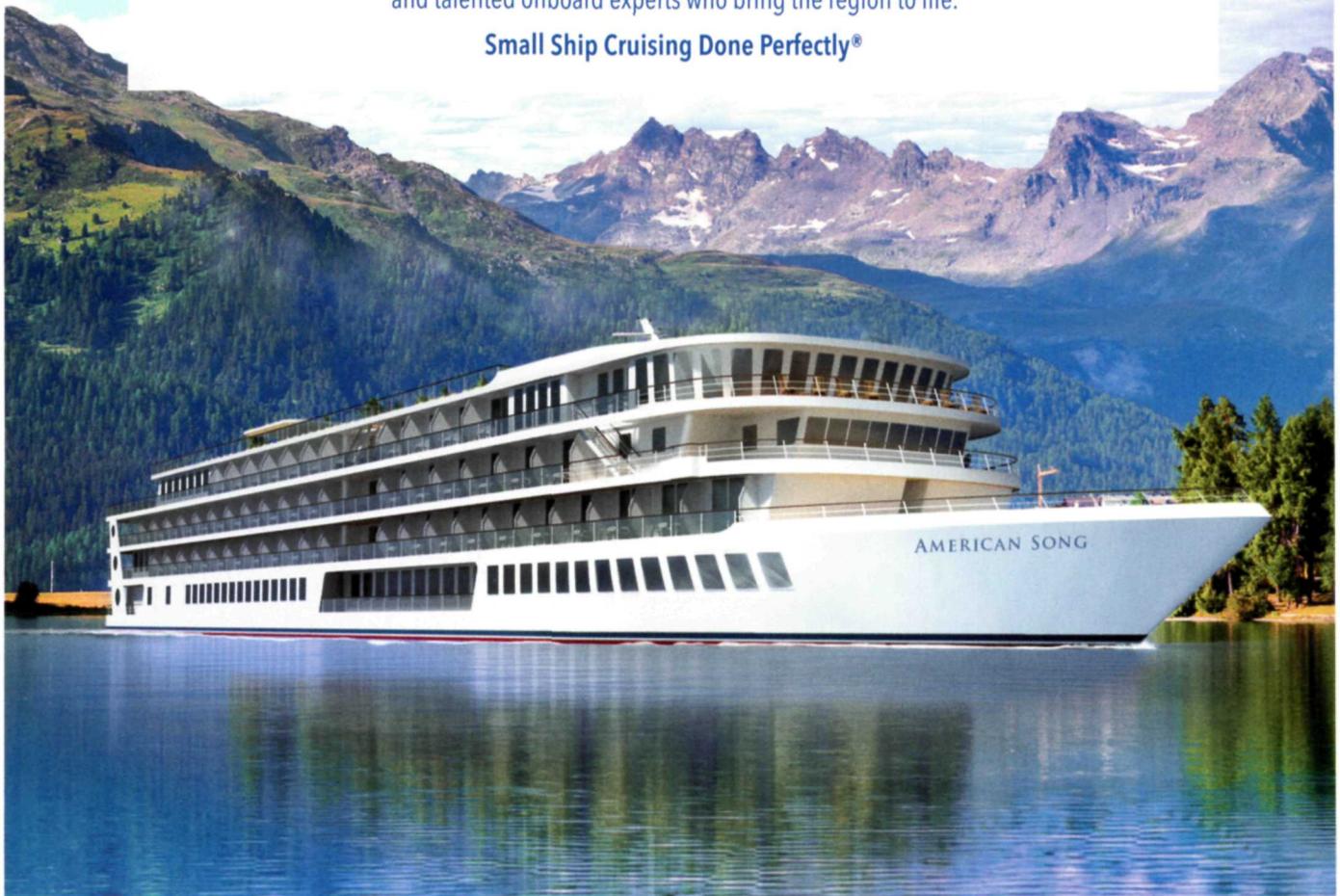


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A BABY LOGGERHEAD TURTLE swims toward the open ocean after hatching on a beach near Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas National Park.

BRETT SEYMOUR/SUBMERGED RESOURCES CENTER/NPS

COVER:

LAKE CRESCENT, Olympic National Park, Washington, Oct. 13, 1968.

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ON THE WEB

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What I Cherish

As I sit to write this letter in the midst of this tragic health crisis, I'm thinking about what is truly most important to me.

I treasure my children and grandchildren, and I cannot wait for the day when I can see them in person and hug them again. I cherish every moment I'm able to spend in nature, which right now mainly involves my backyard garden, where I've been able to escape for hours at a time. I value my local community in Annapolis, Maryland, which has come together like so many places across the country to provide food, supplies and support to those most in need. And I am so grateful for my national park community — NPCA's staff, members and volunteers, who all remain steadfast in our mission to protect our national parks. Even during a pandemic, we must be vigilant, since attacks on public lands, air, water and science have continued at an alarming pace.

The benefits of the national parks we all love have never been so clear. They are places of respite and relief. Susan Priscilla Thew, whose advocacy contributed to a major expansion of Sequoia National Park in 1926, spoke eloquently about heading to nature to combat weariness with the "greater game of life." If you "would like to find your way back to sound nerves and a new interest in life, I know of no better place than the wild loveliness of some chosen spot in the high Sierra in which, when you have lost your physical self, you have found your mental and spiritual reawakening," she said.

I long for the day when it is safe to once again lose myself in a national park. Until that's possible, I will continue to find escape and joy where I can. I hope you will join me, starting by losing yourselves in the powerful stories you'll find throughout this special issue.

Please stay safe and healthy.

With gratitude,
Theresa Pierno



Editor's Note



© IAN SHIVE

A HIKER at Joshua Tree National Park in California.

Sunnier Days

In March, as the coronavirus spread with frightening speed, the magazine staff realized we could not simply proceed with a regular issue. National park closures and stay-at-home orders made it very difficult to report and photograph stories. We also wanted to acknowledge that our world was transforming, and so many people were dealing with grief, shock and the challenges of more confined lives.

We decided to produce a special edition, turning to our archives to find previously printed stories that inspired hope, highlighted human perseverance, underscored nature's resilience, and reminded us of beautiful places and the kindness of people. We chose "Early Birds and Night Owls" because of the fitting focus on the wildlife just outside our windows. "The View From Below," reconfigured here as a photo essay, offers a heart-lightening glimpse into underwater parks. "Sketching the Smokies" revisits a beloved park and reminds us of the renewal that always unfolds as winter melts into spring, an apt metaphor. The feature about Richard Proenneke, who lived alone in the Alaskan outback for 30 years, was an obvious selection ("Reflections on a Man in His Wilderness"). Many of us are nurturing our own escape fantasies or are suddenly curious about surviving off the grid. But what's so stirring about these remembrances is that they are about human connection. Self-sufficiency is a virtue, but we also need each other. That has never seemed more true than it does right now.

We did not update factual details such as statistics or job titles but made small changes to align articles with current style guidelines. We also added some new images and have new material in President's Outlook, Letters, Echoes and That Was Then.

We hope this look back touches you as it touched us. These inspiring places have been there for us during many trying times, and they will be there again. In the meantime, let's indulge in small pleasures: photos of brilliant wildflowers, memories of long-ago trips, dreams of future adventures and sunnier days.

Rona Marech
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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 for 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. Sign up to receive Park Notes, our monthly email newsletter at npca.org/join.

HOW TO DONATE

To donate, please visit npca.org or call 800.628.7275. For information about bequests, planned gifts and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 145 or 146.

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TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

Thank you for your Editor’s Note regarding the position of the organization and the magazine [“Not Just Pretty Photos”]. Yes, we all want to remember and revel in our beautiful national parks, but it is NPCA’s job to help us protect them – more from the ravages of irresponsible lawmakers than from the ravages of nature and climate change. Therefore, you must educate us about the threats parks face, including the misrepresentation of history. (I greatly enjoyed the

Winter 2020 piece on Hampton National Historic Site, “An Honest Reckoning,” which we must now revisit.) That is why you are on our donation list! Please keep up the good work.

MICHAEL S. SCHMOTZER

York, PA

LISTENING TO THOSE WHO KNOW

Thank you for your encouraging article, “A New View,” about Native American leaders having more say in the management of national parks. While, according to DNA testing, I don’t have any Native American ancestry, some of my family members do. I continue to be appalled at how we treated the indigenous people on this continent during the era of colonization and westward expansion. I grieve that we continue to frequently disregard their rights as well as their valuable ideas and insights for how to take care of our many natural and historic wonders.

Thank you for your leadership in this matter and for writing about it. It’s a step in the right direction.

KATHRYN HAUEISEN

Houston, TX

A TRUE FEAT

Years ago, I did a couple of day hikes on the Pacific Crest Trail south of Lake Tahoe. The trail was on a mountainous segment and included steep climbing. I was carrying only a light pack, and I was in good shape, but it was exhausting. I thought then of the superhuman effort it would take to hike around

20 miles a day in order to complete a thru-hike. I really enjoyed “Homecoming,” Daniel Howe’s account of the Appalachian Trail’s rigors and his transformative experience.

PHILIP RATCLIFF

Salem, OR

ARTS IN THE PARKS

I enjoyed the article “Seeing the Light” about Weir Farm National Historic Site. The article piqued my interest, and I look forward to visiting the park on my next trip up North. Also, I’d like to remind others that, although this is the only national

park dedicated to painting, there are programs that celebrate art in other parks. One of my favorites is at Denali National Park, where we took a walk down to a lake and were given art supplies, paper and a clipboard. With a little direction and a beautiful lake to draw inspiration from, we couldn't help but come up with meaningful pieces of art. While we were drawing, so was our instructor. I went home not only with the art that we created, but also with the instructor's sketch of my daughter and another woman enjoying their time as artists.

MIRJAM SPAAR
Severna Park, MD

TO KEEP OR NOT TO KEEP

The article "Say Bees!" is a tribute to Sam Droege's work and detailed photography of bees and other small arthropods. The significance of this U.S. Geological Survey project is nicely summarized and sympathetically reported, but I was taken aback when Droege said, "We're not a museum. We're a database," as justification for crushing and discarding the photographed specimens. There is a growing awareness among biologists that seemingly small morphologic distinctions correspond with genomic differences and define separate species. Thus, it is irresponsible to "crush" and discard the physical part of a database. Indeed, what Droege and other biologists may have traditionally thought was a single species needing only one picture may later come to be understood as a number of very local species with differ-

ent ecologic roles. Sadly, further study of a photographed insect's body and "guts" (a possible source of genetic material) on the pin is lost with this treatment. A short driving distance from his Maryland lab is the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. This is the proper repository for Droege's specimens.

ED LANDING
Albany, NY

The writer is New York state paleontologist emeritus and curator emeritus of paleontology at the New York State Museum.

We received several letters expressing similar concerns. Sam Droege explained that time, money and space constraints prevent him from preserving, storing or shipping the multiple specimens of the same species that are sent to his laboratory for identification. He does collaborate with staff at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., however, and he sends thousands of specimens to scientists around the world for preservation and identification purposes. "Taxonomy and morphology are topics near to my heart," he said.

—Editors

A NOTE TO OUR READERS

We are pleased to announce that National Parks magazine is a finalist for a National Magazine Award for General Excellence. Known as the Ellies, the annual awards sponsored by the Ameri-

can Society of Magazine Editors are the magazine industry's top prize. We are competing against Atlanta, Audubon, The Hollywood Reporter and The Trace in the special interest category. After a delay due to COVID-19, the winners were announced on May 28 — just after press time. In addition, the magazine won three awards in the 28th annual North American Travel Journalists Association contest. Todd Christopher, NPCA's senior director of digital and editorial strategy, won a bronze medal in the family travel category for his story about Great Basin National Park, "Open Roads & Endless Skies." Our story about the quest to create a national park recognizing Emmett Till and the struggle for civil rights in Mississippi ("Mississippi Reckoning" by Kate Siber) took home a silver medal in the historical travel category. And a photo essay ("Water, Smoke, Spirit, Forest, Ghost, Land, Sky" by Matt Brass) won bronze in the illustrated story category.

CORRECTION

A caption in "Capturing Acadia" [Winter 2020] inaccurately stated when and where people can be the first to watch the sunrise in the United States. According to Steffen Thorsen, who runs the timeanddate.com website, it is only between around Thanksgiving and sometime in January that viewers atop Cadillac can consider themselves the first in the continental U.S. to witness this spectacle.

Send letters to National Parks Magazine, 777 6th Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-3723. Or email npmag@npca.org. Include your name, city and state. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.



Echoes

Changes in our actions, even if they're inspired by horrible things like this, can have a real effect on resources that we need for survival.

Stephanie Kodish, NPCA's senior director and counsel for clean air and climate, in an article in Backpacker magazine, "While You Were Quarantined, National Parks' Air Was Getting Cleaner." Park Service data shows ozone levels at four national parks fell significantly during the beginning of the economic shutdown put in place during the coronavirus pandemic.

These are unprecedented times, and we are all making sacrifices so that our communities can stay safe, healthy and resilient.

Joy Oakes, NPCA's Mid-Atlantic senior regional director, in an article on Fredericksburg.com about the closure of Shenandoah National Park because of the spread of COVID-19. In early April, NPCA called for the immediate closure of all national parks to protect park staff, visitors, adjacent communities and park resources.

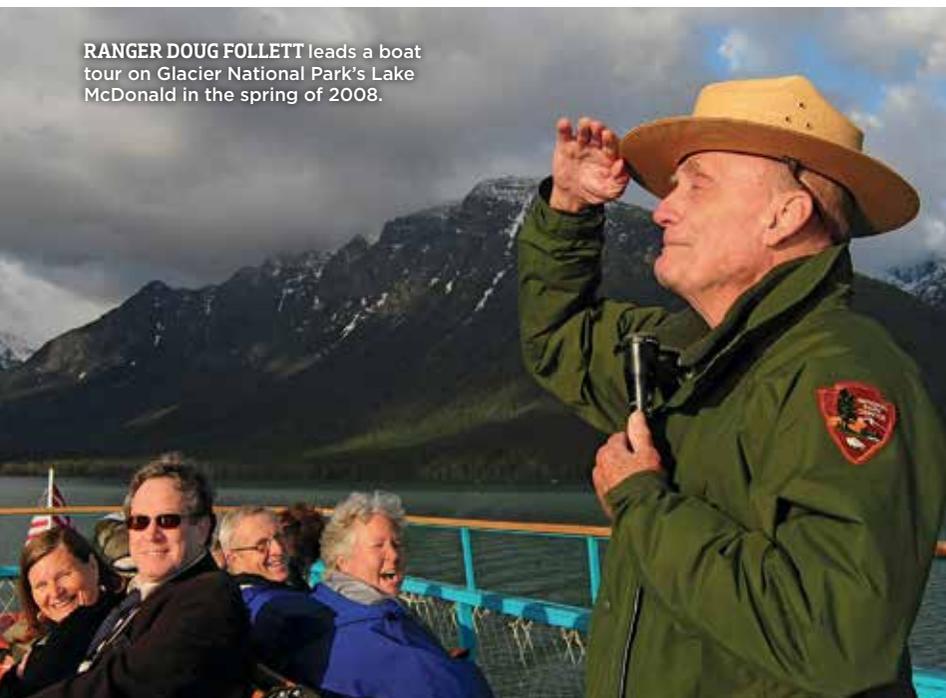
During this time of a global health crisis, now is not the time to make rash decisions that could weaken protection for an iconic national park unit within America's Everglades.

Melissa Abdo, NPCA's Sun Coast regional director, in a statement after the Army Corps of Engineers reversed its determination that an oil company's seismic exploration in Florida's Big Cypress National Preserve damaged wetlands there. The corps did not provide any evidence supporting the change of course in their announcement, which came just one month after the initial finding.





RANGER DOUG FOLLETT leads a boat tour on Glacier National Park's Lake McDonald in the spring of 2008.



© CHRIS PETERSON

PUBLISHED IN SPRING 2010

The Voice of Glacier

Ranger Doug Follett reflects on 50 Years at Glacier National Park.

Doug Follett is the kind of guy people like to be around. He's charming. Witty. Funny. Kind. He knows history, loves nature and writes poetry. His storytelling carries all the excitement of an old Western movie and the warmth of a flickering bonfire. In Glacier National Park — a place notorious for moody weather — Follett is a constant beam of sunshine.

At 84 years old, "Ranger Doug" is one of the oldest and longest-serving employees in the National Park Service: This year marks his 50th anniversary as a seasonal interpretive ranger at Glacier. His career began in the summer of 1942, when he fought pine blister rust infections in the park by removing gooseberry bushes; in 1961, he spent the first of many summers as a seasonal ranger.

But his experiences in Glacier began

long before he was of working age. In 1927, when Follett was just an infant, his father took a job with the Great Northern Railroad and relocated his family from Fernie, British Columbia, to Whitefish, Montana. Throughout his childhood, Follett immersed himself in the mountains surrounding his home — but it was the people, not the landscapes, who left the biggest impression. Blackfoot Indian culture was alive and strong, and Follett developed a deep respect for and fascination with the tribe's history and way of life. Often, he yearned to be one of them — a passion that fueled his teachings on park tours and at Columbia Falls High School, just southwest of Glacier, where he taught history for 35 years.

In recent years, Follett has become somewhat of a celebrity, gracing the front page of local papers and leading

Whitefish's 2010 winter parade as grand marshal. He and his wife, parents of four daughters, live at the edge of a lake in Whitefish. Last September, Amy Leinbach Marquis spent a morning with him in Glacier and spoke to him about some of his fondest memories from a lifetime dedicated to a national park.

Q: Your connection to Glacier goes back years before you ever started your first job here. Talk about that.

A: When I was a year old [in 1927], we moved to East Glacier where my dad was strapping automobiles onto railroad flat-cars to send over Marias Pass, because there was no highway at that time. While he was earning money to put milk in my bottle, my mother and I hobnobbed with the high society in the big East Glacier hotel, now the Glacier Park Lodge, where just peeking in the door cost more money than we made all summer. Visitors would come up and say, "How long are you staying?" And my mother would respond, "We are here for the entire season" — and then make sure they didn't follow us out behind the Indian tepees to that little cabin we really lived in.

When we weren't doing that, we were down at the Indian powwows at night, where the tepees were pitched and the bonfires blazed, and the Indians whose shadows flickered across those tepees had not long before been on the warpath — the Blackfeet were the last of the plains tribes to be subjugated by the Army. The powwows were held to initiate the important people who came to stay at the Glacier Park Lodge. My mother often spoke about the Indian who got up there with an interpreter and gave a long, interesting speech about the history of the Blackfeet. When it was over and the interpreter left, the Indian said, "I want to thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your kind attention this evening. As a Harvard graduate, I did want you to know that I speak English." Isn't that neat?

Incidentally, the Glacier Park Lodge is where I learned to walk. My

mother said she would aim me down the long hallway, and I'd take off with momentum. When she heard the crash, she would come down and pick me up, turn me and aim me the other way. She also said that in that hotel, the old-timers — the frontier people — were still around. We would all go down to the depot and meet the trains, with the Indians in white buckskin from head to toe and their headdresses dragging on the platform. While we were waiting, they would carry me up and down the platform, moccasins and all, gently bouncing me up and down, until the train whistled. Then they would come back, lay me in the buggy and go meet the train. Just imagine what it was like for those tourists from the East to get off a train in Glacier Park to see these Blackfeet Indians.

One time two ladies from back East came over and said to my mother, "Little girl, you should not let those people handle your child." And my mother said, "Why?" And they said, "Because they might steal him." And my mother said, "If you look around, you will see that they have plenty of their own kids — and they're all better looking than mine."

She denied having said the last part. But we had no concern about the Indians — we lived with them. They were on the fringe of our lives, and we were on the fringe of theirs, and the Indians and the old frontier people like us were just fading into the past. I've always thought how unique it was to have been born into a world where I got to see all of those people. Some of my cousins were the last of the real, old-time trappers who went off into the mountains for days at a time, on snowshoes. It was the end of an era, but I got to tag along, and I feel pretty fortunate for that.

Q: What's changed since then?

A: Interpretation hasn't really changed, and that's a good thing. I'm a believer in people-to-people, and not people-to-machines, if that's at all possible.

Dealing with the public hasn't changed. There are more of them, even in relation to 1961, which was no frontier.

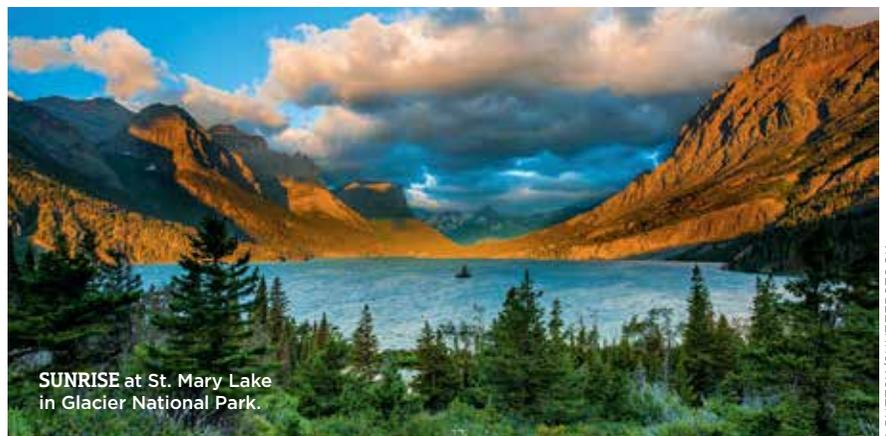
But there have been other changes. I made 100 trips to Sperry Glacier — one of the largest glaciers — in a 20- to 25-year period starting in 1961. The glacier was 300 feet thick and 300 acres large, roughly speaking, and we went out there with ropes and ice axes like a Sherpa expedition heading for Everest, and risked our lives to peek into the crevasse, which may be gone now.

Then one spring I noticed 6 inches of red rock at the end of that Glacier snowfield. And I said to myself, "Next year that will be covered up, because Old Mother Nature knows that if she doesn't put more snow on top, we won't have

that something? To be so certain that the world we had always known was going to stay that way, and that the glacier was coming back? I walked with that glacier hand in hand for half a mile as it melted back, yet I was in denial every day.

So what do I tell people today? We are in a world that is in constant change. What was yesterday is not today and will not be tomorrow. When I was walking on Sperry Glacier for 20 years, it was melting the whole time, but it was just getting thinner, and I couldn't tell until it got so thin that the edges came in. It's always been happening, and we are the first generation to be able to see major geological climate changes and not be able to deny it.

Of course, we do get people who



glaciers, and our sign at the entrance says we're a glacier park."

And I literally expected it to be covered up the next year. But instead of 6 inches of red rock, there were 6 feet. And I said, "That will be covered up." Then there were 16 feet the next year. I said, "That will be covered up." Then 60 feet, then 160, then a quarter-mile and a half-mile, and suddenly you had to walk over all this rock just to get to the glacier.

I was in denial of what was happening for 20 years. Al Gore wasn't there to say, "Look dummy, the glacier's not coming back for a while. Climate change really is happening." I know a lot of us men are slow learners — but isn't

argue with us and tell us this is nothing big. I don't deny that global warming and climate change have come and gone over the ages. But it's the extreme rapid acceleration that we're concerned with now.

Q: You've become quite well known for your poems. What inspired you to start writing?

A: The Great Spirit came to me a few years ago, as he often does to us part-time Presbyterians. And he said, "Douglas" — he always calls me Douglas — "a question has arisen concerning your immortality. So get your act together, you bald-headed little guy." And I thought to



Trail Mix

myself, “Gosh — what do I want to leave behind? What things have I done?” I’ve hiked the Garden Wall a hundred times. I’ve done Sperry Glacier a hundred times. I’ve been to Avalanche Lake 500 times.

So, I started writing poems. (I’m too lazy to write stories. I haven’t even gotten last year’s Christmas cards done yet.) I thought, “What do I take for granted on my hike on the Garden Wall?” And I recalled a hike I took on a September day. In the summertime, the mountain goats are ragged and dirty and look like they got out of the barber chair before the job was done. But in September when the air has cooled off, the goats are in full coat, with 6 or 8 inches of beautiful white fur, waiting for the winter to start. So on this day I glanced up the hill, and here was a family of goats in their new white coats, standing against 40 feet of red and orange mountain ash bushes. And I thought, “Wow.” The image imprinted itself on my mind like a photograph. A bunch of years have passed, but it’s still there. And I thought, if that impressed me, what would it do to the people who aren’t used to it?

“Walk with me, see the goats, on the mountainside in their new, white coats, standing bright against the sky, looking down on you and I.”

I also think of the time I had a party of people out on the Garden Wall, and there were two golden eagles in the sky, way up there at a thousand feet. They plunged past us, down into the valley, then flew up, grabbed onto each other, and tumbled through the sky together.

“Walk with me where eagles fly, and tumble wildly through the sky, giving truth to ancient words that sometimes love is for the birds.”

Not everything is so dramatic and exciting as goats and eagles and grizzlies; some of it is subtle. You can stand right out here in front of the visitor center in October, and the golden leaves will rush

up the street chattering like a bunch of busy little people. I haven’t learned the language yet. But every year it’s the same — they rush up the street chattering, and then pretty soon they rush back down the street chattering.

“Walk with me when North Winds blow, and whisper of the coming snow. Tossing golden leaves on high as summer bids a sad goodbye. These and other things you’ll see, if you will come and walk with me.”

I’ve shared these poems for the last two years as an evening visitor program, and I’ve gotten a surprising response. Of course, that’s why I stay on the job — it keeps me alive. You’ve got to get emotionally high for this stuff.

A young woman came to the visitor center one fall, and she was quiet. She had been over on the Indian reservation and took a horseback trip with an Indian at one of those ranches, and she was just so sad that she was leaving. So I started to recite these poems for her, and she started crying, and I thought, “Wow, maybe that’s the greatest compliment I could ever receive.”

Q: What have you learned from interacting with so many park visitors over the years?

A: I have come to feel, from watching visitors over the last 50 years, that the American people feel that their National Park System is the basis for a kind of religion. And that the national parks are the cathedrals where they come to worship. And the people in the big hats are the high priests who have been given the responsibility to protect these sacred land trusts.

That is one of the big things that I’ve



© CHRIS PETERSON

FOLLETT gets ready for work. His career at Glacier began in 1942, and he became a seasonal ranger in 1961.

come to contemplate in just the last year or so. And I think, “Wait a minute, these are people from all over the world who have no contact with each other. They come by the hundreds of thousands. And yet I see the same intensity, the same fervor, the same awareness of the national parks and their value.” Quite obviously, the “national parks idea” is a cause people can believe in.

I’ve always been impressed by the dedication and the professionalism of the managers, the superintendents and all the people in the parks I have been associated with. As a seasonal, I’m not really part of that — I’m kind of a citizen observer working on the edges, so I can be critical. But I feel good about what I have seen from the park people, especially when it comes to protection, preservation and wise use. This park is in good hands.

The original Q & A has been slightly condensed. To read the full-length article and watch a short video featuring segments of this interview go to npca.org/rangerdoug.

AMY LEINBACH MARQUIS is the former associate editor of National Parks magazine. Now a documentary filmmaker, she lives just outside Boulder, Colorado, where she continues to craft national park stories.

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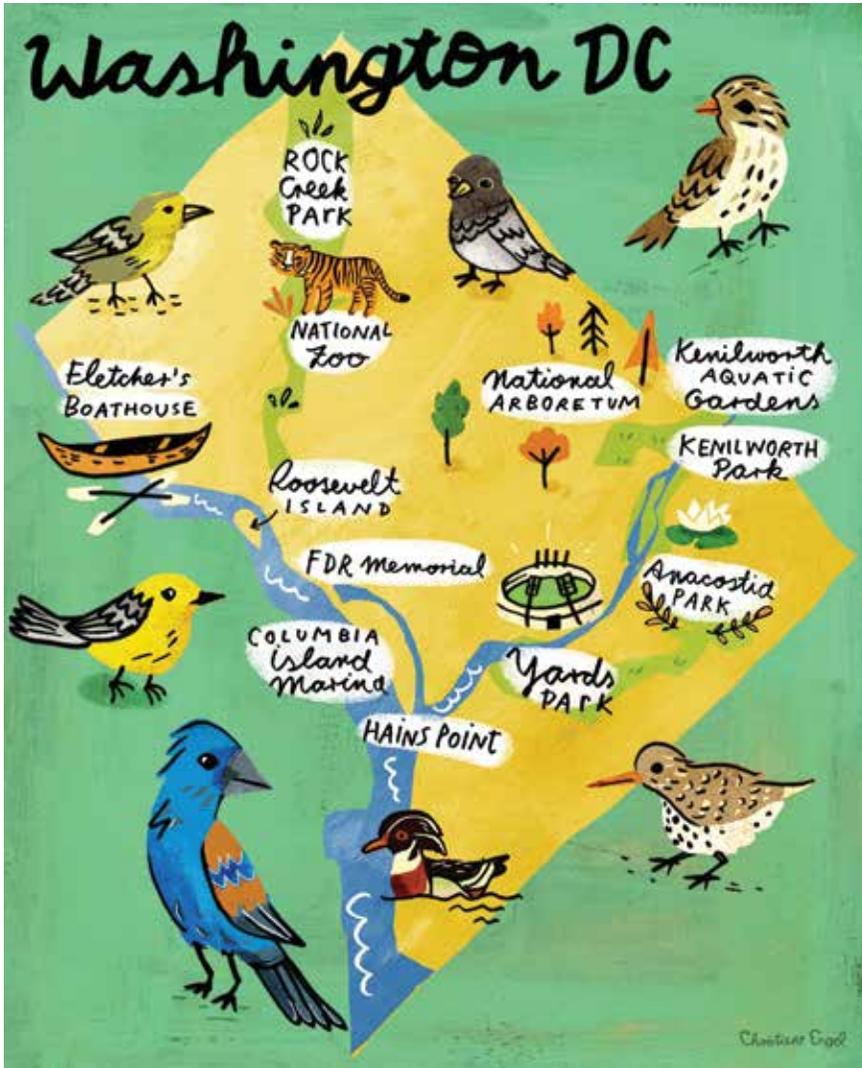
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PUBLISHED IN FALL 2015

Early Birds and Night Owls

Could a trio of devoted birders break a Washington, D.C., bird-watching record set in 1989?



THE NATION'S CAPITAL makes for a unique Big Day venue — because the city covers just 68 square miles, it's possible to visit all the best birding sites in a single day.

We started our day at 4:30 a.m. at Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens along the Anacostia River on the east side of Washington, D.C. Though the area had at one time been a landfill, it looked wild enough to us in the darkness, with the moonlight casting a silver

edge onto silhouetted rows of trees and long-grass fields. Since the park didn't open officially until after dawn, we parked outside the gate and took the pedestrian path, walking in silence so we could catch the slightest squawk or chirp. If we were going to set the record

for finding the most birds in the District of Columbia in a single day, we couldn't let one peep get by us.

In birder lingo, it's called a Big Day. Small teams have from midnight to midnight to identify — by sight or by sound, using the honor system — as many bird species in a given area as possible.

Our capital makes for a unique Big Day venue — because it's just 68 square miles, it's possible to visit all the best birding sites in a single day. Most Big Days are done at the state level, where a large chunk of precious daylight might be spent racing from one important spot to another. In Texas, for example, birders had to drive more than five hours across the state to set the Big Day record of 294 species. The record-holders in Maine chartered a plane to fly between the state's forested north and the beaches and marshes along the coast.

But Washington's convenient size comes at the expense of bird diversity. Despite containing more than 7,000 acres of parkland and 23 national park sites, the district simply does not have the variety of habitat needed to get Big Day numbers you'd find in states with, say, shorelines and grasslands. The number we had to beat, set by a team of five in 1989, was 136 species.

I put out a call for like-minded souls willing to take a day off from work to make a run at the record, and two birders accepted. Adam had been a hardcore birder in his teens but had drifted away from the hobby after college. Now in his early 30s, he had recently caught the bug again and was eager for a tough challenge. Gerry, a veteran birder from Virginia, couldn't turn down a chance to set a record in Washington, where he had worked for decades.

We chose to make our attempt on

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Trail Mix

May 6. Early May is the peak of spring migration in the city, that glorious time when millions of birds make their way from their wintering grounds in Central or South America to their breeding grounds in the United States and Canada. When the birds stop during the day to rest and eat, local birders have a chance to see species that can't be found at other times of the year. If the

weather hit in our favor — we hoped for rain overnight that would stop the northbound flight and drop tired birds into the district — early May was our best bet.

Not coincidentally, May 6 was also the date that the 1989 record had been established. I exchanged emails with a couple members of the record-setting team, and they offered location advice and tips on where to find certain species. (In birding, cooperation trumps competitiveness.) Pray for rain, they said, and good luck. We planned our route, did a bit of scouting in the days before and got some sleep.

And then there we were, in the pre-dawn darkness at Kenilworth, which is part of the National Park System. Unfortunately, forecasted rains hadn't materialized, but there were still scattered puddles tucked into dips in the grass. Right away, we were able to pick out a small group of calling least sandpipers, our first sighting. The din of birdsong rose along with the sun, and within minutes, we were surrounded by the raucous symphony of hundreds of birds beginning their day.

Moving quickly, we picked out several birds at home in the short grasslands of the park — Eastern bluebirds, American robins and the rare blue grosbeaks. We were off and running.

We had arranged to meet Robert Steele,

a ranger and fellow birder, when he arrived at 6 a.m., and he let us into the park. We immediately found a little blue heron, an infrequent visitor to the district, and scampering around the park, we also caught sight of solitary and spotted sandpipers, lots of singing blackpoll warblers, and a swamp sparrow.

The day was brightening now, and we needed to hustle to locate migrant songbirds, including warblers, vireos, thrushes and flycatchers. The easiest way to locate these creatures is to hear them singing, and they sing most reliably in the morning. If we wanted big numbers, we needed to be in a dense forest, where they find food and shade after a night's flight, no later than 8 a.m. Instead of trying to cross half the city to Rock Creek Park in the morning rush hour, we decided to try our luck at the nearby National Arboretum, and we showed up just as the gates were opening.

At the high point of Hickey Hill, we stepped out of the car into a swarm of singing birds. It was the kind of spring migration morning that birders dream of all winter. A Cape May warbler perched atop a pine tree, its orange cheek shining. American redstarts and black-throated blue warblers pecked around in the undergrowth. An Eastern wood-pewee sang from the depths of the woods. We located the nest of an easy-to-miss brown thrasher. I followed the raucous sound of scolding crows to a major surprise: a young great horned owl. Invigorated, we left the arboretum with our species count in the upper 80s.

As we ticked species off our mental lists one by one, we grew more sharply aware of the birds we were missing. Despite our success at the arboretum, we hadn't found a pine warbler, and our search for a bald eagle was fruitless, though we'd taken special care to look for the pair that famously nests in the

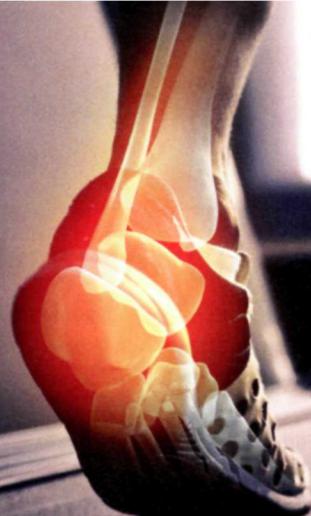
THE AUTHOR and his friends found yellow-throated vireos in Rock Creek Park, a national park site and the most popular birding destination in the city.

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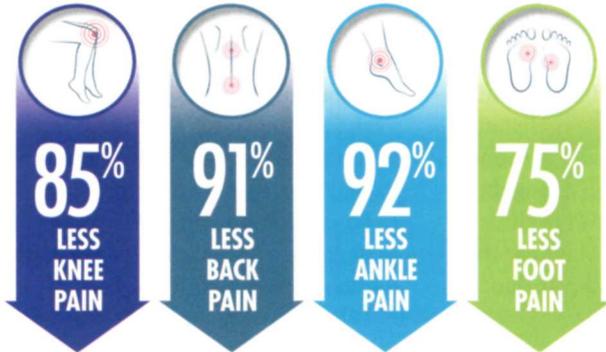
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Trail Mix

park. Somehow, we were even missing the ubiquitous house finch, one of the most common birds in the city.

But we still had most of the day ahead of us, and with rush hour over, we headed to Rock Creek Park, a national park site and the most popular birding destination in the city. It was much quieter by then. Most migrants had stopped singing and were feeding in



SAVANNAH SPARROW

© STEVE BYLAND/SHUTTERSTOCK

the treetops, out of view, but we still expected to catch a handful of species nesting along the park's wooded streams and in steep ravines. In short order, we found yellow-throated vireos, ovenbirds and one Louisiana waterthrush, and then pushed on to our weirdest stop of the day: the National Zoo.

For whatever reason, large numbers of black-crowned night-herons nest at the zoo's aviary, along with a single pair of rare yellow-crowned night-herons. We ducked among dawdling tourists, feeling a bit absurd running through a zoo with binoculars and cameras jangling around our necks. We found the night-herons and a red-tailed hawk before diving back into the uncivilized wilds of the city.

On to Fletcher's Boathouse, part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal

National Historical Park on the Potomac River. The low floodplain there is unique habitat in Washington, and we crossed a few more species off our list, including warbling vireos, orchard orioles, a Northern waterthrush and sun-bright prothonotary warblers. Good stop for sure — but still no house finches.

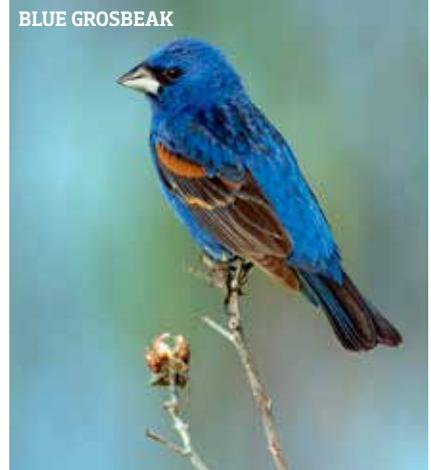
We were pressing now. The wide Potomac River at Hains Point is as close to ocean as Washington gets, and accordingly, we were looking for gulls. Adam had his huge spotting scope with him, and we quickly picked off herring and great black-backed gulls on buoys downriver. A common loon was our 100th species, and flyby Caspian tern and red-breasted merganser were bonuses. Adam called out that he had spotted our long-absent bald eagle, but after a second look through his scope, he sheepishly acknowledged that his eagle was in fact a rower in a distant crew boat wearing a brown shirt and a white helmet. It had been a long day.

We hiked around the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial near the National Mall, picking up overdue



PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

© ED SCHNEIDER/SHUTTERSTOCK



BLUE GROSBEAK

© MICHAEL G. MILL/SHUTTERSTOCK

Savannah sparrows, and headed back across the Anacostia as twilight fell, to Poplar Point. We figured 105 was a nice, round number, but the reliable field sparrows failed to materialize. We found an early willow flycatcher for 104 and sped back across the river to Yards Park for a last-ditch effort at house finches. Until that moment, none of us had ever wished an invasive species to be more abundant, but we were out of luck. Exhausted and enveloped by darkness, we called it a day.

We double-checked our lists and lingered around the car, laughing about the wild day we'd had and cursing the birds that had eluded us. We didn't come close to the record, but none of us had ever seen 100 species in a single day in the district. Amid the frenetic searching, we watched the sun rise and set on the nation's capital, visited nine different national park sites, and experienced just about every bit of nature the city has to offer. We'd had fun.

As I was walking my dog early the next morning, the first birds I saw were a pair of singing house finches. Unbelievable. At least we'd know where to find them next year.

NICK LUND writes about nature, birds and birding. He can be found online at TheBirdist.com.



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STARTING IN 2004, retirees Reg and Laurie Wofford served as full-time seasonal volunteers in national parks including Acadia, Olympic and Grand Teton.



GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK/NPS

PUBLISHED IN WINTER 2017

The Retirement Cure

Making the most of retirement with a 40-foot RV, a patch of dirt and full-time seasonal volunteer work in the national parks.

A pop of static. Reg Wofford instinctively reaches down and adjusts the volume of his radio. Beside him his wife of 54 years, Laurie, speaks smoothly into hers: “We’re first on a jam at Willow Flats. There’s a griz on a carcass with her cubs.”

As Laurie signs off and reclaims her radio, the Woffords return their focus to the dynamic scene playing

out before them under the unflinching blue of a Western sky. Willows, profuse and tangled, trace a creek bank in the distance and sea-glass-tinted sagebrush smudges the air like so much incense. In the middle of this wild Eden, surrounded by twiggy clumps of bitterbrush, a mama grizzly bear — broad of forehead and tawny of coat — teaches two cubs to scavenge for meat.

The moment is captivating and raw, and something that few have the good fortune to see. It’s those few who bring the Woffords to this particular corner of Grand Teton National Park today. The spectators, lining the roadside and jockeying for pictures, buzz with faintly contained energy. “People get so excited,” says Laurie, an energetic, petite brunette. “That’s one of the fun things that we do — get to see the excitement of people who are seeing a bear for the first time or a moose or an animal on a bucket list.”

At the same time, Laurie says, “We don’t want people with their smartphones running out there to get close enough to get a good picture. It’s stressful for the animal, and it could be

dangerous for the people. Or it could just push the animal away, and then nobody gets to see it.”

Reg and Laurie — 82 and 76, respectively — climb out of their vehicle, strap on neon-yellow vests and heft bright-orange cones from the back seat. They wade into the crowd of curious onlookers to direct traffic, answer visitor questions and provide a comfortable 100-yard buffer to the lurching bears.

It’s just another day in paradise for the Woffords, full-time seasonal volunteers with the park’s wildlife brigade. From late May through September, they work side by side in the shadow of the mountain range armed with name badges, volunteer patches and cans of bear spray. Their goal as members of the brigade is to keep people safe and animals wild.

Reg, a former marathoner with a wide grin and a lifetime’s worth of laugh lines, jokes that the job is far from predictable. They plot out their day each morning, he says, and then “everything changes.” They might cruise down many miles of paved and unpaved roads, pausing at scenic overlooks and scouting for wildlife. Or they could meander through more than 1,000 campsites spread among six main campgrounds to educate visitors about bear country and remind people to secure food items before leaving their picnic tables or tents. Or sometimes, they mediate wildlife-induced traffic jams, which run the gamut from two visitors pausing by a chipmunk to dozens of people and vehicles congregating near a bear, wolf or moose for hours on end.

A single day could entail assisting with a bear jam at Signal Mountain, talking to visitors hiking along String Lake or helping relocate a campsite’s paper wasp nest. Through it all, they

“They’re the spunkiest couple I’ve run into. They go out there every day and work harder than most seasonal rangers. I want to be like them when I grow up.”

answer a loop of endless questions such as “When do you let the bears out?” with sincerity and enthusiasm.

Reg and Laurie are just two of more than 1,000 volunteers whose efforts benefit Grand Teton every year. Many roll up their sleeves and lend a hand for an afternoon or a weekend. Far fewer, between 100 and 130, work full time for months in a row.

Across the park system, the number of volunteers has more than doubled since 2008. Last year, volunteers outnumbered National Park Service staff roughly 20 to 1 and expanded the financially strapped agency’s ability to meet the needs of hundreds of millions of visitors. The core of this volunteer force, nearly one-third of the total, are those ages 54 and older who help staff visitor centers, maintain trails and lead educational programs. In all, more than 400,000 volunteers contributed 7.9 million hours of service in 2015, the equivalent of over \$152 million in labor.

Even in this mammoth force of dedicated people, however, Reg and Laurie stand out. When I worked as an intern with Grand Teton’s wildlife brigade in 2009, I found their passion both inspiring and humbling. My compensation for the 10 weeks was shared park housing and a small weekly stipend. Reg and Laurie, in comparison, earn a patch of dirt in an employee campground for their 40-foot RV. An impression of their verve and easy partnership has stayed with me all these years. When I call them to reconnect and learn more about their story, they’re as warm as I remembered.

Laurie tells me that her fondness for the Tetons dates back to her childhood in Texas. Her parents, a second grade teacher and a school superintendent, packed up the family each summer and drove to parks. One year on the overnight drive to Rocky Mountain National Park, Laurie woke up to a mountain’s craggy maw outside her backseat window. “I’d never seen a mountain in my life,” she says, “and I was just absolutely blown away.” The following year, her family traveled to Grand Teton to stay at a now-defunct guest ranch along Cottonwood Creek. They were enchanted and returned summer after summer during her teenage years.

Reg came to the national parks a little later in life. His job with Westinghouse Electric required extensive travel, and he visited parks as often as he could during stateside trips. As he and his family explored seashores, Civil War sites and natural wonders, he came to appreciate the diversity of the park system.

After retiring in 2001 from Hawaii-based jobs — Reg from Westinghouse and Laurie from Fairway Systems, a company that automates golf course tee times — the Woffords embarked on an enviable park adventure. They purchased an RV in Florida, picked up a senior pass for entry into all the national park sites and started driving. From the grass-laden rivers of the Everglades and the wilds of Acadia to the sienna cliffs of Zion and vast deserts of Joshua Tree, they zigged and zagged. They didn’t mind the tumbleweed lifestyle or close quarters, but a few years later, they found themselves plagued by a peculiar sense of



Trail Mix

aimlessness. “It was time for us to make a contribution somewhere and not just be wandering at loose ends,” Laurie says. “At some point you want to be useful.”

The first year, circumstances aligned, enabling them to fill a sudden vacancy at an information station on the Schoodic Peninsula of Acadia National Park. That was 2004. With the exception of the year they drove the Alaska Highway and toured Denali National Park & Preserve, the Woffords have been volunteering full time at parks every summer since. They coast-hopped between Acadia and Olympic National Parks before settling in Grand Teton in 2008.

Last year, the Woffords’ dedication to the park, its wildlife and the wildlife brigade was formally recognized. A lapel pin on their uniforms now identifies them as recipients of the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award for volunteers, an honor granted to those who have donated

4,000 or more hours of service.

“They’re the spunkiest couple I’ve run into. They go out there every day and work harder than most seasonal rangers,” says Carl Kautz, a former Grand Teton ranger who worked with them for two summers. With a chuckle he adds, “I want to be like them when I grow up.”

The Woffords’ daughter, Robin Polhemus, whose earliest park memory involves a pell-mell run down a steam-shrouded boardwalk in one of Yellowstone’s hydrothermal areas, views her parents’ volunteer work as an “act of respect and responsibility for our nation’s public lands.” She believes the volunteer lifestyle, not to mention the miles of hiking, has kept her parents young. “Their age doesn’t define them,” she says. “They can do whatever they want. And they do it well.”

Every summer, Polhemus and her

family make the trip from Oahu to Wyoming to visit Laurie and Reg in the park that’s become their second home. “I’ve never seen my parents as happy as they are in the Tetons,” she says.

Asked why they return each year, the Woffords don’t hesitate: “The mountains,” Reg says. “The people,” Laurie adds. A pause. A laugh. “The animals.”

After a moment of reflection, Laurie elaborates: “The mountains are just the most spectacular, but it’s the people, I think. The family we’ve developed here in the wildlife brigade is one of the strongest drives that keep us coming back.”

For nine summers, this group has gathered for potlucks at the Woffords’ campsite. There’s a new picnic table now, 2,000 twinkle lights draped in the pines and a few more tree-stump seats around the fire, but little else has changed over the years. Holding paper plates sagging with hamburgers and pasta salad, the brigade members swap anecdotes about visitors and try to outdo each other with absurdities found abandoned at picnic tables. They marvel at some visitors’ naiveté and share in the small, precious moments of the job: a child’s first bear sighting or a dawn-hushed morning along Jackson Lake. Reg and Laurie might tell the story about the time they assisted a distressed hiker near Garnet Canyon who had spent an unexpected night on the mountain. Or they’ll talk about their family’s upcoming visit or glean tips for their next back-country excursion. Invariably, as the darkness of the mountain night deepens, another neighbor walks by and an invitation is cast.

“We always tell people,” Reg says, “when the fire’s on, when the lights are on, come on over. Party’s on.”

KATHERINE MCKINNEY DEGROFF is the program manager of outreach & engagement at NPCA.

THE SNAKE RIVER in Grand Teton National Park.



© LONEROC/SHUTTERSTOCK



AMBREEN TARIQ in Kings Canyon National Park.

“What’s left to discover in this fantastic world? I have seen oceans and I have seen deserts. I have been caught in sand storms and lightning storms. I have slept in swamps and at the edges of canyons. What more is there to make me gasp, wide-eyed in wonder?”

© AMBREEN TARIQ

From the Fall 2017 article “Nature Fix,” about Ambreen Tariq, her effort to make public lands more welcoming to all, and @BrownPeopleCamping – her Instagram account and the source of this quote. See more at npca.org/naturefix.

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THE FIRST written account of the mysterious tree stump in Crater Lake dates to 1902, but the Old Man may have been floating for much longer. One park biologist estimated the tree to be at least 450 years old.

© JOSEPH S. GIACALONE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

PUBLISHED IN FALL 2011

The Old Man of the Lake

How has a giant hemlock managed to float upright in Crater Lake for more than 100 years?

ACCORDING TO NATIVE AMERICAN LEGEND, an epic battle occurred one night in southern Oregon 7,700 years ago. Standing atop Mount Mazama, Llao, a god who had been spurned by the daughter of a local chief, spit magma and shot superheated steam miles into the sky.

Skell, his rival, fought back by pitching volcanic fireballs from California's Mount Shasta, blowing the massive summit of Mount Mazama to bits. By dawn, Llao was driven underground; Skell celebrated the victory by filling the massive caldera with water, creating Oregon's Crater Lake.

For as long as memory stretches, strange stories have hovered above the area like a chilly Northwest fog. People have spotted ghostly campfires on uninhabited Wizard Island, and visitors to Crater Lake Lodge still tell stories of eerie occurrences in the night. The park's most famous phenomenon, however, is easily spotted in broad daylight: An ancient hemlock tree, known as "the Old Man of

the Lake,” has been floating completely upright for more than 100 years.

The first written account of the Old Man appeared in 1902, the year Crater Lake was named a national park. While reporting on the cataclysmic events that shaped the area, geologist Joseph S. Diller mentioned seeing the remarkable stump six years earlier near Wizard Island at Crater Lake’s west end. The Old Man’s sun-bleached and splintered head and torso floated nearly 4 feet above the water. His lower body descended some 25 feet into the depths, and his waist was 2 feet in diameter at the surface.

Appearing to be rooted and yet still moving, the Old Man seemed to defy the laws of physics. In 1929, William Gladstone Steel, known as “the father of Crater Lake” for pushing Congress to designate it as a park, mentioned seeing “a great tree, broken squarely off and floating upright.” In 1938, park naturalist John Doerr spent three months tracking its travel patterns, noting “the Old Man travels extensively and, at times with surprisingly rapidity.” Between July 1 and Sept. 30, the Old Man logged more than 62 miles and, on one particularly windy day, traveled 3.8 miles.

In the years that followed, the Old Man became a local celebrity, and a legend arose that he controlled the weather. Naturally, the scientists who helicoptered a small submarine into the lake in 1988 to study geothermal activity downplayed such an idea. To them, the Old Man was a navigational hazard, so they tied him up near Wizard Island — but the moment they did,

Why hasn't the Old Man sunk? Why hasn't he eroded? And how, despite having no significant root structure, does he stay balanced?

the sky grew dark and a storm blew in. Humbled, the scientists quickly released the Old Man, and moments later, the skies miraculously cleared.

The initial theory was that a landslide on the crater wall carried the Old Man into the lake, and rocks wedged in the roots stabilized its base. Such an explanation made sense, considering that at Spirit Lake near Mount St. Helens, hundreds of trees have been floating upright ever since the eruption in 1980. But these trees follow a typical pattern: They have a large root structure, float for a number of years and eventually sink to the lake bottom. Why hasn't the Old Man sunk? Why hasn't he eroded? And how, despite having no significant root structure, does he stay balanced?

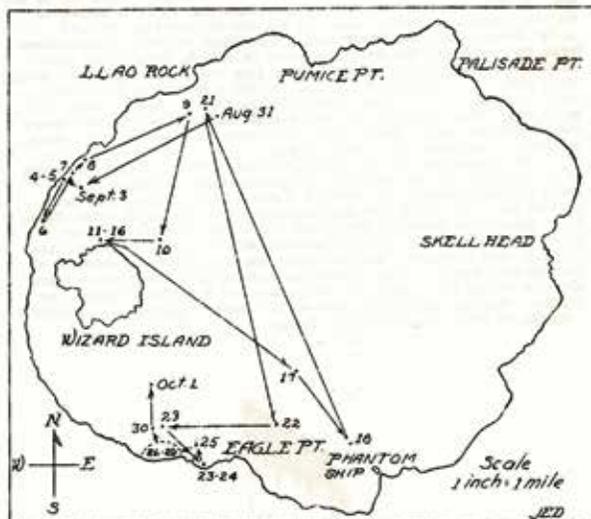
When Ranger Dave Grimes leads

his boat tour on Crater Lake, he doesn't jump aboard the massive conifer like rangers in the past, but he often steers the boat over to pay a visit. Up close, the Old Man is a striking example of balance — between movement and stillness, darkness and light, earth and sky, Llaol and Skell. And then there's the matter of depth. You could stack the Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty and Washington Monument beneath the Old Man and still not reach the lake's deepest point of 1,943 feet. “It takes people a few moments to register what they're seeing,” Grimes says, “but once they realize that this log has been floating like this for over a hundred years, they're amazed.”

Grimes credits Crater Lake's clean, cold water for preserving the tree and the high density of the submerged part for keeping it balanced. Based upon initial carbon dating, Scott Girdner, an aquatic biologist with the park, says the Old Man is at least 450 years old, but he isn't sure how long it's been floating in the lake. For the staff, the Old Man is much more than a floating log. “He has character, a story and history that is part of the park,” Girdner says.

While some tourists find the Old Man eerie, Grimes has a different view. “For me, the Old Man is a calming presence,” he says. “He is blown by the wind, but he's not rocked by the waves.” **NP**

OVER THREE MONTHS in 1938, the Old Man traveled at least 62 miles, based on the observations of two naturalists. The map below shows the tree's movements during September as the prevailing winds changed direction.



COURTESY NPS, CRATER LAKE NATIONAL PARK, CRLA08913

KEVIN GRANGE is a freelance writer and firefighter living in Jackson, Wyoming. His new book, “Wild Rescues,” which details his experiences as a paramedic in Yosemite, Yellowstone and Grand Teton, will be published by Chicago Review Press in October. Visit him at: kevingrange.com.

sketching the Smokies

Walt Taylor heads to the mountains with paper, pens and paint.



Gatlinburg provides a noisy and bustling contrast to the peace and quiet of the park. But sometimes the noise is pleasant indeed. Here, the bluegrass band Monroeville plays an outdoor concert.

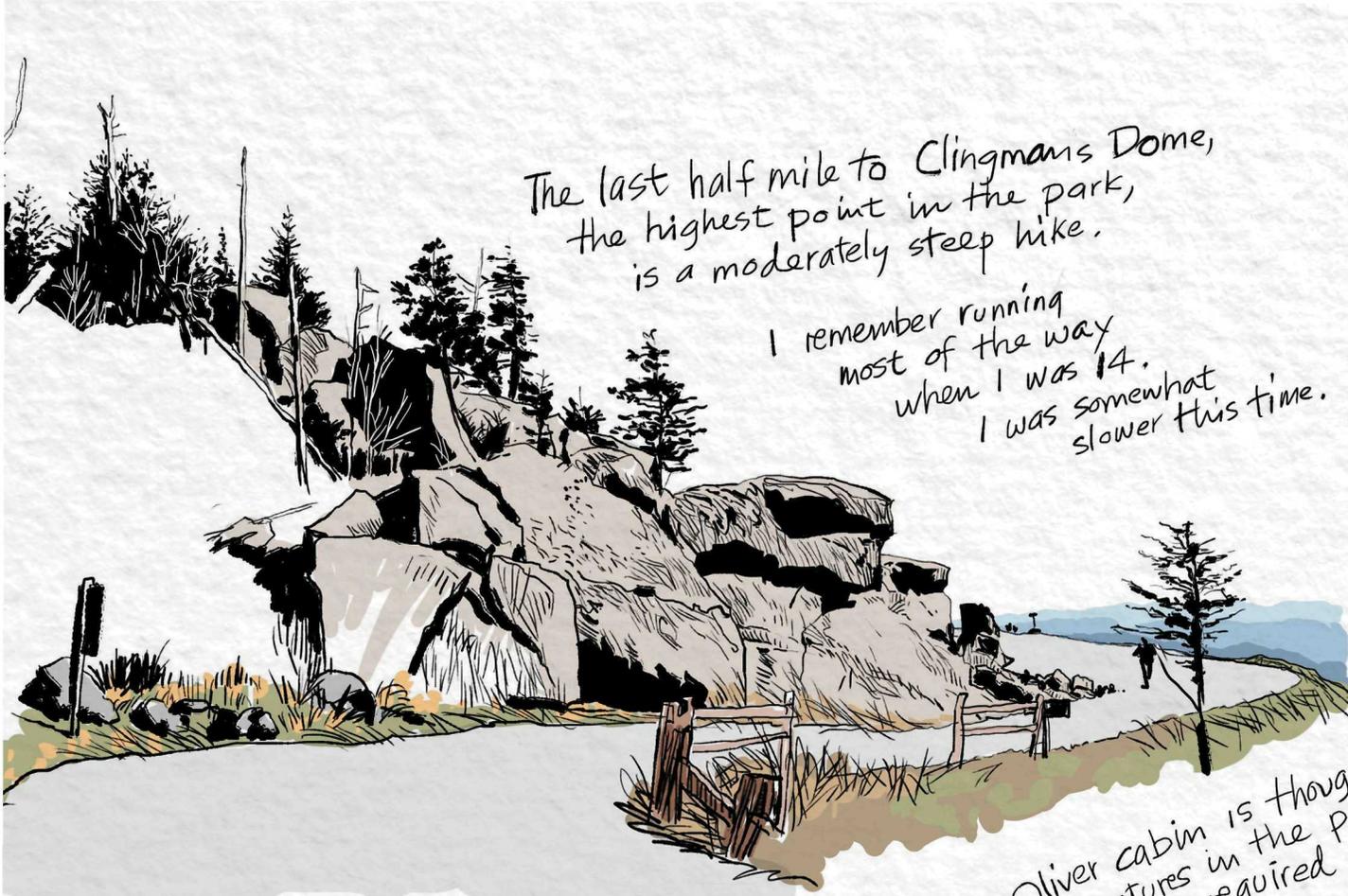
“Why in the world would you want to visit the Smokies in March?”

I wasn't entirely sure how to answer this question, posed by some of my more practical-minded friends. But after a few days there, the reasons became abundantly clear. The ability to walk a mountain trail and hear only birds, to contemplate a waterfall in solitude, and to drive the winding roads at your own pace without encountering traffic jams — these are priceless experiences. Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the most heavily visited of all the parks (at right around 9 million visitors annually, as of last count), which means you should be prepared to rub shoulders with your fellow travelers in peak seasons.

Sure, you're not going to see the colorful spills of laurel and rhododendron or the riotous fall colors, but that just makes you appreciate the shoots and tiny flowers that peep out all the more. Everyone seems to move at a slower pace. And you can stop and talk to rangers or other visitors and get to know their stories.

And speaking of stories, there's plenty of time to absorb the histories of the mountain families who are no longer here — to stand in their cabins and imagine their lives, to see where they worked and worshipped, and to contemplate their final resting places. Walking in relative solitude through their lives, you begin to understand the hard work it took just to survive, and also why it was worth it.

I've documented some of the reasons that I'd be happy to return to the Smokies well before the crowds arrive.



The last half mile to Clingmans Dome, the highest point in the park, is a moderately steep hike.

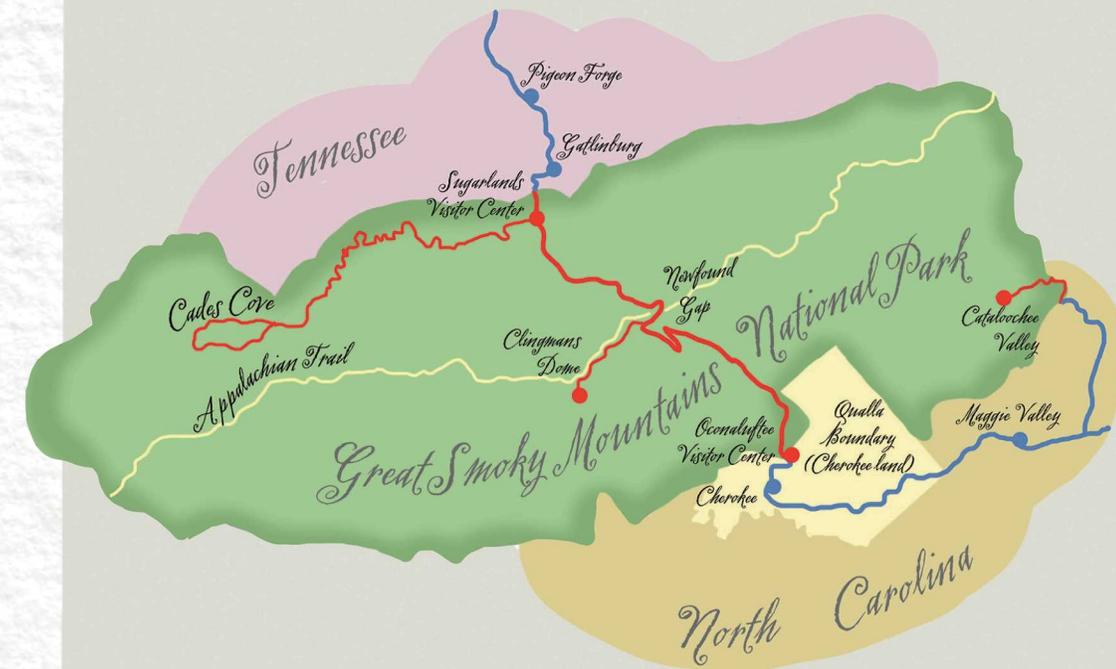
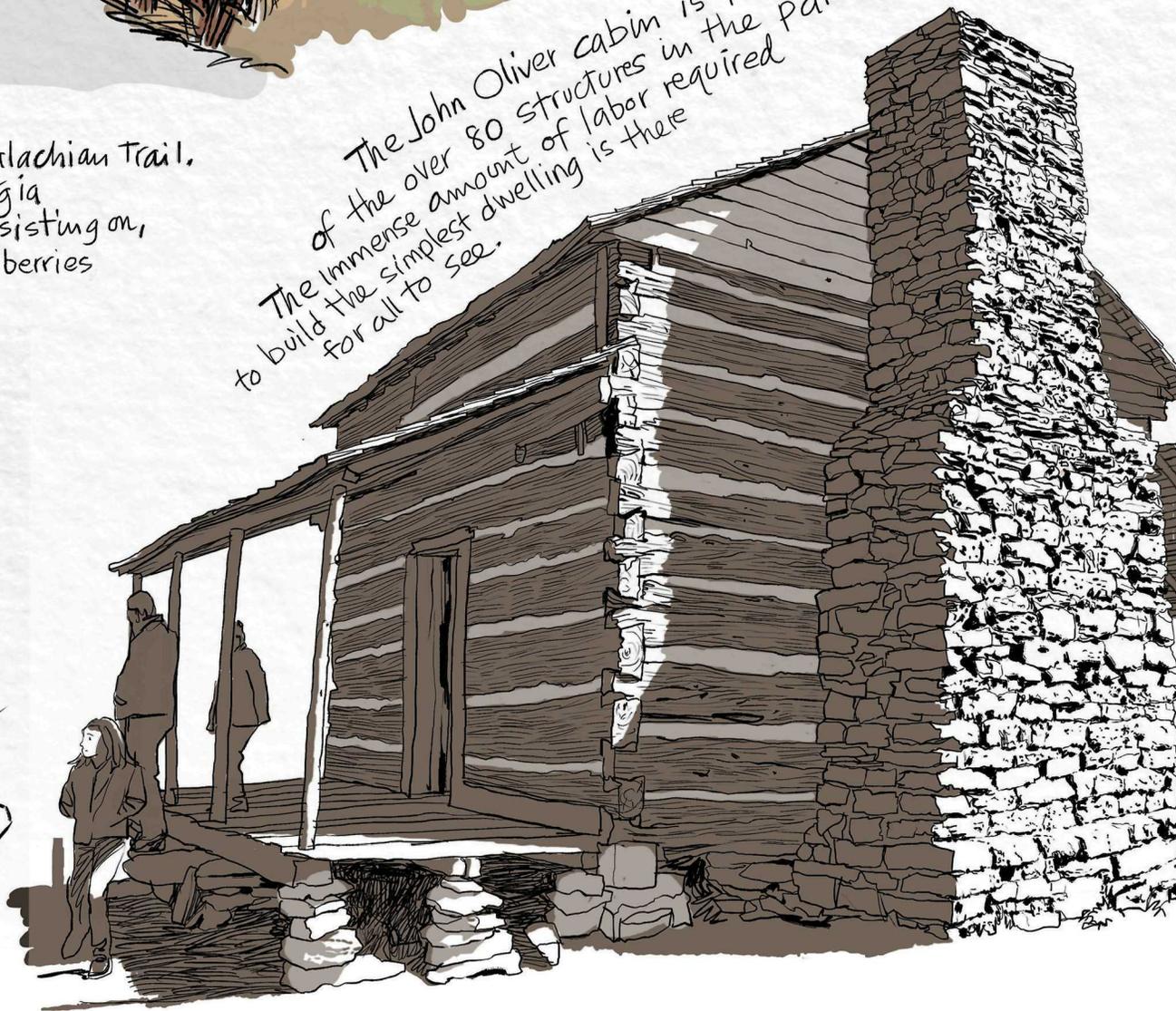
I remember running most of the way when I was 14. I was somewhat slower this time.

This man was hiking the Appalachian Trail. He began a week ago in Georgia. We asked him what he was subsisting on, imagining meals of wild greens, berries and roasted chipmunk.

"Pop-Tarts," he answered.



The John Oliver cabin is thought to be the oldest of the over 80 structures in the park. No frills here: The immense amount of labor required to build the simplest dwelling is there for all to see.



TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

THE FIRST THING you need to know, and never forget, is that there are no gas stations in the park. Second, the only accommodations are offered by a lodge on top of a mountain, one with no electricity and few amenities, which is accessed only by a rigorous hike. And it's usually booked way in advance, if you can believe that. For the less adventurous, the towns outside either main entrance provide more than enough of what we modern urbanites have come to expect. From the north and west, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, is the gateway town, and if your cultural tastes run to Hillbilly Golf and moonshine emporiums, this is the place for you. If the thought of sharks gliding overhead is your idea of fun, then Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies is your El Dorado. Even in early spring, however, you have to do some searching to find last-minute motel vacancies, so plan ahead. Although most of the restaurants are tourist-themed, some are worth seeking out. At Parton's Deli, you can get a decent Reuben sandwich,

and if you ask the proprietor the inevitable question, "Are you related to Dolly," he'll answer, "Not close enough." Pigeon Forge, down the road, is a gantlet of over-the-top shops and attractions, culminating in Dollywood. It's fun to drive through and gawk at, but expect traffic — even in March. You can avoid this avalanche of kitsch by entering the park via Townsend or Cosby.

If you're approaching from the east or south, then the Cherokee-Maggie Valley area is where you might want to stay. Cherokee, North Carolina, was built on land belonging to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and it's dotted with numberless gift shops with names such as TeePee and Tom-Tom and Wampus, gathered around the foot of a gigantic, eye-popping Harrah's casino and hotel. A more leisurely stay can be had down the road in Maggie Valley, with its share of restaurants, souvenir shops and appealing motels and hotels. We opted for a tight-budget place, the Scottish Inn, and it was just fine.

Finding spots to eat in Maggie Valley just before tourist season was a little harder, but not impossible. If you demand a little more activity, you could commute from Asheville, North Carolina, which is a destination in its own right and has plenty of nightlife.

The park itself has a good number of restrooms at the visitor centers and elsewhere, but if you plan on eating, you'll need to stock up outside the park. There are several campgrounds; the one we visited, in the Cataloochee Valley, was a pleasant place next to a babbling brook. You'll soon find that the park is loaded with babbling brooks. The roads are well kept but full of winding turns and switchbacks; at one point the road to Newfound Gap makes a full loop and passes under itself. The voice on our confused GPS device said "recalculating" at least twice as it struggled to deal with the turnabout. And the following should come as no surprise: Cellphone coverage is unpredictable. Just relax and enjoy being out of touch.

Elk were reintroduced into the park in 2001, and a herd thrives in the remote Cataloochee Valley, whose buildings provide an intriguing peek into the lives of the settlers. It's reached via a steep and occasionally heart-stopping, often unpaved, road over the mountains.

These rangers are playing host to several classes of local schoolchildren.

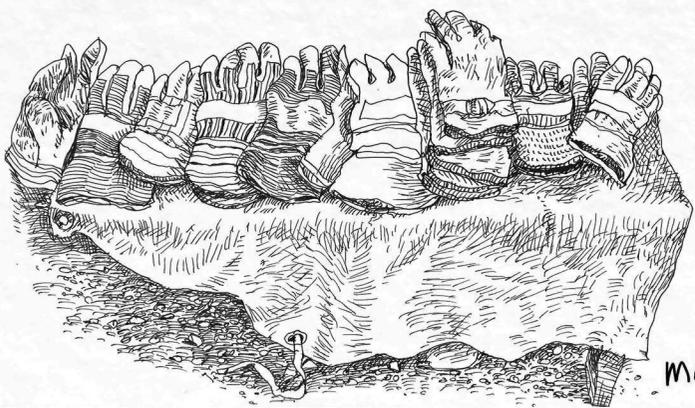
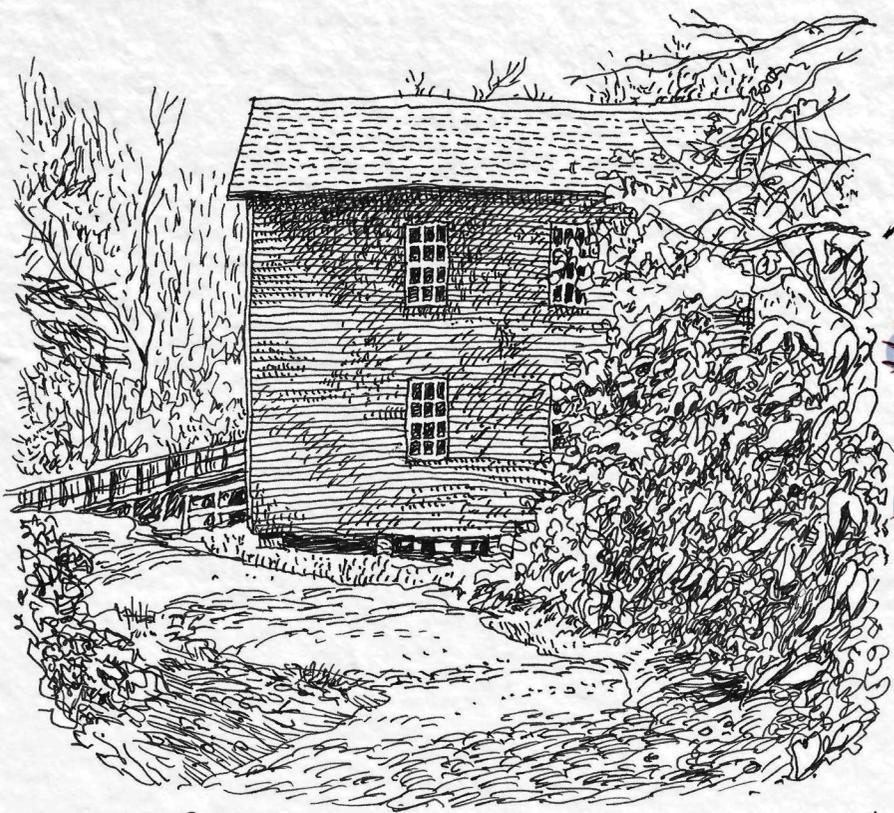


Late March means spring break, and the campgrounds were bustling with students from all over, recuperating from lectures and exams.

The park's broad valleys are home to a variety of wild life, such as the deer pictured here.
Big lesson: Elk are considerably larger than deer.
Lesson #2: It's hard to run fast carrying a sketchbook.



Mills were crucial to mountain communities. This one is just inside the Oconaluftee entrance to the park, which is where it's always been. You can move other structures, but you can't move a mill.



Gloves await the hands of schoolchildren. Will the Blacksmith Ranger is going to teach them to make a length of chain.

An overnight snowfall completely transforms the scenery.

This family drove
all the way down from
Minnesota just
to see
Cataract Falls.

Ok, they were on
their way to Atlanta,
but they couldn't resist
an opportunity to
drive through Great Smoky
Mountains National Park.



Walt Taylor is an artist based in Norfolk, Virginia. "Sketching the Smokies" won a 2015 Folio Ozzie Award for best use of illustration.

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REFLECTIONS ON A MAN IN HIS WILDERNESS

Remembering Richard Proenneke

HIKING IN the mountains above Upper Twin Lake in 1986.

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 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 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.

— Rona Marech



© DICK PROENENKE

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 why he was using intestines for bait. He said that he had caught a

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.

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 with a thank-you note for helping to educate this park ranger. I



© MAGGIE YURICK



TOM GRAYNIPS



© DICK PROENNEKE

A VIEW OF the cabin and raised storage shed from the lake (left). Above: Eating fresh blueberries in a spot along the Chilkadrotna 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.

considered it an honor to have met and spent some time with this remarkable man.

Stu Coleman retired from a job working among the bison and bears at Yellowstone National Park in 1999.

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.



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 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 on the only private inholding in the Twin Lakes area that did not belong to Alaska natives. Chris Degernes made Dick chocolate peanut clusters a few times



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

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 calculus 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."

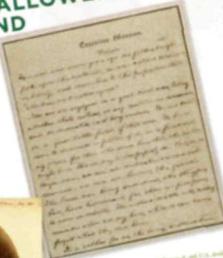
Patty Brown, who was a park ranger in Alaska and California for 20 years, worked at Lower Twin Lake from 1990 to 1991. She went on to spend another 20 years teaching science, math and other subjects in Alaska.

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

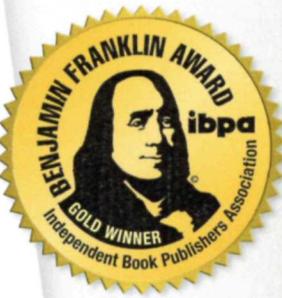
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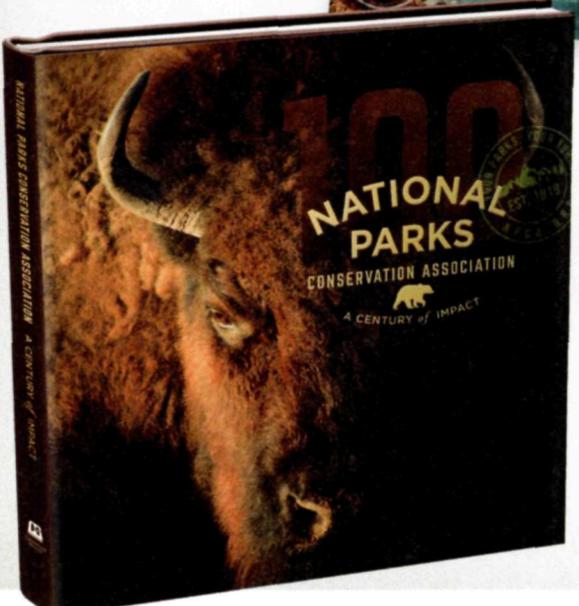
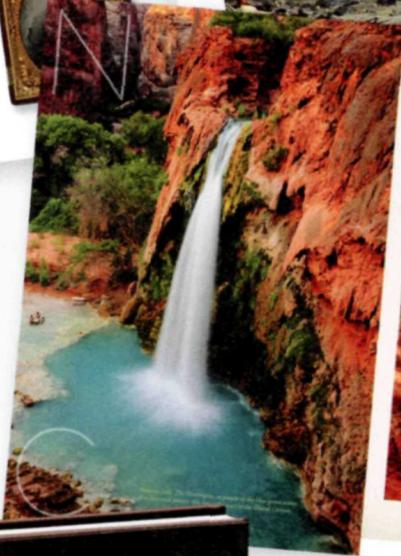


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THE VIEW FROM BELOW

Taking a journey underwater with the
Park Service's Submerged Resources Center.

By Kate Siber • Photos by Brett Seymour



PARK SERVICE diver Kelly Moore holds a large spiny lobster during a live, web-based educational broadcast called "Channel Islands Live."

PUBLISHED IN SUMMER 2014

LAST SPRING, A TEAM OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE divers pattered about the shallow aquamarine waters of Buck Island Reef National Monument in an aluminum boat. They cut the engine, dropped a buoy and a line, and, after donning scuba gear, jumped in and descended. Swimming in neat circles on the sea floor, they weren't looking for Technicolor fish, sea turtles or eagle rays. They were looking for hidden archaeological treasures.

Earlier that week, the team from the Submerged Resources Center had surveyed the area, which is in the U.S. Virgin Islands, using a magnetometer, a torpedolike instrument that drags behind a boat and detects iron on the sea floor. Now, over dozens of dives, team members were investigating locations where the magnetometer had sensed metal. In some places they found discarded fish traps and other trash; elsewhere their high-tech gadgets led them to a sandy sea floor studied with soft corals. But they also discovered anchors, anchor chain and even the skeletal remains of a shipwreck that date to at least the 19th century — and possibly much earlier than that.

"These are resources the park never really knew were there," said Bert Ho, supervisory archaeologist for the Submerged Resources Center. "Each time you jump in, there's an opportunity to find something really amazing."

Famous peaks, canyons and valleys often come to mind first when people think of national parks, but the Park Service also manages more than 5 million acres of underwater lands. More than half of the National Park System's 419 sites have underwater resources, including coral reefs in Biscayne National Park, shipwrecks in Dry Tortugas National Park, crashed airplanes in Lake Mead National Recreation Area and a water-filled cavern in Death Valley National Park that harbors some of the world's rarest fish. In Yellowstone National Park, spectacular geothermal vents spew streams of bubbles underwater, and in Montezuma Castle National Monument in Arizona, layers of sand bubble and swirl in a spring-fed desert sinkhole. Few visitors know about these underwater worlds, but the Submerged Resources Center, a special unit of the Park Service, is on a mission to change that. And with the help of new 3-D modeling tools, custom software and other technology, the team is able to explore and map these frontiers more effectively than ever.

"People have heard of the national parks, but they have no idea that there's this whole other world to the Park Service underwater," said Brett Seymour, an underwater photographer and deputy chief of the center. "We're constantly fighting for the same level of protection and education and outreach for underwater sites that land sites get."



CALIFORNIA SEA LIONS twirl amid kelp at Channel Islands National Park in California.

Often, parks call in the group to help solve an underwater problem, such as mapping areas that are relatively unexplored, figuring out how to protect a disintegrating shipwreck or helping biologists perform studies of invasive species. In other cases, parks ask the divers to develop films, photographs and other media to help visitors appreciate the wonders of underwater public lands that are difficult for the average person to access.

The Submerged Resources Center is in such high demand that

the Denver-based team of nine underwater archaeologists and photographers travels around the country for up to seven months each year. They often arrive in a Suburban towing a cargo trailer full of gear and a Dodge pickup hauling a 27-foot Boston Whaler.

"It's tremendously satisfying to talk to superintendents and other people who have very difficult issues that require the kind of specialized skills that we've worked very hard to develop," said Dave Conlin, chief of the Submerged Resources Center. "I'm fully convinced I have the best job in the National Park Service."

Except where noted, all photos were taken by Brett Seymour of the National Park Service's Submerged Resources Center. A longer version of this article (without the accompanying photo essay) was published in the Summer 2016 issue. To read the complete story go to npca.org/underwater.

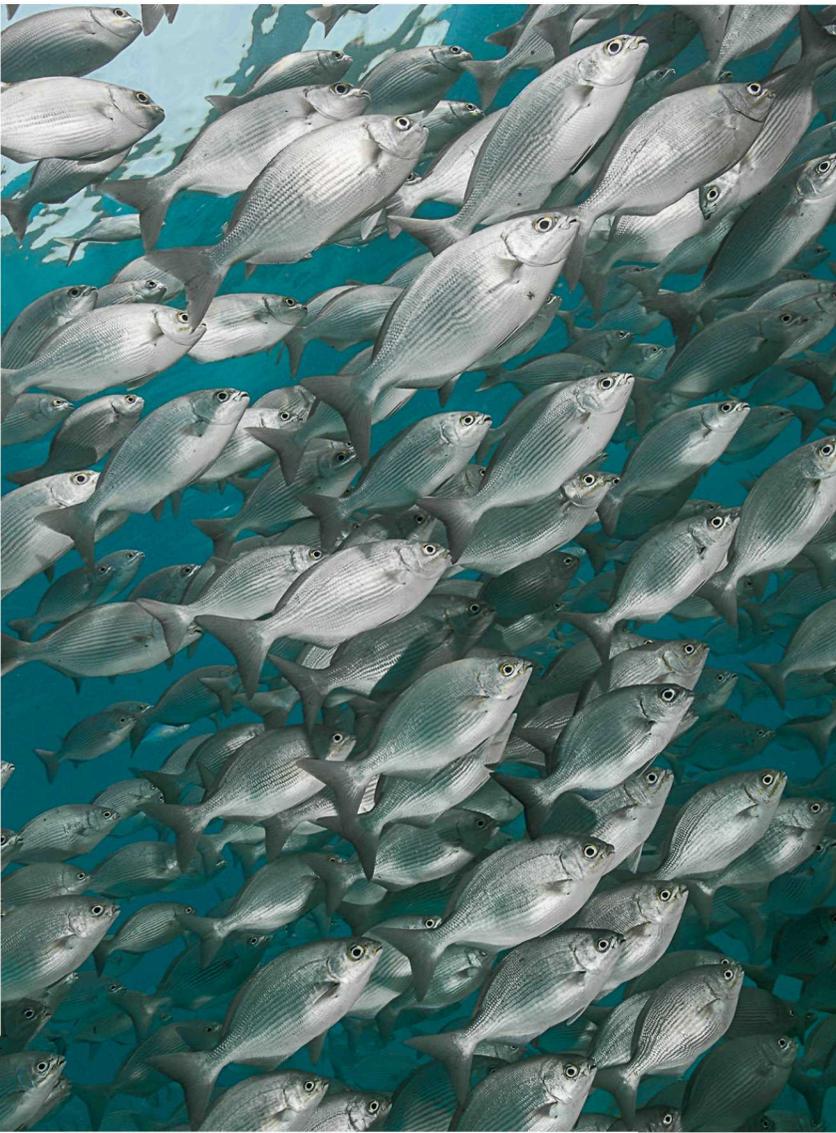
KATE SIBER is a freelance journalist living in Durango, Colorado. She also writes for Outside magazine and is the author of "National Parks of the U.S.A.," a children's book.



A PAIR OF mangrove snappers swim inside the cabin of a fishing vessel resting 25 feet underwater at Dry Tortugas National Park in Florida (left). Top: Common starfish — also known as sea stars — congregate off the coast of Acadia National Park in Maine. Above: A diver from Isle Royale National Park in Michigan examines the remains of the Glenlyon, a freighter that sank in 1924.



MUSHROOM CORALS at National Park of American Samoa (above). Right: Red gorgonians, or sea whips, sway with the current in a kelp forest near Anacapa Island in Channel Islands National Park. Below: A school of Caribbean chub at Dry Tortugas National Park.



SUSANNA PERSHERN/SUBMERGED RESOURCES CENTER/NPS



MARBLE CANYON in the eastern part of Grand Canyon National Park.

© PETER MCBRIDE

PUBLISHED IN WINTER 2016

The Space Between Things

A writer returns to the Grand Canyon again and again. And again.

IT'S NOT EASY to get to the Deer Creek Narrows, tucked deep in Grand Canyon National Park. You must descend more than a vertical mile from the remote North Rim, down through layers of rock formed over millions of years, along slippery slopes of cobbles and across vast undulating sheets of sandstone. Last spring, five friends and I undertook the multiday journey, encountering chilling winds and snow flurries on the rim, raging stream crossings, and nerve-fraying heat on the canyon floors.

When we finally arrived, wearily, on a perfect 70-degree afternoon, the narrows seemed almost magical. A nave of curving sandstone striped with shades of terra cotta and crimson, this slot is graced with perennial waters that tumble in rivulets and waterfalls and collect in clear green pools paved with stone marbles. The sounds of rushing water filled the canyon, punctuated occasionally by the lilting song of a canyon wren. There was no sign of civilization.

We stripped off our salty shorts and T-shirts and slid into the pools. Sunning ourselves on perfectly flat ledges, we wordlessly agreed to cut our chatter out of respect for this rare place. I had been to the Grand Canyon many times but never to a corner of it quite like this. It was just the latest episode in a love affair I never expected to have.

A decade ago, when I was in my 20s, I met an older woman while hiking in

Canyonlands National Park in Utah. She had silver hair, a sturdy gait and an air of quiet confidence. We got to talking, and she told me that she came here often even though she lived on the other side of the country. She had traveled all over the world, but now, instead of seeing new places, she preferred to return to the same one — to hike different trails but see the same spires and hoodoos in different moods and seasons.

I thought she was crazy. At the time, I was brimming with wanderlust, hell-bent on constant movement. What could possibly be learned by seeing the same place over and over? Now I am beginning to understand.

You don't need to go out searching for a place to return to. In the course of your travels, it eventually finds you, sinks a hook, and beckons you again and again. I traveled to the Grand Canyon as a child, but for years, it stayed in a drawer in my mind. Then, in my early 20s, I moved to the Southwest, and since then, I've returned to the park eight times for trips ranging from a few

days to 19. At some point, around the third trip, I realized what was happening. The Grand Canyon had become that place for me: It had drawn me in and wasn't letting go.

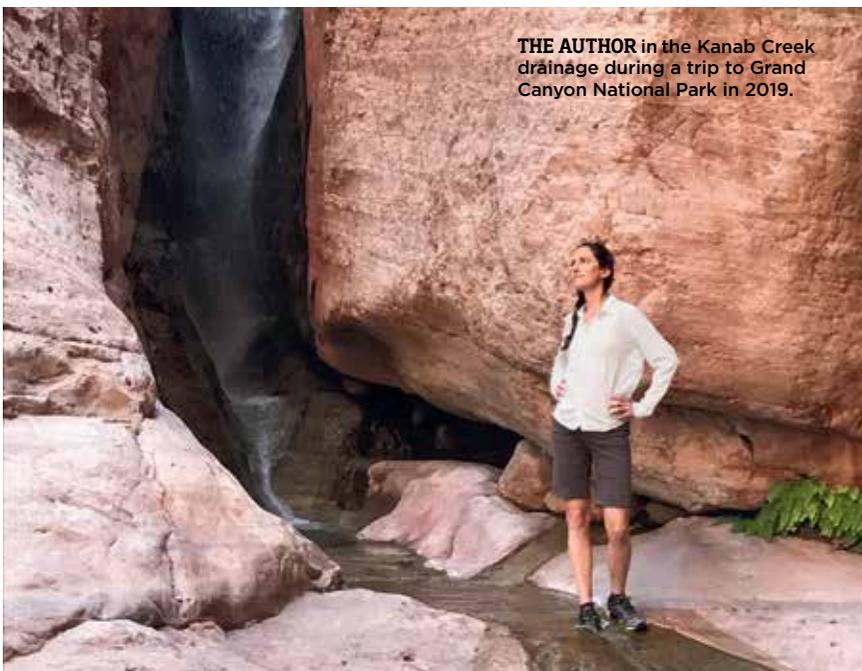
The first thing most people notice about the Grand Canyon is its stupefying grandeur and scale. When I first encountered it, I was 10 years old, embarking on my first backpacking trip. My dad bought me a pink-and-teal backpack, filled it with camping gear, and cajoled me — though I had no previous hiking experience — into slogging 10 miles down to Havasu Falls in a day. I whined and cried and collapsed from exhaustion, unable to go a step farther until I'd wolfed down some oranges and candy. But in my delirium, I also felt like I had passed through some mysterious curtain to a secret world of towering cliffs and glowing turquoise waterfalls that seemed as tall as skyscrapers. Growing up in a big Eastern city, I had never dreamed the world could look like this.

The next time I visited, I was in my

20s on my first long rafting trip: 18 days and 226 miles on the Colorado River with 15 friends. Over those many hours floating on the river's grand stage, we ran out of words to describe the huge amphitheaters going by. I don't think there's any way the human mind can actually grasp the scale of time the cliffs so eloquently illustrate. The result is a sort of suspension of hubris, a constant feeling of wowed, grateful humility.

On that trip, I trained myself to look beyond the magnitude to see the intimate beauty of the canyon — the soothing sound of a tiny riffle, the delicate beauty of a cactus blossom in a throne of needles, the way the water's reflected sunlight dances on overhanging stone. These are things that take time to notice, and I began to realize that you must spend weeks — months, years — here to gain a real understanding of the place's rhythm and tone. I also began to see that part of the allure of the canyon is not only its beauty, but its danger.

In the middle of that trip, one cool, sunny day in April, three friends and I switched from a raft into the group's wooden dory, a craft that bucked like a carnival ride. Just as I was getting used to its jerks and shudders, the boat capsized in Dubendorf Rapid, and in a nanosecond, I was hurled into a wall of water and enveloped. I gasped for air and was shoved beneath again, bouncing off rocks like a doll. The next few minutes were a jumble of darkness and light, air and water. Finally, I reached flat water, spotted the three others — all swimming — and swam back to the overturned dory, which we eventually wrangled to shore. The river had claimed an oar and gruesomely smashed the bow. I was unscathed, but my mind replayed the incident incessantly. I felt small and vulnerable, cowed by the indiscriminate power of water. But I was also, in part, thrilled.



THE AUTHOR in the Kanab Creek drainage during a trip to Grand Canyon National Park in 2019.

© AMANDA KUENZI



HIKERS make their way through Deer Creek Canyon in Grand Canyon National Park. The author first traveled to the park when she was 10 and has returned many times since.

© COREY RICH/CAVAN IMAGES

So often in daily life, we are insulated from the ever-present reality of our own fragility, and it was exhilarating to see beyond the delusion.

When we left the river after nearly three weeks, I felt bereft. It wasn't just that the canyon was so beautiful and exciting. Being in such a place, so connected to my body, to other people, and to feelings of fear, humility and belonging made me feel more human than I ever feel when surrounded by civilization. I knew I had to return not only to try to understand this inscrutable place but to remind myself of who I am.

A few years ago, I applied for a permit to backpack the Nankoweap Trail without ever looking at the trail description. "You know, this is a pretty scary trail," my friend Amanda told me as we drove through a starry evening to get to the trailhead and camp. She unfolded the description and read aloud: "This is NOT recommended for people with a fear of heights." She looked at me with

her eyebrow raised. The next day, we hiked by Saddle Mountain on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and peered down. A rolling cliff face dropped into an abyss. The narrow thread of a trail appeared impossible.

Somehow, with the help of some wires holding rocks to the slope and well-placed logs to prevent erosion, a trail made its way down into the canyon. This was the way it went: We looked ahead and deemed it undoable. And yet, step by step, we moved forward.

This time, what the canyon required was unbroken concentration. Our shoulders grazed a wall on our left as a cliff dropped away on the right; one misstep could have spelled disaster. I trained my gaze on the path ahead and wired my attention to my feet: heel, toe, heel, toe.

Eventually, we made it all the way down into the canyon and along a stream to the Colorado River, where ancient granaries overlooked a ring of cliffs and the river twisting off. But what

I remember best was taking a moment, on that tightrope trail, to stop and look around. It was as if the uncluttered calm required to walk the path safely allowed me a sharper view.

Two billion years' worth of happenings — climates changing, seas rising and falling, sediments coming and going — were all preserved here in this labyrinth that stretched to the horizon. A charcoal smudge of rain traveled among the uplifts. Elsewhere, the sun illuminated the layers. I had always experienced this place as a landscape of stone, but, standing there, perched in the middle of a huge cliff, I realized it was just as much a landscape of air and silence. It seems there are only certain moments when I'm able to see the spaces between things. **NP**

KATE SIBER is a freelance journalist living in Durango, Colorado. She also writes for Outside magazine and is the author of "National Parks of the U.S.A.," a children's book.

HISTORIC TRAVEL DESTINATIONS



Photo Credit:
Jeremy Hess, for Destination Gettysburg



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Jeremy Hess, for Destination Gettysburg

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History is everywhere in Gettysburg. Walk through Soldiers' National Cemetery and ponder President Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address. Deepen your comprehension of the Battle of Gettysburg with the Gettysburg Driving Tour. Bring the three heroic days of the battle of Gettysburg to life with your family, at your own pace with our driving app. Continue your discovery with a visit to historical museums. Learn of the military tactics used during the battle and stand in the shoes of the town's civilians whose lives were upturned by three fierce days of fighting in the place they called home.

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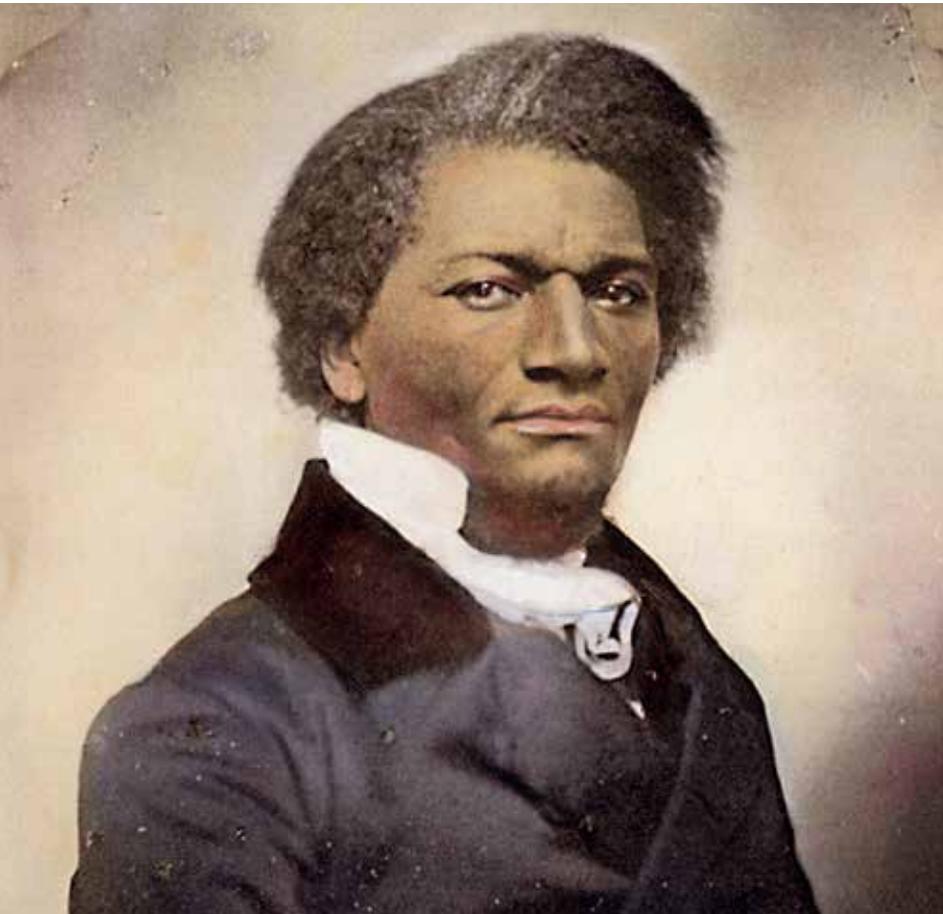
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FREDERICK DOUGLASS circa 1855.

Walk into the visitor center at Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, just steps from the Douglass home, and you'll hear a park volunteer repeat the words highlighted in the park's short film: "Agitate. Agitate. Agitate," she says. "What does the agitator in a washing machine do?" the volunteer asks the group of visitors, mostly children. "It moves things around, it stirs the pot, right? That's what Frederick Douglass did." And he encouraged others to follow his lead, amassing an enormous list of achievements for a black man born in the early 19th century — or, in fact, for any person of any race, born in any era.

Frederick Bailey was born into slavery on a farm outside Easton, Maryland, in 1818. (After escaping from slavery in 1838, he would change his name to Douglass to avoid being captured.) When he was only 8 years old, his master's wife started to teach him to read using the Bible — a move that could have landed her in prison. When she was forced to stop, a young Douglass tricked other children into teaching him one letter of the alphabet at a time, according to Braden Paynter, an interpretive ranger at the park.

"Words were the lever that Douglass used to change the world," Paynter says. "And he was always making arguments. In fact, this house is an argument. It says, 'I am a gentleman, and you must treat me as one.'"

As visitors entered the house, they were taken into the living room, which still contains busts common to Victorian homes of the time. The wallpaper features colorful tropical plants, a nod to Douglass' work as the U.S. minister to Haiti under the Benjamin Harrison administration. To the right of the entrance is the sitting room, where Douglass would teach his grandchildren history lessons or show them how to play the violin. Beyond the living room is the study, where he would spend up

PUBLISHED IN SPRING 2013

Renaissance Man

Frederick Douglass' home tells the story of a man who overcame enormous obstacles and paved the way for others to do the same.

TAKE THE GREEN LINE SUBWAY TRAIN TO ANACOSTIA, in the southeast quadrant of Washington, D.C. Walk past the Thurgood Marshall Academy on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, past the Baptist churches, the barbershops and the colorful row houses, and you'll find a house perched high on a hilltop. The man who lived in this house launched a civil rights movement long before Marshall and MLK had landmarks named after them, long before "civil rights" had become a household term.

© SARIN IMAGES/GRANGER

to five hours a day paging through one of the thousands of books he owned or drafting speeches and correspondence with friends and associates, including Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells and Mark Twain.

How did Douglass rise from slavery to become a member of Washington's elite? When he was 20 years old, he borrowed papers from a free black sailor and escaped from bondage, moving to New York, then New Bedford, Massachusetts. He soon befriended William Lloyd Garrison and other key figures in the abolitionist movement, who urged him to share his own experiences. Douglass' stirring speeches became a powerful tool in the battle against slavery and, ultimately, one of the chief ways he would earn a living. In fact, Douglass was such a skilled speaker that some people began to doubt he had been enslaved. To prove them wrong, he wrote his first autobiography in 1845, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass," in which he described his early years and revealed his original name and his owner's name. The move raised his public profile even more and put his freedom in jeopardy once again.

To avoid being captured, Douglass fled overseas, spending time in England, Scotland and Ireland. British supporters were so impressed with Douglass that they purchased his freedom from his owners for \$711. Douglass returned to the United States a free man and settled in Rochester, New York, a hotbed of the abolitionist and women's rights movements.

Soon Douglass began advocating for political activism, using tactics that would gain popularity in the civil rights movement 100 years later. At one point in the early 1840s, he staged one-man sit-ins on segregated train cars in Massachusetts, which drew wide public attention. When the Supreme Court ruled in 1857 that fugitive slaves could

At one point in the early 1840s, he staged one-man sit-ins in segregated train cars in Massachusetts.

be captured in a free state, returned and enslaved once again, Douglass even considered resorting to violence. Just before the Civil War, he thought about leaving the country for good.

Eventually, he came to see the Civil War as a necessary evil that would bathe the nation in blood that might cleanse it of its sins. Douglass was among those who tried to persuade President Abraham Lincoln of the moral imperative of ending slavery.

"In 1864, at Lincoln's second inaugural, he says, 'Every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said 3,000 years ago, so still it must be said, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether,'" Paynter says. "That's Douglass starting to get to Lincoln, who eventually realizes the need to link slavery and the war's outcome."

Several years after the Civil War ended and slavery was abolished, Douglass moved to Washington, D.C.,

where he would serve as the U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia and the District's Recorder of Deeds.

Douglass died on February 20, 1895, at the age of 77. But his words live on as a testament to his work:

"If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." **NP**

SCOTT KIRKWOOD is the former editor in chief of National Parks magazine. He lives in Denver, where he is creative director for Friday, a design and strategy firm working primarily with nonprofits.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS greets African Americans in 1877, shortly after he was appointed U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia.



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That Was Then



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OVERNIGHT CAMPERS PLAY A GAME OF BLIND MAN'S BLUFF, Gateway National Recreation Area, New York, July 2014.

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