



Coalition To Protect America's National Parks Weekly National Park System Report

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Incidents

Zion National Park Eight Rescued By Park's SAR Team

The park's SAR team and Rockville-Springdale Fire were called out on the night of Saturday, March 17th, for what became a lifesaving event.

A team of 16 rescuers responded to calls for help coming from the Pine Creek slot canyon. Eight canyoneers – wet, borderline hypothermic and too tired to continue – began yelling for help after they had made it through about half of the technical slot canyon. Two members of the party eventually found the strength to finish the slot and go for help.

Once rescuers reached them, it was discovered the group was poorly equipped for canyoneering at this time of year. The canyoneers had inadequate footwear and gloves and should have been wearing insulated dry suits rather than the 3mm “farmer John” wetsuits for traversing the ice-cold pools of water in the slot. To complicate matters, a heavy snow storm rolled into the area, bringing sub-freezing temperatures and causing a flash flood on Pine Creek.

The technical rescue SAR team worked through the night, under the trying conditions, to extract each of them, one at a time, using ropes and pulleys.

“There is little doubt in my mind that we saved lives that night,” said Dan Fagergren, the park's chief ranger. “Hypothermia is a real threat in slot canyons, even during the summer months, because the trapped water never sees the light of day. You can imagine how cold this group was, given the time of year, the drop in temperature, the blizzard like conditions and not being prepared.”

Source: [Zion National Park](#).

Joshua Tree National Park Arrest Made In Arson Fire Behind Park Visitor Center

A Twentynine Palms man appeared in federal court last Wednesday afternoon on a federal charge alleging that he illegally started a fire in the Oasis of Mara. The fire damaged historic trees and other park resources in a two-and-a-half acre area behind the Oasis Visitor Center on Monday, March 26th.

Rangers arrested George William Graham, 26, of Twentynine Palms, at the scene of the fire. Graham was observed watching the blaze and admitted to law enforcement officers that he started the fire. According to court records, Graham was known both to the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department and

the National Park Service as a California arson parolee, with prior law enforcement contacts with both state and federal authorities.

Federal prosecutors filed a criminal complaint against Graham that charges him with unlawfully setting timber afire, a felony offense punishable by up to five years of imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. Graham is being detained in federal custody pending his next court appearance, which will be on April 11th.

The investigation is being conducted by the National Park Service, with assistance from the United States Bureau of Land Management, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department, and the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#).

Carlsbad Caverns National Park Three Stranded Visitors Extracted From Stuck Elevator

On Monday, March 26th, three visitors to Carlsbad Caverns were rescued after being stranded in an elevator about 740 feet underground. A mechanical failure left one car suspended in the shaft.

The secondary elevators were the only mode of transportation for visitors aside from walking into the park's underground caves. The park's primary elevator system went out of service in 2015, and a rebuild project is expected to be completed this May.

Rangers and members of the Carlsbad Fire Department rescued two women and a teenage boy. In order to reach them, three paramedics were sent down the elevator shaft in the second elevator car with an NPS ranger situated on top. The responders lowered themselves to the car near the bottom of the elevator shaft. Each visitor was harnessed and lifted into the working elevator. The entire operation took about four hours.

Investigation revealed that the elevator broke down due to a worn travel cable that communicates with the elevator's electrical components during operation.

Source: [Carlsbad Current Argus](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Fire Activity Continues To Center On Florida And Oklahoma

Synopsis

NIFC is at Preparedness Level 1, the lowest of five levels.

Fire activity continues in the south, primarily in Florida and Oklahoma. A total of 35 new large fires were reported last week. As of last Friday, 18 still had not been contained.

Wildland Fire Outlook

NIFC Predictive Services has issued its four month forecast for the period from April through July. Here are the highlights:

- *April* – Wildfire activity will increase across parts of the nation in April, particularly the central and southern Great Plains. Towards month's end, it will shift westward into the Southwest. Other areas of concern are the Florida Peninsula, eastern Georgia and South Carolina, where drought conditions linger. Elevated potential exists across coastal portions of Southern California, where drought continues, and across portions of eastern Montana, where very dry

residual soil conditions exist. Pre-greenup fire activity could elevate during westerly flow wind events.

- *May and June* – Worsening drought conditions across the Southwest will lead to a continuance and expansion of the areas where above normal activity is likely. Above normal large fire potential across the Florida Peninsula in May will diminish by June as sea and land breeze convective activity begins to develop. Preexisting conditions across Alaska suggests a normal potential for fire activity across the state’s interior.
- *July* – July marks the beginning of the core of the Western fire season. Concerns exist across the interior West and California regarding dry grasses. With a below average mountain snowpack observed from Oregon south to the border, fire potential may increase in the higher elevations by month’s end. Indicators suggest an early arrival of the Southwestern monsoon. This should end the Southwestern season; however, the abundant convective activity will inevitably spread northward into the Great Basin and points north.

National Park Service Fires

The following NPS fires were reported either on InciWeb and/or the NICC Situation Report:

- *Channel Islands NP* – The Santa Cruz Fire, which broke out on the island of the same name on the afternoon of March 27th, has burned 250 acres of tall grass and chaparral and is now 70% contained. At present, 26 firefighters are committed; they continue to monitor the fire and tend to hot spots. The public closure for the entire isthmus area of Santa Cruz Island has been lifted, allowing all park concession trips by Island Packers to resume landing at Prisoner’s Harbor. Private boaters will be able to land at beaches that had been closed the past few days for fire safety. Santa Cruz Island, at 96 square miles, is the largest in the chain of eight California Channel Islands. The Nature Conservancy owns 76 percent of Santa Cruz Island and the National Park Service owns 24 percent. Together, they cooperatively manage this island as one ecological unit. Source: [InciWeb](#).
- *Everglades NP* – As of last Friday, the Context Fire had burned 575 acres, primarily in tall grass, and was 10% contained. Twenty-nine firefighters and overhead personnel were committed.

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	March 21st	March 28th	April 4th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	0	0	0
Type 2 Teams	0	0	0
Crews	14	7	9
Engines	250	259	149
Helicopters	9	12	8
Total FF/Overhead	1,017	1,012	876

Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2007-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	11,195	11,873	- 678
Year-to-Date Acres	432,420	524,532	- 92,112

Sources: [National Interagency Fire Center](#); [NICC Incident Management Situation Report](#); [National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook](#).

News From Around Washington

Reports from Capitol Hill, the White House, the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service and other related agencies and NGO's.

Department of the Interior

Susan Combs Appointed Acting Assistant Secretary Overseeing NPS, FWS

Secretary Zinke has appointed Susan Combs, former comptroller for the state of Texas, as acting assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks – the key position in the management chain between the director of the National Park Service and the secretary.

Combs was nominated in July to serve as the assistant secretary for DOI's Office of Policy, Management and Budget, where she would have influence over the agency's decisions on finance, policy, management and environmental affairs. But her nomination has remained stalled in the Senate.

Combs, says the *Huffington Post*, "has a long history of sparring with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over species listings." The article also quotes Stephanie Kurose, the endangered species specialist for the Center for Biological Diversity, about the appointment; she says that it's like "appointing an arsonist as the town fire marshal."

Source: [Huffington Post](#).

House of Representatives

Republican Majority Continues Attack On Federal Employees

Federal Soup, "an online information resource for federal employees," published a story on March 22nd about another way House majority members have found to undermine the federal workforce:

"House Republicans this week voted to reinstate an old procedural rule from the 19th century that allows House members to propose amendments that reduce the pay of specific federal employees and also eliminate entire positions and federal programs. The Holman Rule—named after former Indiana Rep. William Holman— was put on the books in 1876, but stripped down by 1885. Though it had a presence in history, for most of the last-century-and-a-half, individual members have not had the power to control specific federal jobs funded through appropriations bills."

Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) has spoken out against the action: "[Without] any public debate, House Republicans snuck into legislation [H. Res. 787] the Holman Rule – a cynical and dangerous attack on federal workers that allows Members of Congress to reduce the salaries of federal employees. This archaic tool, also known as the Armageddon Rule, is nothing more than a backdoor way for Republicans to dismantle the federal workforce and carry out political vendettas at the expense of career civil servants. This is a page right out of President Trump's playbook. Reinstating the Holman Rule is no empty threat by the Majority. Last year, they used it to attack the Congressional Budget Office. If they can justify political attacks on CBO - the nonpartisan Congressional scorekeeper – no one is safe."

Source: [Federal Soup](#).

Capitol Hill

Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate

The Senate was in recess this week for the Easter holiday.

House

The House was in recess this week for the Easter holiday.

Source: Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

Park People, Friends and Allies

Carl Sandburg Home NHS Polly Angelakis Selected As Park's New Superintendent

Pauline "Polly" Angelakis will become the superintendent of Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site on May 13th.

Angelakis was inspired to become a park ranger after hiking through Hawaii's Haleakalā crater while in college. Since then, she has worked at eleven parks and two regional offices during her 30-year career with the National Park Service. She spent the first eight years as a seasonal employee and has worked as a frontline interpretive supervisor, volunteer coordinator, and education specialist.

Angelakis later assumed positions of increasing responsibility, including serving as regional interpretive specialist and volunteer coordinator for the NPS National Capital Region, acting regional chief of interpretation for the Intermountain and National Capital Regions, and site manager for two sites administered by the George Washington Memorial Parkway. She has been chief of interpretation at Haleakalā National Park since 2012 and also completed temporary assignments there as acting superintendent.

Her NPS career has also included time working at Acadia National Park, Assateague Island National Seashore, Everglades National Park, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Olympic National Park, Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Shenandoah National Park, and the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial.

A Massachusetts native, Angelakis graduated cum laude from the University of Massachusetts in 1987 with a bachelor of arts in English. She is a 2007 graduate of the NPS Mid-level Management Development Program and a lifetime Girl Scouts member. She is married to Alan Willis, an electrical engineering consultant. The couple enjoys hiking, water sports, theater, volunteer work, and traveling.

Source: [Carl Sandburg Home NHS](#).

Coalition News and Activities

News and actions taken by CPANP on behalf of the National Park Service and National Park System, plus news about members of the Coalition:

Member Jerry Rogers Publishes Book On Brother's WWII Letters – Member Cherry Payne has posted these comments regarding Jerry Rogers' new book, [So Long For Now: A Sailor's Letters From The USS Franklin](#): "For anyone who has or had relatives who participated in WWII, especially in the Pacific Theater, I highly recommend a book called *So Long for Now: A Sailor's Letters from the USS Franklin*, by Jerry Rogers. Jerry, who retired from the NPS, was the Associate Director for Cultural Resources. He was a young boy when his older brother, Elden, joined the navy during the war, and just six when the terrible news came that Elden had died in a kamikaze attack. Through letters written by Elden, Jerry's mother, and Elden's girl back home, along with research of what was happening in the war, Jerry has crafted a page-turner of a book. It provides insights into the life and deprivations people at home were

dealing with as the depression ended and wartime rationing began, the hopes and fears of sailors just wanting to get home, and the worry and pain of the people who loved them. This is a wartime book about real people and a snapshot of life as my folks experienced it—probably the most formative time of their lives.”

Member Harry Butowsky Has Added Still More Titles To NPS History Webpage – The April 2018 updates to <http://npshistory.com/> have now been posted to the web. Harry has placed almost 200 additional studies on the webpage, including material from The Protection Ranger Series and information from the Park Law Enforcement Association. Additional material from the Park History Series, Agency History Series and Cultural Resources Series are also listed. There are now more than 30,000 items posted to the site, which was viewed by almost 60,000 visitors last month.

Other Reports and Releases

A brief summary of other recent news stories, web postings and agency press releases pertaining to the department, the National Park Service in general, public lands and the environment – particularly the impacts of climate change on park ecosystems, flora and fauna.

Administration

References To Anthropogenic Climate Change Removed From NPS Report – The April 2nd edition of *Reveal*, the publication of the Center for Investigative Reporting, reports that “National Park Service officials have deleted every mention of humans’ role in causing climate change in drafts of a long-awaited report on sea level rise and storm surge, contradicting Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s vow to Congress that his department is not censoring science.” Zinke last month told a Senate committee that there have been no instances of DOI changing a scientific document and challenged members of the committee to find an example of such changes being made. The report was drafted in 2016 but hasn’t yet been released to the public. *Reveal* obtained and analyzed 18 versions of the scientific report; the article provides specific examples of changes made in the text. Source: [Reveal](#).

Zinke Updates – Here’s the latest on Secretary Zinke, who continues to garner more press coverage than almost anyone in the administration other than the president:

- *Zinke and the Diversity Downgrade* – On March 27th, *CNN* reported that the secretary has been telling DOI employees that he won’t be focusing on diversity during his tenure: “Three high-ranking Interior officials from three different divisions said that Zinke has made several comments with a similar theme, saying ‘diversity isn’t important,’ or ‘I don’t care about diversity,’ or ‘I don’t really think that’s important anymore.’” Zinke’s spokesperson “vehemently” denied the accusations. Source: [CNN](#).
- *Zinke and the Recreational Reps* – Secretary Zinke has appointed 15 representatives from the outdoor recreation industry “to advise him on how to operate public lands,” reports the *Washington Post*, “including three people whom department officials flagged as potentially having a conflict of interest on the matter.” According to the *Post*, “this marks the third time the secretary has assembled panels dominated by industry players to help chart policies affecting their businesses.” The other two were the Royalty Policy Council, made up of members of the oil, gas and mining industries, and the International Wildlife Conservation Council, composed of people with ties to trophy hunting. Source: [Washington Post](#).
- *Zinke and the Ghost of PACs Past* – According to *Politico*, “the Federal Election Commission is asking a leadership PAC previously affiliated with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to account for more than \$600,000 of previously unreported contributions from the first six months of 2017.” The article continues with particulars: “For most of the period in question, the committee, SEAL PAC, was overseen by Vincent DeVito, who is now a top aide to Zinke at the Interior Department, and this is the second time federal regulators have looked into discrepancies during his tenure. Zinke launched SEAL PAC when he was elected to Congress in 2014 and disaffiliated himself from the group after being selected to join President Donald Trump’s Cabinet; DeVito was listed as the group’s treasurer until May, when he too joined the

administration.” DeVito is now counselor to the secretary for energy policy, a newly created advisory position, and also running the department’s energy royalty policy committee. Source: [Politico](#).

National Park System

Public Opposes Proposed Park Fee Increases – Secretary Zinke’s proposal to increase peak-season entrance fees at 17 parks from \$25 to \$70 (the largest hike since World War II) has met with stiff opposition from the public, says the *Washington Post*. “Interior Department officials are backing away from a plan to dramatically increase entrance fees at the most popular national parks,” reports the *Post*, “after receiving more than 100,000 public comments from Americans nearly unanimously opposed to the idea.” Although the proposal is still on the table, DOI is now looking at a smaller fee increase. Source: [Washington Post](#).

Using Your Head While Visiting Parks – The adventure section of the current issue of *Men’s Journal* has an article with this rather forthright headline: “How To Not Be An Asshole In National Parks.” It begins by quoting the old ranger adage about people leaving their brains at home when they go to parks, then lists some of the most common ways visitors get into trouble and how to avoid them. These include getting too close to wild animals, relying on maps rather than cell phones to find your way, and ignoring park signs. It also includes several quotes from NPS rangers. Source: [Men’s Journal](#).

Sundry Actions and Updates – Here, in brief, are additional reports on parks, culled either from park press releases or from newspapers:

- *Grand Canyon NP* – Residents and visitors to the South Rim have been reducing their water consumption, making it possible for the park to refill water storage tanks to sustainable levels. As a result of water conservation, the park is modifying Level 3 water restrictions to allow park concessioners to begin dishwashing at selected dining establishments. Restaurants and cafeterias operated by park concessioners are therefore phasing out disposable paper products. Visitors and residents are being reminded that other Level 3 water restrictions remain in place, including the temporary closure of camper services (showers, laundry, and RV dump/fill station). Sinks in public restrooms remain turned off; hand sanitizer is being provided. Visitors and residents are encouraged to turn off water when brushing teeth or shaving, collect water in buckets while waiting for the shower to heat up, wash only full loads of dishes or laundry, selectively flush toilets, and report wasteful water use and leaks. Residents are also reminded to use non-potable water for plants and lawns and to not fill large-capacity water tanks. Source: [Grand Canyon NP](#).
- *North Cascades NP* – The park’s plan to restore grizzlies to the North Cascade Mountains has gained the support of Secretary Zinke, who made the announcement while visiting the park in late March. A formal decision is expected later this year. The last confirmed sighting of a grizzly in Washington’s North Cascades was by a hiker in 2010. Experts say there may only be about ten grizzlies in the North Cascades in Washington state, but there is also a population in the mountain range north of the Canadian border. Source: [Associated Press via KOMO News](#).
- *Petrified Forest NP* – The park has found a retirement community for two of its hard-working employees – patrol horses Trooper and Gus. Both horses were donated to Equine Well Being Rescue, Inc., a non-profit horse rescue organization. The organization was officially selected as a transitional retirement home for the two horses. Both will eventually be available for adoption. Source: [White Mountain Independent](#).
- *Lassen Volcanic NP* – The Bumpass Hell Trail visitor use improvements environmental assessment is now out for review. The EA analyzes the impacts of three alternatives for rehabilitation of the trail and boardwalk. In 2015, a portion of the boardwalk leading to Turquoise Pool was removed because it was being undermined by the Pyrite Pool; other parts of the trail have not been comprehensively rehabilitated since the 1970s. Comments will be accepted until April 7th at the [Lassen Volcanic PEPC site](#). Source: [Lassen Volcanic NP](#).

- *Yosemite NP* – The March 30th edition of the *Fresno Bee* has an interview with Mike Reynolds, former acting NPS director and now the park’s superintendent, about his perspectives on and plans for Yosemite, particularly regarding its perennial traffic and parking problems. See the article for details. Source: [Fresno Bee](#).

Public Lands/Land Management Agencies

‘Plummeting Morale’ Reported In Forest Service – The March 27th edition of *Mountain Journal* includes an article by former Forest Service employee Susan Marsh on a dramatic decline in morale in the Forest Service. Marsh attributes much of the decline on two issues familiar to any land management agency employee – increased workloads and reduced funding – but specifies four other key issues:

- Centralization of administrative processes (human resources, finance, IT support). This is because service centers are not set up to handle specific tasks that can only be done at the local level, which means that field employees have to handle their own administrative tasks. Coupled with this is a feeling that things aren’t going to get better, and that top managers don’t know or care “that employees are struggling to keep up with the ever-increasing administrative burden while trying to find time for their real jobs.”
- Changing or conflicting mandates, priorities and direction. “With increasing consolidation of forests and ranger districts and resource specialists shared between two or more, employees often answer to multiple bosses, each of whom has his or her own expectations.”
- Public trust. There’s a public perception that federal employees are “drones with cushy benefits.” Although working hard to do the jobs they were hired to do, employees “are blamed for actions and circumstances over which they have no control.”
- Fluctuating budgets. “The basic operation and maintenance needs on a national forest don’t go up or down in response to falling budgets; they only go up. Costs increase each year for personnel, vehicles, and supplies, and the demands coming from the public to do more keep increasing. No private sector businessperson could operate successfully with the kind of conditions handed federal land management agencies.”

Response to the article, say the magazine’s editors, has been “off the charts.” It’s a must read for any present or former federal employee. Source: [Mountain Journal](#).

Commerce Department Report Puts Value On Outdoor Recreation – KIRO News (Seattle) has posted a story on a new report by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, that shows the value of outdoor recreation in the U.S. – most of which, of course, occurs on public lands. The report reveals that the outdoor recreation economy accounted for 2% (\$373.7 billion) of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2016. The figure puts the outdoor recreation industry in the same territory as construction (4.3%), legal services (1.3%), agriculture (1%) and mining, oil and gas extraction (1.4%). Additional figures reveal the outdoor recreation economy grew 3.8 percent in 2016. Source: [KIRO News](#).

Conservation, Climate and The Environment

Report: Climate Change Will Alter Mix Of National Park Bird Species – The *Wisconsin Gazette* has an article in its March 28th edition on yet another worrying trend: “A new study by scientists from the National Audubon Society and the National Park Service indicates an average of 25 percent of the bird species found in some of America’s most well-known national parks could be completely different by mid-century because of a changing climate.” The findings appear in *PLOS ONE*, a journal that publishes peer-reviewed scientific research. “The study authors analyzed 274 sites managed by the National Park Service and overlaid them with climate suitability models for birds known to spend summers and winters within the parks. The suitability models were then linked to two different trajectories of greenhouse gas emissions representing low and high emissions paths. The low-end pathway incorporates the most stringent mitigation scenario where the high-end represents our current trajectory.” See the article for full details. Source: [Wisconsin Gazette](#).

Coastal Parks And Coming Hurricane Seasons – The National Park System includes just under 90 ocean and coastal parks, with the majority of them in the Caribbean or along the Gulf and Atlantic coastlines, making hurricane assessments and forecasts important for coming seasons. Although the National Hurricane Center forecast for 2018 will not be out until next month, the current issue of the meteorology magazine *Weatherwise* (the name comes from a Ben Franklin quote: “Some people are weatherwise, some are otherwise”) has an article summarizing the extraordinary 2017 hurricane season and offering some thoughts on the probability of it’s being matched or exceeded in the future. The 2017 season featured three hurricanes – Harvey, Irma and Maria – that had major impacts on the United States and its territories, including many National Park Service sites. It marked the first time that three Category 4 hurricanes hit the country in the same season. Meteorologists use a formula called ACE (accumulated cyclone energy) to calculate the total energy of a given storm or season. The seasonal average ACE value has been running around 100; last year, it hit just over 223. The author concludes with a warning: “While no single storm is ever caused by global warming, aggregate, long-term changes in the storm environment...might be creating a statistical uptrend in factors such as storm frequency, size, wind intensity, geographic coverage, storm duration and rainfall....Given the trends toward increased storm destructiveness – and whether global warming has anything to do with this – it’s best to prepare for more of these tropical-borne nightmares.” Source: *Weatherwise* (article URL available only to subscribers).

From The Archives

This section, put together for both CPANP veterans who were regular readers of the Morning Report 25 years ago and those who joined the NPS during the ensuing period, contains news and incidents taken from issues published during the corresponding week in the appropriate month and year. Today we go back to the first week of April, 1993:

- *Lake Mead NRA* – A 41-year-old New Mexico man and a friend spent the afternoon of April 3rd diving in about 50 feet of water 200 feet off the shore of Boulder Beach. While on their way back in, they decided to make one last dive to use up their oxygen. When the New Mexico man failed to surface, his companion made several fruitless rescue dives, then reported the incident to rangers. A park dive team responded; they failed to find the man’s body that evening, but recovered it in 30 feet of water at noon the following day. It appears that his air ran out and that he drowned because he was unable to release his borrowed and unfamiliar weight belt.
- *Fire Island NS* – On the afternoon of April 6th, a plane landed on the beach 200 yards east of Fire Island Pines. Neither the pilot nor his passenger was injured. FAA inspectors determined that the plane had run out of gas while the pilot was returning to the Suffolk County airport after a flight to New Jersey. The pilot was forbidden from attempting to take off because the beach surface was uneven and the landing gear could have dug into the sand. Around 4 a.m. the next morning, the owner of the Dedalos Flight School at Suffolk County airport landed a second plane on the beach; the pilot of the first plane was with him, and the two planned on refueling it and taking off. At 8:20 a.m., a park employee found the second plane stuck in the sand. Its operator was cited and was due to appear before a federal magistrate on June 2nd. The planes were towed down the beach to Smith Point and removed from the island.
- *Yosemite NP* – [Note: The name of the principal in this case has been changed to John Wang in order to avoid any legal or privacy issues] On February 11th, John Wang was arrested in Los Angeles on a no-bail federal warrant issued by the park's magistrate for a variety of charges involving commercial use of the park and other illegal activities. He had been a fugitive for seven months at the time of the arrest. Wang, who claims he is a citizen of Hong Kong, was first licensed to operate a tour bus in 1984, and for several years made regular runs to the park with buses and vans loaded with Chinese-speaking travelers from both San Francisco's Chinatown and Asian countries. He first came to the attention of park rangers several years earlier when one of his buses backed into a ranger's private vehicle and caused \$1,500 in damage. Upon investigation, it was determined that Wang did not have insurance, California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) or Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) authority, or a permit to operate within the park. On New Year's Day in 1989, a bus driven by Wang slid out of control on an icy road in the park and collided head on with another vehicle; three people

were injured, one seriously. Wang pleaded guilty to unsafe operation of a bus, failure to possess a license to drive a bus, operating a vehicle that was mechanically unsafe, and failure to have a log book. He was placed on summary probation and fined \$400. As a result of Wang's subsequent unwillingness to desist from operating illegally in the park and without PUC authority, the California Highway Patrol and NPS began a program of surprise inspections of tour buses in the park. Arrest warrants were issued for Wang and two of his drivers following the issuance of several citations to them and their subsequent failure to appear in court. In May, 1992, Wang pleaded guilty to a series of violations, was fined \$4,000 and was sentenced to three years' probation. On July 4, 1992, a Wang-owned company van crashed in Nevada, killing two people and injuring 13 other passengers. The accident was caused by a tire blow-out at high speeds; the van's tires were found to be bald and defective. After the crash, Wang closed his San Francisco office and disappeared. The park subsequently filed a petition for violation of probation and failure to appear, and a bench warrant was issued. Wang was apprehended when police were called to a domestic dispute and was later arrested on the federal warrant. After he paid his fine, the federal district court withdrew the probation violation petition and opted to release Wang into the state's custody for further prosecution. The district attorney's office in San Francisco has filed criminal fraud charges and issued a felony arrest warrant for Wang for failing to return monies paid for tours after he closed his office, and California PUC has filed charges for operating tour buses without a permit. The ICC has obtained an injunction against Wang's interstate transportation operations and will be filing charges against him in federal district court in San Francisco for contempt of court.

Acknowledgements

This newsletter comes to you through the efforts of a number of people. First are our “regulars”:

- Producer: Steve Pittleman
- Congressional Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- At Large Correspondents: Dennis Burnett and Rick Smith

Thanks also to the following members for forwarding articles for inclusion in this newsletter – Mark Forbes, Bill Walters, Joan Anzelmo, Mike Murray, Duncan Morrow, Cathy Halainen, and Debbie Bird.

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to Bill Halainen at the Weekly National Park System Report: BHalainen@gmail.com. Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

A Closing Observation

Here's a gem from a century ago that we offer today in tribute to our colleagues in the Forest Service, who, as noted above, are facing as many challenges these days as employees of the National Park Service. It was written by an anonymous USFS ranger in 1917:

I got a little detail to the supervisor's shack,
And I hadn't lit in Springer 'til I wished that I was back
On the far end of my district, counting stock or building trail,
For to work inside an office is like doing time in jail.

This bending o'er a table and a-writing all the day,
Is a making me hump shouldered and my hair is turning gray.
It sure will be my finish if they don't relieve me soon,
For my bewhiskered, sunburnt features is gettin' paler than the moon.

Some may rant and cuss a little and feel they've got a snob
Cause they haven't been promoted to a supervisor's job;
But I'd rather face the devil, or a bald faced grizzly bear,
Than this everlasting torment in a super's swivel chair.

I thought that I had troubles when on my district all alone,
But I've found that serious trouble was a thing I'd never known.
When I git back on my district, you can bet your life I'll stay,
And be thankful to my Maker I can draw a ranger's pay.

Anonymous US Forest Service ranger, from *Songs of the Forest Ranger*, edited by John D. Guthrie, 1917.

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The *Weekly National Park System Report* is a publication of The Coalition To Protect America's National Prks. It is prepared by Coalition member Bill Halainen, former editor of the *NPS Morning Report*, and produced and disseminated by Coalition member Steve Pittleman.

The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that “studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service.”

To receive a copy of this free publication, join the coalition. Any current, retired or former salaried (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) employee of the National Park Service can join the Coalition. For more information, click on [this link](#). If you need to contact the Coalition office on other matters, including changes of address, click on [this link](#).

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