



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

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Volume 2

Number 19

Incidents

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Eruption Continues With No Sign Of When It Will End

The eruption of Kilauea Volcano that began on May 3rd continues and the park remains closed. The U.S. Geological Survey said last Thursday that the flow is still very active and there's no way to know when the eruption will end or if more lava-spewing vents will open.

Here's what's known about damage to the park at present:

- A magnitude 5.5 quake on June 3rd left cracks in the overlook deck at the Jaggar Museum.
- Layers of acidic volcanic ash coat picnic tables, roads and overlooks.
- The park is without water because of broken pipelines.
- Roads in the park are fractured and three buildings, including the park's visitor emergency operations center, have been damaged.
- Crater Rim Drive and Hilina Pali Road near Kulanao'kuaiki Campground are impassable in places.
- Along the park's eastern shoreline boundary, earth cracks have been observed near Holei Sea Arch.

Solidified lava that made a park road impassable has been removed so the road could serve as an emergency evacuation route if needed. Chain of Crater Road is a 19-mile stretch of road that extends through the park, starting near the summit of the Kilauea and winding its way down to the coast. Opened in 1965, the road has been blocked by lava for 41 of its 53-year existence. Work began on May 30th to remove a seven-tenths-of-a-mile section of solidified lava from the lava flow that covered the emergency road in 2016 and 2017.

"We understand and commiserate with our community and visitors about the prolonged closure, but we cannot provide safe access to the Kilauea section of the park as long as these very unpredictable dangers threaten the safety of park staff and visitors," said Superintendent Cindy Orlando. "Unlike lava, which you can see coming and avoid, we cannot see or predict earthquakes, nor can we foresee a summit explosion, but both threats continue."

For more information, go to the following sites:

- Hawaii Volcanoes NP – <https://www.nps.gov/havo/index.htm>
- Hawaiian Volcano Observatory (HVO) – <https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/observatories/hvo/>
- HVO webcams – https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanoes/kilauea/multimedia_webcams.html

- HVO photos/videos – https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanoes/kilauea/multimedia_chronology.html
- HVO maps – https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/volcanoes/kilauea/multimedia_maps.html

Sources: Hawaii Volcanoes NP; [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#);

Yellowstone National Park Three Injured In Three Separate Animal Incidents In Four Days

Park staff were busy during the first week of June responding to incidents in which people were injured by animals, two of them visitors and the third a concession employee:

- On Sunday, June 3rd, a concession employee suffered serious injuries when she was attacked by an elk. The elk reportedly reared up and kicked Charlene Triplett several times with its front legs, striking the 51-year-old woman in the head, torso and back. She was flown to the trauma center at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center in Idaho Falls. The attack happened behind the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel, where Triplett worked (she was off-duty at the time). The cow elk was protecting a calf that was bedded down roughly 20 feet away and hidden by cars. It's not known whether Triplett saw the calf or the elk prior to the attack.
- On Tuesday, a female elk with a calf attacked 53-year-old park visitor Penny Behr of Cypress, Texas, behind the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel. The elk surprised Behr as she walked between cabins; although she backed away, the elk kicked her in the head and body. She was taken to a hospital. The park hasn't yet determined whether the elk involved in this incident was the same as the one who struck Triplett.
- On Wednesday, visitors got too close to a bison in the Lower Geyser Basin. The bison charged the crowd, goring 59-year-old Kim Hancock of Santa Rosa, California. Hancock was taken to a hospital with a hip injury and was later reported to be in good condition. According to the park, some people in the crowd got within 15 feet of the bison when the safe distance is at least 75 feet.

Sources: [Casper Star-Tribune](#); [CBS News](#); [SFGate.com](#)

Grand Teton National Park Two Killed In Glider Crash

Two people were killed in a glider crash in the park on Sunday, June 9th.

The Teton Interagency Dispatch Center received a call around noon reporting that two people had failed to return from a scenic glider ride that departed from Driggs, Idaho, which is just west of the park.

The search at first focused on an area south of the park, but it was soon determined via pinging one of the person's cell phones that the glider was down in the park. The pilot of an independent helicopter then contacted the park and reported glider wreckage in the park between Middle Teton and South Teton.

Rangers flew to the site, which was located above Icefloe Lake around 10,800 feet. They determined that both occupants of the glider had been killed in the crash. They recovered the bodies via a long-line aerial operation.

Source: [EastIdahoNews.com](#).

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore Man Rescued, Charged And Fined After Climbing Miners Castle Rock

A Michigan man had to be rescued late last month after climbing to the top of the iconic Miners Castle turret at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

The stunt cost the 30-year-old Auburn Hills man \$690 in fines. He also was charged with three federal violations after the incident – disorderly conduct (creating a hazardous situation), trespassing into a closed area, and damaging a natural resource.

The man allegedly jumped a fence and went past signs warning people not to climb the formation, which is a landmark of Lake Superior's southern shoreline.

The incident occurred just after noon on Tuesday, May 29th, when park rangers on marine patrol noticed the man sitting atop the rock.

Source: [Michigan Live](#).

Kings Canyon National Park Searchers Find Missing Hiker

A five-day effort to find a missing hiker came to a happy conclusion when searchers located him on May 28th.

Stephen McGuire, 67, who uses the trail name 'Bible,' began hiking the Pacific Crest Trail northwards in March and was last seen near Kearsarge Pass in the park on May 18th. He wasn't reported missing until May 23rd, a day after he failed to pick up a food supply at Mammoth.

McGuire was found to be in good health. He said that a winter storm had slowed up his progress.

Source: [YourCentralValley.com](#).

Zion National Park Rockfall Injures Two Hikers

A rockfall injured two visitors on the Riverside Walk Trail on the afternoon of Sunday, June 3rd. They were treated at the scene and taken to a medical facility.

The trail was closed temporarily until a geologist could examine the area and the trail could be cleared.

The Riverside Walk, historically called "The Gateway to the Narrows," is one of the park's most popular trails. The relatively easy trail parallels the North Fork of the Virgin River as the canyon begins to narrow, with cliffs as high as 1400 feet on each side. The rockfall was near the far end.

Source: [Fox 13 Salt Lake City](#).

Big Cypress National Preserve Two Men Charged With Harassing Gators, Panther Kitten

Two Miami-Dade men who were charged by the state last February after videos surfaced of them harassing alligators and endangered Florida panther kittens in the park now face federal charges as well.

This past February, the state charged Alfredo Lopez de Queralta, 45, and Javier Torres, 42, with eight felony counts each of killing, injuring or possessing alligator eggs without authorization. The United States Attorney's Office has now charged the men with knowingly taking a Florida panther.

They were released on their own recognizance on May 21st.

Source: [Miami Herald](#).

Denali National Park Rangers Conduct Two Successful Mountain Rescues

Rangers conducted two separate mountain rescues during the next-to-last week of May. The two rescues were the third and fourth of the season.

In the first rescue on May 20th, a party of two climbers was hit by falling rock and ice debris while rappelling the Mini-Moonflower climbing route on a sub-peak of Mount Hunter. The climbers used an InReach device to alert rangers. Even though one of the climbers had a broken arm and significant cuts, the two were able to get to the base of the route on their own, where the injured climber was evacuated by helicopter.

That same day, a separate party of two fell off the narrow ridge near 16,500 feet on the West Butress Route. The climbers were roped together but were not using snow anchors. Other climbers saw the fall and reported it to the park. The two fell about 1,000 feet into a crevasse on the Peters Glacier, where they were not visible from the ridge above.

The two were able to activate a personal locator beacon. When a park ranger responded to the site of the fall, though, visibility deteriorated and the flight had to turn back.

Before sunrise on May 21st, as a rescue team was prepared to leave camp, one of the fallen climbers arrived at the camp with an injured knee. The man reported that his climbing partner was injured and unable to make it to camp but that she was alert and stable on the glacier.

The rescue crew made it to the woman; she was evacuated by helicopter to Talkeetna after rangers determined that a short-haul to base camp was too risky as the weather closed in.

Ranger say that it was because of the climbers' communication capabilities and self-sufficiency that such a happy outcome was possible.

Source: [KTUU News](#).

Natchez Trace Parkway Company Fined For ARPA Violation

A company hired to complete work for a new housing development under construction in Davidson and Williamson Counties illegally excavated park lands, removing century-old Native American artifacts, and will pay a substantial fine.

Cultural Resources Analysts Inc. entered into a deferred prosecution agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice last month to avoid criminal charges for violating ARPA and agreed to pay a \$15,024 fine, the amount of damages assessed from the unauthorized excavation; they were also ordered to return all artifacts discovered during the process.

The company was issued a notice of violation by rangers last December for conducting an unauthorized archaeological survey on park lands in connection with an abutting development. CRA excavated land without required archaeological permits in November, 2016, and removed Native American archaeological artifacts more than a century old. The excavation was done in advance of proposed tree plantings to screen the housing development from the view of parkway visitors, according to the release.

“This situation could have easily been avoided had CRA applied for and received an ARPA permit,” said Superintendent Mary Risser.

Source: [Nashville Tennessean](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Fire Activity Increases In West

Synopsis

NIFC is at PL 2. Large fire activity picked up last weekend. Nationally, 42 large fires have burned more than 192,000 acres. Alaska reported 18 large fires, and California and New Mexico each have five.

National Park Service Fires

No large fires are burning in NPS areas.

Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	May 21st	June 5th	June 12th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	0	1	3
Type 2 Teams	0	3	2
Crews	7	78	123
Engines	33	193	280
Helicopters	4	36	48
Total FF/Overhead	444	3,248	4,865

Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2007-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	25,437	26,813	- 1,376
Year-to-Date Acres	1,845,444	1,501,521	+ 343,923

Sources: [National Interagency Fire Center](#).

News From Around Washington

Reports on official actions and activities 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

Administration Announces \$256 Million In NPS Construction Projects

On June 6th, the Department of the Interior issued a press release announcing more than \$256 million in approved funding to rebuild critical national park infrastructure. Here's are excerpts from the release:

"The [infrastructure funding] list includes projects like the repair of the Arlington Memorial Bridge in D.C., the visitor access upgrade at Herring Cove Beach at the Cape Cod National Seashore, and the rehabilitation of the Elkmont Waste Water System at Great Smoky Mountains National Park – dire maintenance and repair needs that contribute to the \$11.6 billion backlog currently facing the nation's national parks.

"Roads, bridges, trails, water systems and visitor centers – even bathrooms, campgrounds and drinking fountains—are all part of this critical, but often unnoticed, infrastructure framework. In 2017, 330 million people visited the 417 NPS sites across the country. The NPS completed over \$650 million in maintenance and repair work in Fiscal Year 2017, but aging facilities, high visitation, and resource constraints have kept the maintenance backlog between \$11 billion and \$12 billion since 2010..."

The news release, [available at this link](#), includes a list of the approved FY 2018 projects

Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Capitol Hill Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate

On June 5th, the Senate agreed to S. Res. 534, supporting the goals and ideals of "National Travel and Tourism Week" and honoring the valuable contributions of travel and tourism to the United States.

On June 5th, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to examine the 2018 wildland fire outlook and the wildland fire management programs at the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service. Jeffery Rupert, Director, Office of Wildland Fire, was the witness for the department.

On June 6th, the Senate passed:

- H.R. 88, to modify the boundary of the Shiloh National Military Park located in Tennessee and Mississippi to establish Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the National Park System. The Senate amended the bill to authorize land acquisition by donation or exchange only.
- H.R. 1397, to authorize a land exchange between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center of the Federal Highway Administration to allow better access to the center. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.
- S. 1692, to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.

On June 14th, the Committee on Appropriations is scheduled to mark up the FY 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

House

As noted in the weekly report published on May 24th, the House passed H.R. 5515, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2019. When the final bill was compiled with the amendments adopted by the House during debate on the bill, additional provisions affecting the National Park Service were found. The NPS-relevant provisions are as follows:

- Sec. 342, to amend the boundary of Shiloh National Military Park to include the Fallen Timbers, Russell House, and Davis Bridge battlefields, and to establish the Parker's Crossroads Battlefield as an affiliated area of the national park system.
- Sec. 1076, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the National Aviation Heritage Area in Ohio through September 30, 2025.
- Sec. 1099E, to require the secretary of defense to provide for the inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in DC the names of the 74 crew members of the *USS Frank B. Evans* killed on June 3, 1969.
- Sec. 2832, to designate one acre of land, the Mormon Peak Microwave Facility, within Death Valley National Park, as potential wilderness.
- Sec. 2845, to establish a grant program for the preservation of our nation's most historic battleships, which are defined as those between 75 to 115 years old, listed on the National

Register of Historic Places, and located within the state for which it was named, with a requirement for a one-to-one non-federal match, and with a sunset date of September 30, 2025 (it appears that this language is directed to a specific ship or ships in a particular state).

- Sec. 2847, to authorize the Society of the First Infantry Division to make modifications to the First Division Monument located in Presidents Park in DC.
- Sec. 3549, to modify the boundary of White Sands National Monument to include 2,826 of lands from the adjacent White Sands Missile Range and to include 5,766 acres of lands currently outside the boundary. The bill also transfers 3,737 acres of national monument land to the White Sands Missile Range.
- Sec. 6101, to authorize the secretary of the interior to establish fees for medical services provided inside and outside of units of the National Park System. Under current law, fees collected for medical services provided to visitors and park employees in about a dozen remote western parks must be returned to the treasury. This legislation establishes a fund within the treasury for these fees, which can then be used at the parks where they are collected. However, the fees will still have to be appropriated by Congress each year, making this legislation less than optimal for the parks involved.

On June 5th, the House passed the following:

- H.R. 1026, to revise the authorized route of the North Country National Scenic Trail in northeastern Minnesota and to extend the trail into Vermont to connect with the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.
- H.R. 2991, to establish the Susquehanna National Heritage Area in the State of Pennsylvania, by a vote of 373 yeas to 9 nays.
- H.R. 5005, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the birthplace of James Weldon Johnson in Jacksonville, Florida, as a unit of the National Park System, by a vote of 374 yeas to 5 nays.
- H.R. 5655, to establish the Camp Nelson Heritage National Monument in the State of Kentucky as a unit of the National Park System, upon sufficient lands being acquired to constitute a manageable unit and upon donation of the land. The bill passed by a vote of 376 yeas to 4 nays.
- H.R. 801, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Route 66 National Historic Trail.
- H.R. 3997, to waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans demonstrations and special events at war memorials on Federal land.

On June 6th, the Committee on Appropriations held a markup of the FY 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The bill was ordered reported, as amended by a vote of 25 yeas to 20 nays. Among other amendments, the following were adopted by the committee at the markup:

- An amendment to prohibit funding to reintroduce grizzly bears into certain areas in the State of Washington.
- An amendment to prohibit funding for the EPA to purchase fountain pens costing more than \$50 each.

The bill appropriates \$3.25 billion for NPS in FY 2019, which is an increase of \$53 million above the FY 2018 level, and which is well above the president's proposed \$2.4 billion. The bill includes the following funding levels:

- Operations of the National Park System (ONPS) - \$2.527 billion (\$2.4 billion in FY 2018). The bill includes a \$50 million increase for park operations. In the committee report to accompany the bill, the committee noted that NPS policy on plastic water bottle use has been inconsistent and they require NPS to allow both the purchase of water in plastic bottles as well as the use of water filling stations.

- Natural Recreation and Preservation Programs (NRP) - \$63.6 million (same as FY 2018). Within this account, the committee stated it had continued funding at the FY 2018 levels for a number of grant programs, including several that the administration wanted to zero out, such as the National Heritage Areas program, the Chesapeake Gateways and Water Trails program, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation program, the Japanese American Confinement Sites program, and the American Battlefield Protection program.
- Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) - \$91.9 million (\$96.9 million in FY 2018). Within the Historic Preservation account, funding levels are as follows: \$48.9 million for State Historic Preservation Offices and \$11.48 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, equal to the fiscal year 2018 enacted level. The bill also provides the following grant program funding at the fiscal year 2018 enacted level: \$13.5 million for competitive grants of which \$500,000 is for grants to underserved communities and \$13 million is for competitive grants to document, interpret, and preserve historical sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement; \$5 million for competitive grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); and \$13 million for the Save America's Treasures competitive grant program for preservation of nationally significant sites, structures, and artifacts.
- Construction - \$369.3 million (\$359.7 million in FY 2018)
- Land Acquisition (LWCF) - \$172.36 million (\$180 million in FY 2018). Within the land acquisition account, funding is provided as follows: \$100 million for State Conservation Grants; \$20 million for the competitive Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) grant program; \$22 million for federal land acquisition; \$10 million for the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), equal to the fiscal year 2018 enacted level; \$4 million for inholdings, donations, and exchanges and the Park Service is encouraged to prioritize acquiring inholdings at national battlefield parks.
- Centennial Challenge - \$30 million (\$23 million in FY 2018). Within the \$30 million provided for the Centennial Challenge, NPS is directed to make \$5 million available to the National Park Foundation to help leverage additional funding for projects.
- Chesapeake Bay Initiative – The bill includes authorizing language to extend the initiative by another year through FY 2020, and the federal lands fee program (FLERA) through FY 2021

A number of bad riders on clean water, delisting the gray wolf, not allowing the Trestles Historic District (California) to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and a few others are in the bill again this year. It is expected that some of them will drop out when the bill reaches the Senate or in conference just as they did last year.

On June 6th, the Committee on Natural Resources marked up, among other bills, H.R. 5751, to redesignate the Golden Spike National Historic Site as the Golden Spike National Historical Park, and to establish the Transcontinental Railroad Network, which shall consist of all units and programs of the National Park Service that are determined by the secretary to relate to the history, construction, and legacy of the Transcontinental Railroad and other Federal, State, local, and privately-owned properties that have a verifiable connection to the railroad. The network would also produce and disseminate appropriate educational materials relating to the railroad, and be authorized to enter into appropriate cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding to provide technical assistance to related properties, and to create and adopt an official, uniform symbol or device for the network.

On June 6th, the Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on four draft discussion bills that had not yet been introduced as follows:

- Discussion Draft H.R. ____, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to recover the cost of processing administrative protests for oil and gas lease sales, applications for permits to drill, and right of way applications.
- Discussion Draft H.R. ____, to clarify the categorical exclusions authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and authorize additional categorical exclusions to streamline the oil and gas permitting process.
- Discussion Draft H.R. ____, to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to authorize notifications of permit to drill.

- Discussion Draft H.R. ____, to clarify that Bureau of Land Management shall not require permits for oil and gas activities conducted on non-Federal surface estate to access subsurface mineral estate that is less than 50 percent Federally owned, and for other purposes.

Katharine MacGregor, deputy assistant secretary for land and minerals management was the witness for the department.

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

Park People, Friends and Allies

Channel Islands National Park Russ Galipeau Retires Following 40 Years With NPS

Superintendent Russell Galipeau retired on Friday, June 1st, bringing to a conclusion his 40-year career with the National Park Service, the last 15 at Channel Islands.

He was 18 and working in St. Augustine for the state of Florida across from the Castillo de San Marcos when he made the move to the National Park Service.

“A ranger walked over and told me: You could get paid more money if you wanted to do historic interpretation across the street at the old fort,” Galipeau said.

Soon after, he was doing living history for the agency. After college, he went to work at the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. From there, being a biologist by training, he sought out positions managing natural resources.

Galipeau did field work in the Everglades National Park and with a sea turtle program at Canaveral National Seashore. He also worked at a regional office working with small parks before heading to Alaska, then on to Yosemite in the 1990s.

First up in retirement, Galipeau plans to head up to Alaska, where his wife, Margie Steigerwald, is working. But then he'll be back in Ventura County, where his youngest daughter, Maya, will start her junior year in high school next fall. His older daughter, Amy, teaches in Malibu.

Source: [VC Star](#)

Booker T. Washington National Monument Superintendent Carla Whitfield Has Retired

Carla Whitfield has retired from her role as superintendent of Booker T. Washington National Monument following 25 years with the NPS. Her last day was May 25th.

Whitfield began her service as superintendent of Booker T. Washington National Monument in 2009 on Juneteenth, a day celebrating the end of slavery in the United States.

Accomplishments during her tenure included a new film and exhibits, infrastructure upgrades, the planting of the park's Giving Garden, the creation of a Living History Guild, and the Booker T. Washington National Monument Research Institute.

Whitfield said that she would not have been able to achieve any of her accomplishments without the help of many others.

“We all pulled our plows together and we furrowed and we grew,” Whitfield said. “We planted the seeds and we grew it--we grew a mighty harvest. Everyone sitting in this room has something to do with that. And you're just losing one person, so the spirit is still in the room ... one person leaves, the spirit is still here.”

Source: [Smith Mountain Eagle](#).

Yosemite National Park “Boots” Davenport Receives Aviation Safety Award

Assistant Helitack Foreman Andrew “Boots” Davenport has been named the recipient of this year’s Wright Brothers National Aviation Safety Award. This is award is given annually to aviation specialists who exemplify excellence in the field of aviation safety. The following is taken from his citation:

Andrew Davenport was nominated by his peers for his impeccable commitment to his job, which ensures the safety of his co-workers, local community members, park visitors, and the national firefighting community. Andrew dedicates his time and energy during the busy wildfire and search and rescue seasons to provide expertise and supervision for seven-day coverage for the helicopter in Yosemite National Park. His peers from multiple agencies, supervisors, and management throughout Yosemite National Park recognize Andrew’s personable leadership style, his positive attitude, willingness to collaborate, and commitment to safety on the job.

During the 2017 fire season, Andrew’s critical decision making skills were instrumental while responding to multiple interagency incidents, including the Detwiler Fire, South Fork Fire, Empire Fire, and several highly technical search and rescue operations. Andrew has also worked to better integrate the NPS and the U.S. Forest Service short-haul programs as an extraction tool to help save lives while working on an active fire line.

Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)

News Reports and Releases

A brief summary of recent news stories, web postings and agency press releases pertaining to the federal government, the administration, DOI, the National Park Service, public lands and the climate and environment.

Government and Administration

Interior’s Forced Move Of Yellowstone’s Dan Wenk Ignites Firestorm – DOI’s decision to forcibly move Superintendent Dan Wenk out of Yellowstone, which led to his decision to retire, has drawn outraged comments from numerous people and publications. Perhaps the most comprehensive article on this action is a Todd Wilkinson piece in *Mountain Journal* entitled “Forced Out Of Yellowstone.” Here are excerpts from the opening paragraphs: “Against his will, in violation of an informal ‘gentleman’s agreement,’ and amid public outrage, Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Dan Wenk has received notification from the U.S. Interior Department informing him that he is being forcibly re-assigned to a regional director post with the National Park Service in Washington D.C... Wenk told *Mountain Journal* (last) Thursday he finds the actions heavy-handed and untenable. Instead, he will step down from government service in the coming weeks. ‘It’s a hell of a way to be treated at the end of four decades spent trying to do my best for the Park Service and places like Yellowstone but that’s how these guys are,’ Wenk said, referring to Zinke’s Interior Department. ‘Throughout my career, I’ve not encountered anything like this, ever.’” A full reading of the article (link below) is recommended in order to understand the discussions and actions that have taken place over the past few months and to see copies of the relevant memoranda, which are attached to the piece. Sources: [Mountain Journal](#).

More National Park Disruption Expected After Yellowstone Shakeup – Among those commenting on DOI’s actions against Wenk was Coalition Chair Phil Francis, who was quoted by the Public News Service in a June 11th article. “Phil Francis, who chairs the Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks, says the nation’s parks and visitors will end up paying the biggest price, as more staff members are either forced out or choose to leave on their own. ‘And when they leave the service, they take with them an enormous amount of experience, an enormous amount of institutional memory,’ Francis

states. These parks are complex. These parks are difficult to manage, in many cases.” Phil then talks about the implications of the Department’s action: “Francis says transferring senior staff for no reason isn't good management, and he worries the moves will have a chilling effect – a signal that if staff members don't go along with Zinke's political agenda, their jobs could be at risk. Affecting morale that's already low in an agency being asked to do more with less, Francis says Wenk's dismissal will also make it harder to recruit strong candidates. ‘Maybe people will be less likely to apply for jobs, if they think that there's going to be political consequences to their decisions, as opposed to adhering to the National Park Service policy and the law by which we're supposed to manage these parks...”

Source: [Public News Service](#).

National Park System

‘Death Of Solitude’ In The West – The *Canyon Country Zephyr*, an independent newspaper that covers Western environmental issues, has a thoughtful and provocative article in its June/July issue by writer and “traditional environmentalist” Jim Stiles about the “death of solitude” in the new West, particularly its national parks. He attributes the massive overcrowding in so many parks (illustrated with some telling photos) to the “Disneyfication of Wilderness” and to a “disturbing disconnect between a new generation of Americans and the natural world,” in which people no longer understand the purpose and value of quiet and solitude. “As technology continues to shrink the world, its newer citizens embrace the collective over the solitary,” he writes. “Solitude feels like isolation for many in 2018 and it has no place in the Brave New West. We all cherish the shared experience, but there was always a need for the empty room. Now the need recedes. ‘Rugged Individualism’ has been in decline for decades. Now it’s in its death throes. And so, we offer a lament, as the love and longing for the quiet moment, passed along from generation to generation, for more than a century, from Thoreau to Muir to Leopold to Abbey, draws to a close. The solitude is there, if you know where to look for it, but who’s looking? And who would notice or care if it went away?” Source: [Canyon Country Zephyr](#).

Around The Parks – Brief reports on parks, culled either from park press releases or from newspapers:

- *Everglades NP* – The *South Florida Sun Sentinel* has a report on the escalating effort to remove invasive pythons from the park: “The roar of shotguns will sound in Everglades National Park, as the war intensifies against the Burmese pythons that have devastated the park’s wildlife. The park announced Thursday that for the first time it will allow state-contracted python hunters to pursue the giant snakes within its boundaries. And for the first time, it will allow the use of firearms — shotguns only — to kill them. Although the park already uses more than two dozen of its own volunteers to catch pythons, the new initiative will triple the maximum number of snake hunters from 40 to 120.” Source: [South Florida Sun Sentinel](#).
- *Flight 93 NM* – WITF, a PBS station in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, reports that the remaining wreckage from United Flight 93 will be returned this year to the memorial marking where it crashed in the 9/11 terror attacks. The wreckage, which is being stored in shipping containers, will be buried in a restricted area of the park that's accessible only to loved ones of the victims.” Source: [WITF News](#).
- *Saguaro NP* – In 2006, 26-year-old Jake Quilter suffered a fatal heart attack while hiking in the park. He worked as part of Saguaro’s trail crew. Although a dozen years have passed, his family and friends have not forgotten him. Every year, his older brother, Casey, and his family join 30 friends and relatives to remember him and do something in his honor. This year it was joining a huge effort to cleanup the shores of Chesapeake Bay. In just three hours, about 6,000 volunteers on foot and in boats removed 128,817 pounds of litter and debris from about 312 miles of shoreline. Jake Quilter worked for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation during the summer while home from the University of Tennessee; after graduating, he worked for the National Park Service at Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Olympic, and Saguaro national parks. Source: [The Virginian-Pilot](#).

- *Point Reyes NS* – The *East Bay Express*, a paper that serves the Berkley-Oakland area, reports that Point Reyes ranchers have created a lobbying group “to weaken protections for public lands” in general and Point Reyes NS in particular. “A small and slightly mysterious agricultural lobbying group that surfaced recently in Marin County has community members, naturalists, and environmentalist organizations on edge. The Resilient Agriculture Group (RAG), fronted by several local figures known for pro-farming political positions, first appeared in early January and is working with lawmakers in Washington, D.C. to amend existing federal restrictions on the use of public lands for grazing cattle.” Source: [East Bay Express](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – A \$19 million improvement project at Jenny Lake is entering its fifth and final construction season. The work will enhance the South Jenny Lake developed area and the west shore of the park's most-visited destination. The project includes newly reconstructed trails, a new paved path leading from the visitor center to the lake shore, new viewpoints, benches, and interpretive exhibits. Source: [KIDK News](#).
- *Harriet Tubman NHP* – The first park rangers have been assigned to Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, more than a year after its creation. With three rangers now onsite, the Tubman home will be open an additional day each week. The site is usually open Tuesday through Saturday, but closed Sunday and Monday; it will now be open on Sunday as well, when visitation is highest in the summertime. Source: [Auburnpub.com](#).
- *Castillo de San Marcos NM* – The park has hired a lab in Texas to clean and preserve 25 cannons from its collection. The cannons will be shipped to Jacksonville and placed into trucks and then taken to Texas A&M’s Conservation Research Laboratory, where they’ll be cleaned and treated to help prevent corrosion. Fourteen cannons from the fort gun deck, grounds and headquarters building will be treated first; after those cannons are finished and reinstalled in about two years, 11 more cannons from the Castillo de San Marcos grounds and Fort Matanzas National Monument will go to Texas for treatment. Source: [St. Augustine Record](#).
- *Gulf Islands NS* – Due to extensive structural damage caused by termites, the park is removing the Star Pavilion at Rosamond Johnson Beach. Work began this past Monday. A portion of the Johnson Beach parking lot will be closed during the demolition and paving. All work will be completed on or before June 29th. Source: [Northwest Florida Daily News](#).
- *National Mall* – Heavy rains and high tide caused the Potomac River and the Tidal Basin to flood onto the National Mall on June 8th, which lead a visiting fisherman to try his luck there, as he knew that there would be plenty of bugs and grubs in the Mall waters that would interest fish. Sure enough, he caught a good-sized carp. See the following link for a photo of fisherman and fish. Anyone know if there’s any precedent for catching fish on the National Mall? Source: [Washington Post](#).

Public Comments Solicited – A listing of planned actions in parks open to public comment, arranged in chronological order by their closing dates. New entries are in **dark red**:

- *Big Bend Backcountry Management Plan Update* – The park is updating its 1995 backcountry management plan, which directs park management on wilderness and backcountry use topics, including backpacking, primitive car camping, backcountry use limits, and other considerations. Closes: June 18th. [PEPC link](#).
- *Acadia Draft Transportation Plan and EIS* – The NPS invites the public to provide feedback on the range of management alternatives and potential environmental impacts identified in the Draft Transportation Plan and EIS. Closes: June 26th. [PEPC link](#).
- *Oregon Caves Preserve Management Plan* – The park is seeking public comment on the management plan and environmental assessment for the recently designated national preserve, as well as a wild and scenic river study. The legislation that created the 4,070 acre preserve was signed into law on December 19, 2014. This plan addresses management of roads, trails,

commercial activities, hunting, hiking, use of pack animals, and backcountry camping, among other things. Closes: July 2nd. [PEPC link](#).

- *Hunting and Trapping in National Preserves in Alaska* – An NPS-proposed rulemaking entitled “Alaska; Hunting and Trapping in National Preserves” was posted in the May 22nd edition of the Federal Register. Here’s the synopsis: “The National Park Service proposes to amend its regulations for sport hunting and trapping in national preserves in Alaska. This proposed rule would remove a regulatory provision issued by the National Park Service in 2015 that prohibited certain sport hunting practices that are otherwise permitted by the State of Alaska. These proposed changes are consistent with Secretary of the Interior Orders 3347 and 3356.” The notice provides background information on the proposed revision and details on the changes that will be made to 36 CFR 13.42. Closes: July 23rd. [Federal Register link](#).
- *Space Coast Trail Bike Path* – The Coast to Coast trail network is at its core designed to complement and enhance existing and planned recreation areas. The Space Coast Trail portion of the overall trail would provide a link to/from larger recreation areas such as Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Canaveral National Seashore, Parrish Park, Haulover Canal and other numerous sites currently permitted for public use. Closes: August 31st. [PEPC link](#).

From The Archives

This section contains news and incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week 25 years ago. This week we go back to the end of May and beginning of June, 1993. All entries appear in the original verb tense.

- *Hawaii Volcanoes National Park* – Rangers Jeffrey Judd and Neil Akana and a Hawaii County police officer have broken an extensive burglary-theft ring which has been responsible for three thefts in Kilauea Military Camp [located inside the park] and at least seven burglaries in the Volcano Village, Volcano Golf Course, and Mauna Loa Estates subdivisions adjacent to the park. The investigation stemmed from an incident in which a compact disc player and discs had been stolen from a car parked at the military camp. The ring was comprised of six juveniles between the ages of 11 and 15. One was carrying a .38 caliber reproduction weapon which investigators believe was used in strong arm robberies of younger children on the base and in the community. The investigation is continuing; more burglary and theft cases will likely be closed.
- *Canyonlands National Park* – On the afternoon of June 3rd, rangers recovered the body of a 52-year-old Moab man from the lower end of Cataract Canyon. When found, he was still wearing a full wet suit with a hood, a life jacket, boaters' gloves, and one swim fin. The man, who was an experienced Colorado River rafter and commercial river runner, had hiked into the canyon with the intention of swimming the 13 miles of rapids that run through the park. He was last seen around lunchtime by another group of rafters who visited with him about three miles upstream from the point where his body was recovered near Rapid 24. His body was flown out of the canyon and taken to Moab. This is the fourth fatality associated with Cataract Canyon this year. Two victims who disappeared and presumably drowned last weekend are still missing. A shoreline search along the river and upper reaches of Lake Powell is still underway in an effort to find the two men. The Colorado River was flowing at 65,600 cfs (cubic feet per second) yesterday. Recent levels have been the highest on the river since 1984, when the river peaked at 109,600 cfs. Experience has shown that critical water levels occur between 60,000 cfs and 80,000 cfs. From 80,000 cfs to 90,000 cfs, some of the rapids flatten out; above 90,000 cfs, the larger rapids get much larger. Temporary restrictions were implemented on May 18th to prohibit rowing trips without a motorized support vessel at least as big as a 22-foot Baby J-rig. No single boat trips are authorized regardless of the size of the boat. In addition to these restrictions, river rangers have established a spike camp below the Big Drop rapids of Cataract Canyon to assist both private and commercial boaters after they attempt their run through this notorious stretch of Class V whitewater. Between May 11th and Memorial Day weekend, a total of 54 private permit rafts and kayaks ran Cataract; of these, 23

flipped in the rapids. Rangers rescued or otherwise assisted 37 individuals by plucking them from the water, transporting them from shore to their recovered rafts, and retrieving free-floating property. During the same period, five rafts on commercial trips flipped and dumped 19 individuals into the river. Most flips occurred in Big Drop 2. Along with the four fatalities recorded so far during this boating season, there's also been one case of severed dehydration and several injuries, including a dislocated shoulder, a broken ankle and minor head injuries.

- *Yosemite National Park* – On May 25th, rangers received a report of a body lying at the top of a talus slope in the LeConte Gully area. They found the remains of a 49-year-old Miami man at the top of the slope about 800 feet above the valley floor. The man had been reported missing by fellow campers on May 18th when he failed to return from a day climb. He reportedly had no climbing experience and failed to tell anyone where he was going or when he intended to return. The investigation revealed that he fell about 300 feet down a nearly vertical slope. Recovery of the body required the use of technical rock climbing equipment due to the angle of the slope and hazardous conditions at the site. Search and rescue volunteers and rangers Keith McAuliffe, Cameron Sholly and Jessica Rust assisted SAR officer Mike Ray with the recovery. The death has been ruled accidental.

Acknowledgements

This newsletter comes to you through the efforts of a number of people:

- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith and Duncan Morrow

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

"National parks constitute a gallery of American treasures. They are more than destinations; they are a way of travel. In an era of growing population and shrinking space, they become ever more valuable. The future of the national parks, however, depends on awareness, concern, and sense of custody of the public they serve. In a democracy, we get what we deserve and leave a legacy that reflects ourselves and our time."

[Michael Frome](#), *National Parks in Crisis*, 1981

* * * * *

The *Weekly National Park System Report* is a publication of The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. 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](#).

--- ### ---