



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

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

Volume 2

Number 24

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### Incidents

#### **Yosemite National Park Yosemite Valley, Wawona Closing Today Due To Nearby Fire**

The 38,000-acre Ferguson Fire, which is burning along a broad swath of the Sequoia National Forest along the park's western border, is having a major impact on the park.

Yosemite Valley and Wawona are closing to the public at noon today. These closures include all hotels, campgrounds, and visitor services in Yosemite Valley and Wawona.

With the ongoing closure of Highway 140, park visitors can exit the park via Highways 120 and 41. The temporary closure is expected to last until Sunday. The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is also closed.

Since the fire began on Friday, July 13th, several other park facilities and roads have been closed due to fire impacts and the need to support firefighting operations. These closures include the Glacier Point Road, Bridalveil Creek Campground, the Wawona Campground, the Merced Grove of Giant Sequoias and others.

Highways 120 West and East and the Tuolumne Meadows area remain open at this time.

Updated 24-hour road and weather conditions can be obtained 209-372-0200 (press 1 and press 1 again) and on the park's website at [www.nps.gov/yose](http://www.nps.gov/yose).

Source: [Yosemite National Park](http://www.nps.gov/yose).

#### **Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Eruption Continues Unabated; Most Of Park Remains Closed**

Most of the park remains closed due to frequent damaging earthquakes, corrosive volcanic ash, and continuing explosions from Halema'uma'u, the summit crater of Kilauea Volcano. Fissure 8, located outside of the park, continues to erupt lava into the channel leading northeastward from the vent and to the ocean. [See this map](#) for the current extent of the flows.

On July 16th, a tour boat operator found out just how dangerous an eruption can be. A "lava bomb" at the ocean entry in lower Puna injured 23 people aboard a lava tour boat operating outside of park boundaries. It punctured the roof of the boat and covered it with lava. Four people were taken by ambulance to the hospital after the boat docked in Hilo; nine of those injured were able to drive

themselves to the emergency room, and another ten passengers were treated at the harbor for superficial injuries.

Sources: [Hawaii Volcanoes NP](#); [Hawaii Volcanoes Observatory](#); [Hawaii Tribune-Herald](#).

### **Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Cruise Ship Passenger Disappears After Falling Overboard**

A 69-year-old passenger on the Holland America ship *Westerdam* was determined to be missing on Friday, July 13th, when he failed to show up for a shipboard medical appointment. A search revealed he wasn't on the ship and had presumably fallen overboard.

The park was notified that evening and began an air and water search of Bartlett Cove, where the incident occurred. The Coast Guard assisted. No sign of the man was found.

The Coast Guard will conduct an investigation.

Source: [KTVA News](#).

### **Rocky Mountain National Park Formal Search For Missing Hiker Suspended**

The NPS search for Brian Perri, 38, who was reported missing on July 5th, nearly a week after he went hiking in the park, has been suspended, but family members are continuing to look for him.

Perri sent a friend a photo of himself on the 13,911-foot summit of Mount Meeker. He was intending only to go day hiking and did not have a tent or camping equipment with him. According to his family, however, he'd gone through Army survival training.

Rescue crews searched for more than a week for Perri; although they have ended their efforts in the field, an investigation continues. With no Rocky Mountain search teams on the ground, Perri's friends and family have organized their own effort.

Perri is 5 feet 9 inches tall and was last seen wearing a tan full-brim hat, sunglasses and a red backpack. He may also be wearing a yellow puffy jacket or yellow rain jacket. Searchers are asking anyone who has been hiking in the Mount Meeker area and saw Perri or other clues, including abandoned gear, to call 970-586-1204.

Source: [Boulder Daily Camera](#).

### **Haleakala National Park Woman Assaulted At Haleakala Crater**

A woman reported being assaulted at Haleakala Crater on Sunday, July 15th. At the time of the report (July 16th), rangers were actively searching the entire crater for the man with the assistance of the Maui Police Department and the state Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The woman's assailant is described as a five-foot, nine-inch tall male in his mid- to late 30s, wearing black pants and a black T-shirt.

Visitor access to the crater from the summit and Kipahulu districts was closed through Wednesday afternoon. No cabin or backcountry camping permits will be issued until further notice. Visitors may still access all frontcountry areas of the summit and Kipahulu districts, including the Pipiwai Trail.

Source: [Honolulu Star Advertiser](#).

### **Death Valley National Park Man Pleads Guilty To ESA Violation In Devils Pupfish Case**

A man accused of harming endangered pupfish in Death Valley National Park pleaded guilty in federal court on Wednesday, July 18th.

Trenton Sargent, 28, pleaded guilty to one count of violation of the Endangered Species Act, one count of destruction of United States property, and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Sentencing is scheduled for October 25th. The maximum penalty for the ESA violation, a criminal misdemeanor, is up to one year in prison and up to a \$50,000 fine. The maximum penalty for destroying United States property and being a felon in possession of a firearm, both felonies, is up to ten years in prison and up to a \$250,000 fine per count.

Devils Hole, a detached unit of Death Valley National Park, is located in Amargosa Valley, Nevada, within a 40-acre parcel of National Park Service land surrounded by the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. Devils Hole is the only location in the world where Devils Hole pupfish exist in the wild. They are the descendants of fish that inhabited an ancient lake that once covered Death Valley.

According to court documents, Sargent admitted that on April 30, 2016, he and two co-defendants rammed the fence surrounding Devils Hole with their ATV, severely damaging the gate. Sargent then fired a Mossberg 500 shotgun at the padlock on the gate, attempting to gain access.

After their attempts were unsuccessful, the men scaled the fence. Once in the enclosed area, they destroyed a sensor center for cameras and equipment for the area, and destroyed a video surveillance camera belonging to the National Park Service. Sargent then went into the water and smashed pupfish eggs and larvae during the peak spawning season for pupfish.

Two other men, Edgar Reyes, 37, and Steven Schwinkendorf, 31, who were with Sargent at Devils Hole during the time of the crimes, previously pleaded guilty to destruction of government property and violation of the Endangered Species Act. They were each sentenced to one year probation.

The investigation was conducted by the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nye County Sheriff's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony Lopez.

Source: [KTNV News](#).

### **Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Hikers and Kayakers Rescued In Separate Incidents**

On Saturday, July 14th, a Coast Guard Air Station Sitka MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew helped the park extricate two hikers after one of them suffered a leg injury. The hikers were taken to awaiting emergency medical services in Sitka.

The next day, the Coast Guard got an alert that a PLB had been activated in Glacier Bay and determined that it had been triggered after a kayaker – one of a group of four – fell into the water. The park led the search effort, but asked the Coast Guard help them out. Coast Guard Cutter *Douglas Munro* and an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter crew joined the search. The kayakers were found safe on shore, waving their arms for help. They were taken about the cutter. All were in good health.

The fact that the cutter was even in the region was fortunate. The *Douglas Munro* is homeported in Kodiak, but is currently on a three-month patrol that will encompass the Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean as part of Operation Arctic Shield 2018, as well as the Gulf of Alaska. Arctic Shield 2018, according to an earlier release from the Coast Guard, is meant to increase maritime awareness and understanding of the risks of the sea.

Source: [Juneau Empire](#).

### **Kings Canyon National Park Climber Rescued, Second Climber Dies On Pacific Crest Trail**

A 30-year-old man died and another was trapped while hiking on the John Muir Trail/Pacific Crest Trail near Center Peak on July 12th.

The two men had been climbing park peaks during the day. Around 4 p.m., the park received a satellite device call from a hiker who reported someone calling for help about halfway up the peak on the northwest side. The hiker was unable to make direct contact due to the terrain and bad weather.

Rangers responded and found a 37-year-old man who had been hiking with a friend. He was uninjured but unable to ascend or descend from his location. A helicopter was requested, and the man was evacuated.

At about 6:30 p.m. rangers found the other man and confirmed he was dead. His body was recovered the following day and transferred to the Tulare County Coroner's Office. The cause of death has not been released.

Rangers have completed about 20 more search-and-rescue operations this year than they did in mid-July last year. The park reminded hikers that monsoon-type weather can happen unexpectedly and bring lightning, strong winds and heavy rains.

Source: [Fresno Bee](#).

### **Glacier National Park Camping Restrictions In Place At Many Glacier CG Due To Grizzly**

A trout-stealing grizzly bear has prompted camping restrictions at Many Glacier Campground, one of the park's most popular frontcountry campgrounds. The park has issued a temporary ban on tents and soft-sided campers in the midst of what's predicted to be a record-breaking month for visitation.

The Many Glacier Campground was temporarily limited to hard-sided camping, including camper vehicles such as Volkswagen buses and pickup trucks with small canvas pop-ups, which are allowed as long as the canvas is not exposed.

The restrictions were put into place after an incident on June 29th when a small grizzly bear weighing approximately 150 pounds made its way into the campground, crossed a stream and entered into a campsite. It compelled two campers to move away from a picnic table where they were cleaning freshly-caught brook trout.

One of the campers sprayed the grizzly with bear spray from a distance of 15 feet, but it was ineffective in deterring the bear's approach. The bear proceeded to climb on top of the picnic table and consume the fish. It also sniffed, pawed and bit two nearby backpacks.

Responding rangers employed hazing techniques to encourage the bear to move out of the campground. Prior to its departure, it dug into two fire pits, sniffed picnic tables, a tent, and an RV with visitors inside.

The bear exhibited numerous signs of food-conditioning and met the definition of a conditioned bear in the park's bear management guidelines. A non-conditioned bear would typically not enter a campsite with people present and would not resist human attempts to scare it away. Food-conditioned bears are usually removed from the population by being placed in zoos or euthanized, hence the phrase "a fed bear is a dead bear." As of the time of the story (July 9th), the bear had not yet been located.

Source: [Flathead Beacon](#).

### **Olympic National Park Two Arrested For Stealing From Fee Collection Boxes**

Randy Eastman, 30, and Brianne Decker, 28, are each facing federal misdemeanor charges after rangers arrested them around 3:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 14th, as they were attempting to remove entrance fee money from a fee canister in the Sol Duc Valley.

Rangers, who were aware of previous thefts in the area, caught the pair in the act. Eastman and Decker admitted to stealing from the lock boxes throughout the park on other occasions as well.

The charges filed in federal court accuse the pair of stealing from canisters June 30th, July 1st, July 8th and July 9th and attempting to steal again on July 14th. The exact amount of money stolen from the fee canisters on the various occasions has not yet been determined.

Eastman is charged with four counts of theft of government property, one count of attempted theft of government property, one count of possession of burglary tools and one count of simple possession of methamphetamine. Decker is charged with one count of theft of government property and one count of attempted theft of government property.

Source: [Peninsula Daily News](#).

## **National Fire Situation**

### **National Interagency Fire Center National Fire Preparedness Level Raised To PL 4**

#### **Synopsis**

NIFC is now at Preparedness Level 4.

Due to increased significant wildland fire activity from central Texas to Washington, the commitment of additional incident management teams, and an increasing potential for new and emerging significant wildland fires forecast for several geographic areas, the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group at NIFC increased the national preparedness level to PL 4 this past Sunday.

#### **National Park Service Fires**

Significant fires are currently burning in these two national parks:

- *Crater Lake National Park* – The Timber Crater 6 Fire is actively burning in mixed conifer in the remote northeast corner of Crater Lake National Park. A Type 2 IMT (Goff) is managing the fire; 588 firefighters and overhead personnel are assigned. The fire had burned 2,010 acres as of Monday and was 15% contained. It's burning mostly in lodge pole pine with a large amount of dead and down timber. This fire is one of several fires ignited by lightning in and around the park on Sunday, July 15th. There are currently no closures in the park. For more information, go to [this InciWeb site](#).
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* – The lightning-caused Horse Creek Fire is burning in steep, rugged terrain with no recent fire history across the canyon south of the Mineral King Road. Due to its location and high spread potential, this fire is receiving a full suppression response. The park is managing the fire; 119 overhead personnel and firefighters are assigned. The fire has burned 30 acres in timber, brush and short grass and is 17% contained. The fire is highly visible for several miles on the south side of the Mineral King Road. The road is very narrow and winding, and traffic conditions have been exacerbated by visitor interest in seeing and photographing the fire from the road. In order to provide for visitor, resident, and firefighter safety during this time of emergency response, the public is being asked to consider alternative recreation options other than Mineral King in order to keep traffic to a minimum. Neither the road nor any structures are directly threatened by the fire, however, so the road remains open. For more information, see [this news story](#) in the *Visalia Times-Delta* or [this InciWeb site](#).

## Active Incident Resource Commitments

Category	July 10th	July 15th	July 24th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	1	0	0
Type 1 Teams	5	2	3
Type 2 Teams	8	4	11
Crews	374	172	428
Engines	871	496	873
Helicopters	136	74	123
Total FF/Overhead	15,162	7,994	15,489

## Fires/Acreage

Category	2018 Total	2007-2017 Ave	2018 Variance
Year-to-Date Fires	35,572	37,628	- 2,056
Year-to-Date Acres	3,682,740	3,494,797	+ 187,943

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.

### **Capitol Hill Weekly Legislative Roundup**

#### ***New Public Laws***

Nothing to report.

#### ***Senate***

On July 17th, the Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine an original bill entitled "Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018." There was no witness from the department at this hearing.

On July 19th, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held an oversight hearing to examine the Administration's reorganization and modernization proposals related to the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior. Susan Combs, senior advisor to the secretary of the interior was the witness for the department.

#### ***House***

On July 19th, the House passed H.R. 6147, the FY 2019 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill by a vote of 217 yeas to 199 nays. See the [June 13th edition of this newsletter](#) for a summary of the bill's provisions. During House floor debate on the bill, the following amendments were adopted:

- An addition of \$300,000 to the Operations of the National Park System Account (ONPS) for the New England National Scenic Trail.

- An addition of \$5 million to the Historic Preservation Fund account (HPF) to restore funding to the level in FY 2018.
- An addition of \$2.5 million for grants to preserve sites and stories associated with the Civil Rights Movement and to reduce operations by the Office of the Secretary by a similar amount.
- An addition of \$500,000 to the amount provided for the Historic Preservation Fund to be used for competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks associated with communities currently under-represented.
- An addition of \$2 million for Historic Preservation Fund grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- A direction that of the amount provided under the Historic Preservation Fund for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, that amount be increased by \$1 million.
- A redirection of \$20,000,000 in the National Recreation and Preservation account (NRP) to the National Maritime Heritage grant program.

On July 17th, the Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing, among other bills, on:

- H.R. 5262, to redesignate the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area as the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 5532, to redesignate the Reconstruction Era National Monument as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park.
- H.R. 5979, to establish the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument as a unit of the national park system upon the donation of sufficient lands to constitute a manageable unit.

On July 17th, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform approved, among other bills:

- H.R. 559, to establish an alternative mechanism for the expedited removal by agency heads of federal employees for performance or misconduct by limiting an appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to appeals made not later than 7 days after the date of such removal; and making inapplicable to removals employee protections affording employees at least 30 days advance written notice of the proposed action and a reasonable time to answer the proposal orally and in writing, representation by an attorney, and a written decision.
- H.R. 6391, to reauthorize and modify authorities of the Merit Systems Protection Board, and among other provisions, the bill requires the board to establish and collect a fee for each claim or appeal filed with the board, but gives the board the authority to waive the fee when it would cause an undue hardship.

On July 18th, the House passed H.R. 1037, to authorize the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, by a vote of 414 yeas to 0 nays.

On July 18th, the Committee on Natural Resources approved, among other bills:

- H.R. 5532, to redesignate the Reconstruction Era National Monument as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park. An amendment was adopted that limits land acquisition to donation, exchange, or purchase with donated funds.
- H.R. 5979, to establish the Mill Springs Battlefield National Monument as a unit of the national park system upon the donation of sufficient lands to constitute a manageable unit.

On July 19th, the House passed H. Con. Res. 119, expressing the sense of Congress that a carbon tax would be detrimental to the United States economy, by a vote of 229 yeas to 180 nays with two answering “present”.

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



## **Park People, Friends and Allies**

### **Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Sula Jacobs Named Park's New Superintendent**

Sula Jacobs has been named superintendent of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Jacobs comes to the park from Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, where she has worked since 2014. Before that, she oversaw operations as deputy superintendent at Biscayne National Park.

She holds a master's degree in public policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. Jacobs earned her undergraduate degree at Washington and Lee University in economics and East Asian studies.

She began her National Park Service career in 2005 as a management analyst in the Office of the Comptroller in Washington, D.C.

Source: [New Jersey Herald](#).

### **NPS Alumni Passing Of Career Ranger Walt Mayer**

Walter Mayer, who was a career ranger in the National Park Service, passed away on Saturday, July 14th at his residence.

Walter was born in Clarksville, Tennessee. He served 33 years with the National Park Service and retired as superintendent for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. He served in the United States Air Force, was a black belt in judo, a Boy Scout leader, and a Silver Beaver Award recipient. Walter enjoyed whitewater canoeing, fishing, disc golf, and target shooting.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Joan Ruth Lewis Mayer; sons, John Lewis (Andrea Richardson) Mayer, Joseph Foster (Annette) Mayer, and James Walter Mayer; sister, Betty Lou Mayer Parker; and six grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Alzheimer's Association (<https://www.alz.org/>) or the Melanoma Research Center (<https://www.melanoma.org/>). Please visit his guestbook and share a memory at <https://www.sykesfuneralhome.com/notices/Walter-Mayer> .

Source: Member Bill Carroll.

### **NPS Alumni Passing Of Sally Sellars**

Sally Moen Sellars, daughter of a park ranger and wife of career ranger and fire specialist Bob Sellars, died on June 29th.

Sally was born in Medford, Oregon, on July 4, 1929 to Ruth and Arthur Moen. Her dad was a park ranger at Crater Lake National Park. When she was five, her father transferred to Yosemite National Park. Sally, together with her older sister Marilyn and brother, Barney, spent a beautiful childhood in this magnificent park. There she became a better-than-average ice skater and skier and hiked most of the trails leading out of the Valley.

In 1941, her dad retired and moved the family to Berkeley, California, but Sally continued to work many summers in the Tuolumne Meadows area of Yosemite. It was at Berkeley High School where she first met a classmate named Bob Sellers. Bob's family considered Yosemite their second home and spent almost every vacation and holiday in the high country of the park.



Bob's lifelong dream was to become a park ranger. Sally decided that being a ranger's wife wasn't a bad idea. They were married on August 30, 1952 after Bob graduated from Cal Berkeley. With the birth of their first son, Mike, their outdoor life continued.

Bob got a summer ranger assignment in Grand Teton National Park. Their new home was a 20-year-old wall tent with a wooden floor. They cooked on a Coleman stove, used a community out house, bathed under a wood-fired 55 gallon oil drum and slept on a single-size army cot. Eventually, their housing improved to a hand-built one-room cabin in the north end of the park, but the other amenities remained the same.

In November 1955, they transferred to a winter ranger assignment in Death Valley National Monument, where Bob became a permanent ranger. At the end of that year, it was off to Mount Rainier National Park. In 1962, they moved to Glacier National Park, where Bob was the district ranger for the west side of the park, then transferred to Yellowstone in 1967.

After ten years in Yellowstone, Sally and the family moved to Boise, where Bob took a job as the wildland fire coordinator for the National Park Service at the Boise Interagency Fire Center. The family made periodic trips to their summer place at Lake Pend Oreille in Northern Idaho; after Bob retired in 1984, they spent another 15 plus summers on the lake.

When Bob retired, Sally decided to get a job. She worked for the Weather Bureau of BIFC and the VA Hospital until she could qualify for Medicare. She also put in time as a Welcome Wagon Hostess.

Sally is survived by Bob, her husband of 65 years, and her children, Mike (Park City, Utah), Ed (Hailey, Idaho), and Margi and her husband, Hank, (Portland, Oregon) and her grandchildren, Alexa and Inga.

A celebration of life reception will be held on Saturday, August 25th, at 2:30 p.m. at the Cloverdale Funeral Home Reception Center (1200 N. Cloverdale Rd, Boise, 83713). In lieu of flowers, please send donations in Sally's name to the Nature Conservancy, the National Parks Conservation Association, or any other institution dedicated to saving public lands.

See the full obituary below for many great stories about Sally and Bob's life together.

Source: [Cloverdale Funeral Home](#).

## **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**

Stories and articles about DOI, the government and the administration.

**Administration Continues Attack On Endangered Species Act** – The July 19th edition of the *Washington Post* has an article by Darryl Fears on an administration proposal to remove key provisions from the Endangered Species Act. “The [proposal](#)...would end the practice of extending similar protections to species regardless of whether they are listed as endangered or threatened. If the proposal is approved, likely by year's end, protections for threatened plants and animals would be made on a case-by-case basis. In another rollback of a key provision, the administration wants the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to strike language that guides officials to ignore economic impacts when determining how wildlife should be protected.” Source: [Washington Post](#).

**Zinke Aide Faces Ethics Questions** – Ben Cassidy, who was appointed DOI’s senior deputy director for intergovernmental and external affairs in October after nearly seven years as an NRA lobbyist, is the subject of ethics questions. Cassidy, reports the *Huffington Post*, “appears to have played a sizable role in getting the agency’s wildlife conservation board off the ground, even though one of his former colleagues is a member of the advisory council.” The president’s mandatory [ethics pledge](#) bars former lobbyists in the executive branch from participating in matters on which they lobbied for at least two years. The pledge also prohibits appointees from participating “in any particular matter involving specific parties that is directly and substantially related to my former employer or former clients.” Source: [Huffington Post](#).

## **National Park System**

Stories and articles pertaining to the parks, regions, technical and training centers, and WASO.

**Interview Provides Perspectives On Yellowstone Management Change** – The July 17th edition of *Mountain Journal* has a long interview with Cam Sholly, Yellowstone’s new superintendent, regarding an array of topics, particularly the transition from Dan Wenk’s oversight of the park and his own management philosophy. The interview, which is conducted by Todd Wilkinson, the magazine’s founder and a respected environmental writer, needs to be read in full rather than via a summary or abridgement. To do so, click on the following link. Source: [Mountain Journal](#).

**National Parks And Preservation Of Dark Skies** – *USA Today* ran an article last week on the problem of light pollution and the loss of dark skies worldwide and the work of the International Dark Sky Association to protect such skies – particularly in national parks and other remote areas. The NPS, reports the newspaper, “has more certified dark sky locations than any other organization in the world...Thanks to the explosion in the popularity of night sky viewing, national parks traditionally staffed for daytime visitors are discovering an additional set of users at night.” Source: [USA Today via FOX23](#).

**Visiting Lesser Known Parks** – The *Guardian*, an English newspaper, ran an article a while back entitled “The 22 Best US National Parks To Escape The Crowds, Chosen By Experts.” Will Shafroth of NPF, for example, recommended Voyageurs NP as an alternative to Acadia NP. Others offered similar alternatives – Dry Tortugas NP rather than Biscayne NP, Grand Staircase-Escalante NM rather than Bryce Canyon, and Manassas NBP rather than Gettysburg NMP. National forests are included among the alternatives. Source: [The Guardian](#).

**Plan In The Works To Combine Management Of South Florida Parks** – The July 19th *Miami Herald* has an article on a planned reorganization of the area’s national parks. Here’s an excerpt: “South Florida’s three national parks and lone national preserve...are getting ‘integrated.’ In a move touted as a possible model for the country, the National Park Service’s southeast regional director told park employees in an email [on July 18th] that the Service wants to combine management under a single organization intended to ‘more effectively align and leverage resources across park and preserve boundaries.’ No layoffs are planned, said Everglades National Park superintendent Pedro Ramos, but the Service is looking to eliminate ‘redundancy.’ What that means remains unclear. But it could lead to fewer rangers and scientists who help protect parks with unique habitats and multiple challenges, including worsening water quality, invasive species and an increasing number of visitors.” Read the full article for details. Source: [Miami Herald](#).

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

- *Manhattan Project NHP* – Nuclear security officials have partnered with the National Park Service to offer pilot tours of Manhattan Project National Historical Park, located in New Mexico. The once-secret city of Los Alamos was among the World War II sites where the U.S. developed the first atomic bomb. The historical park was established in 2015 to preserve portions of the sites. About 100 people went on the tours on July 12th and 13th as part of the Los Alamos ScienceFest. More tours will take place in the future. Source: [The State](#) (Columbia, SC).

- *Lake Powell NRA/Rainbow Bridge NM* – *USA Today* has posted a gallery of 24 great photographs of the two parks by photographer Trevor Hughes. The gallery includes pictures of the lake, the arch, geologic features, night skies, recreational boaters, a ranger on patrol and park fauna. Source: [USA Today](#).
- *Gettysburg NMP* – CBS News' Sunday Morning program ran a story on the park's "witness trees" – trees alive today that were also alive at the time of the battle – on July 8th. There are at least a dozen in the park. It included references to witness trees at Antietam and Fredericksburg. A link is included to a five-minute-long video of the story. Source: [CBS News](#).
- *Glacier NP* – On July 15th, rangers discovered a partially paralyzed grizzly bear that had apparently fallen about 20 feet onto the road near Rim Rock. The bear had sustained severe traumatic injuries and was therefore euthanized. A necropsy revealed significant trauma to its thoracic vertebrae, broken ribs and a dislocated hip. The non-lactating female bear was estimated to be between 5 and 7 years old and appeared to be in otherwise good health. Rangers initially thought the bear had been hit by a car, but evidence at the scene showed that the bear had slipped off an overhanging precipice and landed on its back in the road. Source: [WJAX News](#).
- *Glen Echo Park* – Under a new ten-year agreement between the National Park Service and Montgomery County, Maryland, maintenance, management, operation and programming of the park will be exclusively the responsibility of the county, while park staff will provide interpretation. The federal government retains ownership of the site. Source: [WTOP News](#).
- *Rocky Mountain NP* – According to a new study, the park provides habitat for not one but two subspecies of the American pika, a species thought to be closely connected with climate change. American pikas are native to cold climates in high-elevation boulder fields and alpine meadows in the mountains of the West. They can't tolerate prolonged exposure to high temperatures. As temperatures climb across North America, pikas are considered a sentinel species for climate change. Source: [EurekAlert!](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* – Rangers will be adding unmarked vehicles to their fleet following what has been termed a "dramatic" increases in violations. Unmarked cars in varying colors will be used by rangers following a six-month pilot program that found a significant increase in the number of traffic stops for distracted and aggressive driving. Source: [WZVT News](#).
- *Padre Island NS* – The park hosted its first Ridley Rendezvous on Saturday, July 14th. More than 100 visitors attended the event to catch a glimpse of baby sea turtles hatching, and play fun games, build sandcastles, participate in a dance off and witness the release of rehabilitated sea turtles. The park hosted the free event to commemorate and honor 40 years of participation in the bi-national Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Restoration and Enhancement Program. Source: [Corpus Christi Caller Times](#).

**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:

- *Yellowstone NP: Lewis River Bridge Replacement* – The park is looking at the possibility of replacing the existing 273-foot long Lewis River Bridge, built in 1960, in order to address widespread deterioration. Closes: **July 23rd**. [PEPC link](#).
- *Stonewall NM: Draft Foundation Document* – The park's draft foundation document is open for comments through the rest of the month. Closes: **July 31st**. [PEPC link](#).
- *Mammoth Cave NP: Rehab Of Houchin Ferry Site* – The park is exploring options to determine how best to provide quality recreation opportunities at the Houchin Ferry site while protecting

and preserving the park's cultural and natural resources. No closing date is given for the comment period. [PEPC link](#).

- *Assateague Island NS: Campsite Relocation* – The park has prepared an environmental assessment in support of a new flexible design strategy for relocating campsites at its Oceanside Campground that have been lost or repeatedly damaged by coastal storm events. Several new campsite locations within the developed area on Assateague Island have been considered. Closes: **August 6th**. [PEPC link](#).
- *Redwood N&SP: Greater Prairie Creek Ecosystem Restoration* – The NPS and the California Department of Parks and Recreation are beginning the planning process for restoration of the Greater Prairie Creek watershed through forest and aquatic restoration and road removal. Closes: **August 6th**. [PEPC link](#).
- *Canaveral NS: 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](#).
- *Alaska Region: Hunting and Trapping in National Preserves* – 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. Important note: The National Park Service is extending the public comment period on a proposed regulation change for hunting and trapping in Alaska’s national preserves by 45 days. The deadline, originally scheduled for July 23, has been extended to accommodate interest in this issue from the general public and state and local groups. Closes: **September 6th**. [Federal Register link](#).
- *Gulf Islands NS: Backcountry Stewardship Plan* – Access to backcountry camping by hiking in has been temporarily suspended due to increased resource damage by irresponsible campers over the past several years. The park is committed to evaluating a range of alternatives for managing use of the back country camping area at the Perdido Key area. Ideas are solicited from the public. Closes: **October 31st**. [PEPC link](#).

## **Public Lands, Wildlife and The Environment**

**Violence Against Land Management Agency Workers Drops** – Boise State Public Radio ran a story on July 18th on a new report by PEER that shows that fewer federal land agency workers are being threatened and assaulted while on the job: “Agency workers at the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and National Park Service reported fewer incidents of assault and harassment across the board in 2017. For example, the Forest Service saw 101 incidents last year. That’s down 50 percent from the year before.” According to John Freemuth, a professor of public policy at Boise State University, “attitudes, even anger towards agencies that manage public lands, often change when a new administration comes in. ‘You’ve got a signal now from this administration that has probably calmed down a lot of people,’ says Freemuth. ‘I guess you could say the more vocal opponents of the Obama Administration are probably pleased right now, so they’ve settled down.’” Source: [Boise State Public Radio](#).

**Immersion In Nature Recommended For Health, Stress Reduction** – Here’s a big surprise: “Forest bathing,” or immersing yourself in nature, is being embraced by doctors and others as a way to

combat stress and improve health, reports the *New York Times*. “The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy has certified more than 300 people across North America to be forest therapy guides, among them psychotherapists, nurses and six M.D.s. The sessions are modeled after the Japanese tradition of *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing.” They can add the names of a few thousand current and former NPS employees to the list as ‘pre-certified.’ Source: [New York Times](#).

## **Editorial Opinions**

Links to editorials and op-ed commentary on issues pertaining either directly or indirectly to the National Park Service.

- [“Should We Hide The Locations Of Earth’s Greatest Trees?”](#), Robert Earle Howells, *San Francisco Chronicle*. The trees Howells is talking about are the redwoods in Redwood N&SP – specifically, “Hyperion,” the tallest of the redwoods, whose location is kept secret. “And for good reason,” he writes. “I didn’t realize it, but [in trying to find it] I was embarking on a growing brand of trophy hunting in nature that, fueled by social media, has spawned an out-of-proportion mania for touching, seeing and posting images of special places — usually to the detriment of those places.” Although he manages to find its location and visit it, he later regrets it. His conclusion: “I would encourage anyone to make the [park’s] Tall Trees hike, and discourage anyone from attempting to reach Hyperion. Some locations, some trees, should remain secret, untrammeled, and probably unnamed. Let them flourish in anonymous silence. Let us look out from afar and be happy that they’re there, and proud that 50 years ago we established a national park to protect them.”
- [“Lee Is Dead Wrong On Utah’s Public Lands,”](#) Peter Metcalf, CEO of Black Diamond Equipment, *Salt Lake Tribune*. The “Lee” in the headline is Utah’s Senator Mike Lee, whose “anti-public lands ideology,” Metcalf says, “has blinded him to reality and the integral role these lands play in both our unique Utah high quality of life and our economic vibrancy.” Metcalf notes that over 110,000 Utahans work in the outdoor recreation economy, and another 144,200 people earn their livelihood in Utah’s tourism industry. “It is time for him to stop his relentless assault on our states greatest asset.”
- [“Stand Up Against Zinke, Others Supporting Abhorrent Hunting Rules,”](#) Jim Kowalsky, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*. Kowalsky observes that Alaskans overwhelmingly supported the 2015 hunting rule that the administration is trying to amend. “Apparently, Secretary Ryan Zinke and others at the Department of Interior think that unsporting and unethical hunting practices – such as killing hibernating black bear mothers and cubs in their dens (using artificial light); killing wolf and coyote mothers, pups and even entire packs at their den sites; shooting black and brown bears at point blank range over grease, pet food and rotting meat baits; killing caribou while they’re swimming; and hunting black bears with packs of dogs – are perfectly fine to allow on Alaska’s National Park Service lands. Most Alaskans think they aren’t.”
- [“New Federal Hunting Regulations Are Not Good Policy,”](#) Joel Bennett, *Juneau Empire*. Bennett was a member of the Alaska Board of Game for thirteen years. He opposes the proposed rule noted above for two reasons – because it’s unethical to hunt animals when they are vulnerable and don’t have a sporting chance, and because “predator control” was never intended for the national preserves when they were created. “Former governor and master big game guide Jay Hammond, who first appointed me to the Alaska Board of Game, once said: ‘I fear that we are coming to a point where the hunted may be more honorable than the hunter.’ I don’t know if Hammond’s prophecy has come true, but if the troubling proposals are adopted, there is clear evidence of it.”
- [“Here’s Why I Work For The U.S. Government For Free,”](#) Bruce Baum, *Marin Independent Journal*. Baum, a volunteer at Point Reyes NS, writes about how great it is to serve the public and work with dedicated NPS staff: “The restorative power of nature is mirrored by the smiles of visitors when they arrive at the park. Daily concerns are washed away by the freshness of



the air, the majesty of the forest and the songs of birds. When I put on my volunteer uniform for my morning shift, I smile. I don't ever remember smiling all the years I put my suit on to go to work."

## **From The Archives**

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1993. All entries appear in the original verb tense.

- *Jefferson National Expansion Memorial* – The Mississippi River rose out of its banks during the summer of 1993 and was a continuing story in the Morning Report. This was the July 20th update from the park: Floodwater was six to seven feet deep over the sidewalk on the park's east side on Saturday, and is rising at the rate of a foot to a foot and a half per day. Visitation to the park has increased dramatically because of the closure of other flooded areas to sightseers. On July 10th and 11th, all previous visitation records were broken at the park's three-story garage, which has over 1200 parking spaces. At times during that period, there was a wait of up to an hour to get into the garage. Visitation counts were begun last week to determine how many visitors were coming to the park to see the flood rather than visit the museum or arch. The number of visitors who came exclusively to see the flood during the period from the 14th to the 18th was as follows: July 14th - 4,424; July 15th - 6,481; July 16th - 8,041; July 17th - 16,127; July 18th (the day of the predicted crest) - 24,558. All of these figures were in addition to regular visitation. High temperatures and humidity caused numerous heat-related incidents, but only one person required transportation by ambulance to a hospital. It's anticipated that there will be resource damage from flood waters to about 175,000 square feet of park land, but that the extremely heavy visitation will cause additional damage to about 70,000 square feet of turf. About 80 trees will have to be replaced along with 4,000 square feet of ground cover. Water intrusion has increased throughout the arch facility, but pumps are currently able to keep up with the flow. Emergency standby units and hoses have been obtained in case of pump failure or a dramatic increase in water flow in the sump areas of the arch. It's anticipated that there will be high water (over flood stage) for at least another three weeks. Protective barriers and ranger patrols will be required until the river drops from its 46.9 foot crest (about 17 feet over flood stage) to approximately 32 to 34 feet. Health warnings are being issued by local and state health officials regarding hazards related to floodwater and the dangers associated with the strong current and floating debris. One park employee has been forced to move from her residence by high water; another three have been called up for duty with their military reserve units for the duration of the emergency.
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* – Just before 11 p.m. on the evening of July 17th, a 23-foot "Eliminator" operated by a 38-year-old Utah man struck a 23-foot "Glastron" fishing boat between the Wahweap Marina and Castle Rock, killing one of the boat's three occupants and injuring three others. The trio in the "Glastron" were drift fishing when the "Eliminator" struck it from the port stern side, crossed over it, and exited on the starboard bow side. Lower unit skeg and propeller marks were made across the vessel. The man who subsequently died was knocked from the boat and heard to scream for help; his friends tried to come to his assistance, but were unable to locate him. One of them suffered a three inch laceration in his head, and two passengers on the "Eliminator" received minor injuries. All three were treated and released. The accident occurred in 150 to 270 feet of water; because of the depth and the site of the search area, a review is being conducted to determine whether the search should be continued. The operator of the "Glastron" told investigators that the navigation and anchor lights were on prior to the accident, but witnesses at the marina stated that the anchor light was not visible prior to the collision. The "Eliminator" was seen leaving the marina at a high rate of speed prior to the accident. Its operator was arrested for second degree homicide, and a search warrant was obtained for a drug/alcohol blood screen. He was released after posting a \$40,000 secured bond. A joint investigation is being conducted by the park and Coconino County Sheriff's Office.

- *Haleakala National Park* – On July 19th, heavy rain in the Kipahulu District caused flooding on all streams, and park rangers accordingly posted all trails as closed due to high water. A young woman and man nonetheless decided to go for a hike in the area. They crossed Palikea Stream where it joins with Pipiwai Stream at about 3 p.m., hiked up the Pipiwai trail, and returned to the crossing about an hour later. The stream had risen considerably in the interim; when they attempted to cross, both were swept downstream and over a 30-foot waterfall just below the crossing. The man was able to get out of the stream about a quarter mile below the fall, possible because his backpack provided some flotation, but the woman disappeared. Rangers were notified of the incident around 4:20 p.m. and immediately began a search for her. The search area stretched from the point last seen down the O'Heo Stream to the ocean and along the shorelines adjacent to the confluence. No sign of her was found. The search resumed the next morning at 6 a.m. Some of the woman's personal effects were found, but searchers were unable to find her. Water levels in the O'Heo Stream are still at flood stage. Dive teams will search pool areas as soon as the water recedes and conditions are safe for entering the water. Maui County fire and rescue is assisting in the search effort.

## **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, Bill Wade and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Joan Anzelmo, Larry Frederick, Cathy Halainen, Bill Carroll, Mike Warren

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](mailto:BHalainen@gmail.com). Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

## **A Closing Observation**

“It wasn't that long ago – a few decades at most – when high-level supervisory land-management positions in the Park Service, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management were largely apolitical. They were held by highly experienced professionals with long records of applying science to land and wildlife management issues. [Recent] moves by Zinke and the Trump administration signal these critical posts will now go to those more supportive of the administration's positions, regardless what's best for the natural resources involved. And that's truly unfortunate. American national parks, forests, wildlife and other publicly owned natural resources must not be entrusted to the volatile whims of politicians.”

Editorial Board, *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*

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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.”

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