



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

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

Volume 2

Number 37

Incidents

Golden Gate NRA Historic Building Burns Down

An investigation is underway into a suspicious blaze that destroyed a historic park building that was once the site of a United States Army shooting range.

About 30 firefighters from more than five local fire districts responded late on Halloween evening to the former indoor rifle range and target house, located in the Marin Headlands, and found the building fully engulfed in flame. It took them an hour to contain the fire and longer to mop up. Fire officials have ruled out all natural causes for the fire, such as ordinary electrical and gas failures. The preliminary estimate placed the loss at \$267,000.

The building was one of the last remaining structures associated with the historic Fort Barry rifle range.

Source: [San Francisco Chronicle](#).

Midwest Regional Office Two MWRO Staffers Rescue Man Who Jumped Into River

Two regional office employees rescued a man who jumped off the nearby Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, which crosses the Missouri River. One of them was looking out his office window when the incident occurred.

"I saw a splash in the water and I got up and I saw there was a man in the water," said NPS biologist Chris Holbeck. "I ran downstairs, we have a rescue ring by the back door, and I grabbed it and I started running down the sidewalk trying to catch up with the guy. He was just floating and I tried to make contact with the guy. I yelled out to him, said to swim to shore, keep his head up, don't go under."

Coworker Bruce Swanson soon joined Holbeck in the rescue effort. "I started yelling at him to swim at an angle out of the river," said Swanson, "and I think at one point when he went under you could see that he was struggling with his hands, and he came back up and I don't know if that was the point that he decided he wanted to make it to shore because before then there was no effort to move."

The two men ran along the shore, trying to keep up with the floating man, but the river was winning.

"I was not able to run as fast as the current, so I was losing the guy and I was afraid he was going to go under," said Holbeck. They lost sight of the man for a bit, but soon found him among some trees and helped get him from the water to a rescue squad.

Holbeck said this isn't the first time he's tried to help someone who had jumped into the river. "It usually doesn't work out this well," he said. "I'm very happy with the outcome."

The link below includes a video interview with Holbeck and Swanson.

Source: [WOWT News](#).

Haleakala NP Man Tased After Threatening Rangers

A man was tased and taken into federal custody on October 24th following an incident in the park

Matthew Gonzales entered the park without paying the fee, then refused to obey orders from park rangers and threatened them. At one point, he picked up a lava rock and refused to put it down when ordered to do so by rangers. The rangers tased Gonzales, bringing him to the ground, but he held onto the rock and struggled with them as they tried to arrest him. He was warned he would be tased a second time if he didn't cooperate; when he continued to resist, the ranger fired his taser a second time. He was then taken into custody.

Gonzales is accused of interfering with an agency function, violating a lawful order, and nonpayment of recreational fees. He made his initial appearance in court and the next day and was to appear at a detention hearing last week.

Source: [Hawaii News Now](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

Below are short follow-ups on incidents previously reported in this newsletter:

- *Yosemite NP* – The man and woman who fell to their deaths from Taft Point have been identified as Vishnu Viswanath, 29, and Meenakshi "Minaxi" Moorthy, 30. Rangers determined that they fell about 800 feet. The couple ran a travel blog called "Holidays And HappilyEverAfters" and boasted an Instagram following of more than 17,800 people. Although the cause of their deaths has not been determined, family and friends believe that they were talking a selfie of themselves on the cliff edge. Source: [Washington Post](#).
- *Delaware Water Gap NRA* – The popular boardwalk trail at Dingmans Falls reopened on October 31st, almost eight months after a series of nor'easters caused extensive damage to the park and region. The storms uprooted and snapped hundreds of trees along the access road, parking area and trail, crushing boardwalks, stairs, railings and bridges and damaging structures. Repairs included replacing about 130 feet of decking, replacing two staircases leading to the upper observation area, and removing more than 500 trees from the site, including 10 that fell onto structures in the area. Other parts of the park remain closed, awaiting removal of hundreds of trees. Source: [LehighValleyLive.com](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – Volcano House Hotel resumed its restaurant service on October 25th after months of closure following the Kilauea eruption. The hotel was forced to temporarily close at the same time as the park due to the increased seismic activity brought on by the eruption. When the park reopened in late September, parts of the hotel reopened as well, but kitchen services could not resume immediately. Source: [Hawaii Tribune Herald](#).

[Official 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.

Department of the Interior Official Update On Reorganization Disseminated

On November 1st, Susan Combs, whose title is “Senior Advisor Exercising the Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget,” sent out a memo to all employees (addressed as “Interior Team”) entitled “Update on the DOI Reorganization and announcing the Regional Facilitators for the 12 Unified Regions.” The full text follows. The hot links are as they appear in the memo, as are the grammatical errors.

In an effort to keep everyone informed, here is an important update on the [DOI Reorganization](#).

Secretary Zinke announced that our new Unified Regional boundaries were finalized and became effective on August 22, 2018, and shared the [final map](#) with all of you on August 29, 2018. A great deal of progress has been made since the Secretary’s last message. One significant achievement since then was the selection of Regional Facilitators by their peers. These Regional Facilitators are leading the Reorganization from the field, and will be seeking your input as this process proceeds. The [list of Regional Facilitators for each of the Unified Regions is available here](#). The Regional Facilitators are building teams of subject matter experts in our primary Mission Areas: Recreation, Collaborative Conservation, and Permitting; and our Support Areas: Human Resources Management, Information Technology, and Procurement of goods and services. These Unified Region teams will be comprised of experts from all of the participating bureaus present in the Region.

I held a two-day meeting with the Regional Facilitators in Washington, D.C. on October 15-16, 2018. Secretary Zinke personally met with this group during our meeting, and told them in very plain terms that while he would provide the broad direction, they will be the ones who implement the Reorganization from the ground up. We had very thoughtful discussions about questions they posed. It is important for you to know that some topics may purposefully lack specific or detailed answers for now because the leaders out in the Regions and Field Stations will be the ones who build and shape their Unified Regions. One size does not fit all. Our Unified Regions are very diverse and may take different approaches based on their unique priorities and needs. For example, some Unified Regions have significant recreation components, while other Unified Regions have significant permitting and collaborative conservation workloads, and some Unified Regions have significant workloads in all of our Mission Areas.

Please review the list of [updated Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) here](#). If you have a specific question on the Reorganization and you don’t see it answered in the FAQs, please send your question to reorg@doi.gov or use the [online feedback form](#) and you will receive a response.

I want to give you a date and a timeline to consider. Secretary Zinke told the Regional Facilitators that he wants all of the Unified Regions to be “stood up” and operational by July 1, 2019. The Regional Facilitators are working hard to make happen. By July 1 of next year, each Unified Region will have an Interior Regional Director (IRD). A standard process will be used to select a career Senior Executive Service member who will serve as the IRD, and that IRD will be coordinating with the bureaus to conduct business more effectively and efficiently.

I want to thank all of you for your patience as we work through some of the administrative details of the Reorganization. I know you’ve heard parts and pieces of information on the Reorganization and would like more information. We are planning town hall meetings to help provide you with information and answers to your questions. Thank you for the important work you do every day. The goal is to have this Reorganization shaped by all of you. Your input is critical and will help build Unified Regions that stand the test of time. Unified Regions will make it easier for our partners and the public to work

with us and ultimately, it will be easier for you to do your jobs as we transition to increased decision-making at the Regional/local level.

Let's make Reorganization a success together.

Congress Weekly Legislative Roundup

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate

The Senate is in recess until after the mid-term elections.

House

The House is in recess until after the mid-term elections.

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

Park People, Park Friends

NPS Alumni Passing Of Peter Richter

Peter Richter, 70, of Anchorage, Alaska, died on October 13th after being struck by a drunk driver while on a bicycle tour outside of Riga, Latvia.

Peter was born in Saranac Lake, N.Y., on February 6, 1948. He graduated from Stony Brook University in 1971, and later lived and traveled in Europe for several years, where he studied at the Goethe Institute and worked in a German shipyard and at a Swiss ski area.

While in Leadville, Colorado he learned to fly, lived in an off-the-grid cabin, helped start a food co-op, and worked in the molybdenum mine and as a surveyor. Yearning for wilder places, he moved to Alaska in 1982, where he worked as a surveyor for the National Park Service. He earned a master's degree in Pacific Rim studies from Alaska Pacific University in 1998. Peter finished his career with the National Park Service's Shared Beringia Heritage Program, where he worked with scientists, artists and native communities on both sides of the Bering Strait to fund research and cultural programs. The last 13 summers of his life he set net for salmon from his fish camp out of Pilot Point.

Peter lived a full and adventurous life, even into his last days. Growing up in the Adirondacks instilled in Peter a lifelong love of the mountains and wilderness. As a young man, he spent summers working as a boatman for Marjorie Merriweather Post at her Adirondack camp, "Topridge." Over the years, he climbed Denali, rafted the Grand Canyon, drove a Volkswagen across the Soviet Union, sailed around Svalbard and bike-toured across Eastern Europe at age 69. In his last year of life, he skied from Rainy Pass to Nikolai and hiked the Chilkoot Trail. This winter, he planned to complete the "Winter 46ers," winter ascents of the 46 Adirondack peaks taller than 4000 feet.

Even with all these achievements, Peter was humble, hospitable and always happy to meet new people. His kindness and enthusiasm made him friends across Alaska, Russia, Europe and much of the world. Peter was a bush pilot, world traveler, mountaineer, commercial fisherman, mentor, gardener, pioneer, loving husband and a cornerstone for many communities of Alaskan adventurers, fishermen, pilots, pioneers, misfits and punks. He loved spending time at his cabin on Shell Lake – his "paradise" – and hosting folks for hot, 180-degree saunas and dinners during the cold winter months. His loss will be felt deeply by his family, friends and community.

Peter is survived by his loving spouse, Matthew Lohrstorfer. A memorial to celebrate his life was held last Saturday in Anchorage. All are welcome.

Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#) via Elvira Arnberger.

NPS Alumni Passing Of Donald Hill

Donald Hill, a career NPS employee and superintendent, died on October 24th.

Donald was born in Elmhurst Illinois on June 26, 1945 to Stanley E. Hill and Francis E. Hill. After moving to Montrose, Colorado, in 1962, he graduated from Montrose High School in May of 1963. He completed a year CSU before moving to Durango, Colorado, in order to complete a bachelors degree in biological science at Fort Lewis College. He received his degree in June, 1968, and a Colorado secondary teaching certificate that December.

From 1969 to 1971, he taught math as well as life, earth and physical science at Arvada Junior High School and Jefferson County Public Schools. His passion for our national parks began in April of 1965, when he worked as a seasonal at Black Canyon on the Gunnison National Monument, then from 1968 through March of 1973 at Colorado National Monument. Donald continued as a maintenance worker for just under a year until he became a permanent.

In 1975, Donald was selected as an intake ranger and became the first permanent employee and ranger for the Morrow Point District at Curecanti NRA. He served as the chief of interpretation there from 1978 until 1987, then was selected to fill the park manager position at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, where he finished out his career.

During his career and in his personal life, Donald exercised a discipline laced with truth, ethics, education and a moral compass beyond reproach. As a father there were some as good but none better; his gentle spirit and forgiving nature were interspersed with whimsical humor, including but not limited to the occasional "Dad Joke." Always ready to teach a lesson on any and all subjects, though sometimes quite verbose, Donald was a joy to engage with in conversation. He enjoyed camping, cooking, board games, classic movies, drawing and painting, fishing, serving occasionally as a liturgist at the Methodist Church of La Junta, and reading anything involving history.

He is survived by brothers Lee and Warren Hill, by his children Laura Ritter and Bryan Hill, and by his beautiful grandchildren Hayden Ritter, Violet Ritter, Abigail Hill and Calvin Hill.

Please feel free to join family and friends for a service to be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 10th, at the La Junta Methodist Church.

Source: [Peacock-Larsen Funeral Home](#) via Warren Hill.

Coalition and Allied Organization News

News about CPANP, its members, and kindred associations and allies.

ANPR Rendezvous Underway In Bowling Green – If you're in the neighborhood, the Association of National Park Rangers' 41st annual Ranger Rendezvous is now underway at the Holiday Inn University Plaza in Bowling Green, Kentucky. It will run through November 11th.

IRF Announces Dates Of Next World Congress – The ninth World Ranger Congress will be held in the village of Sauraha on the border of Chitwan National Park in Nepal from November 11th to November 19th next year. Additional details will follow in coming weeks. The last Congress was in Estes Park, Colorado, in 2016. The other seven congresses were held, respectively, in Zakopane, Poland (1995); San Jose, Costa Rica (1997); Kruger National Park, South Africa (2000); Wilsons

Promontory National Park, Australia (2003); Stirling, Scotland (2006); Santa Cruz, Bolivia (2009); and Arusha, Tanzania (2012).

News Reports and Releases

A brief summary of recent news stories, web postings and agency press releases pertaining to the Service, the federal government, the administration, DOI, and other public land management agencies that have bearing on the NPS.

Administration

The War On Regulations – *Government Executive* has a long article by Charles S. Clark on the administration’s war on regulations and the uneasy relationship it has created between government professionals and political appointees, particularly the latter’s ready willingness to overturn the decisions and recommendations – often long thought-out and researched – made by the former. Clark interviews Sally Katzen, who ran the White House’s Office of Regulatory and Information Affairs under the Clinton administration, who says that the Trump transition has arguably created the widest breach ever between political appointees and civil servants. The article offers a thoughtful analysis of this conflict, offering perspectives from both sides. Source: [Government Executive](#).

Department of the Interior

The Continuing Adventures Of Ryan Zinke – The secretary continues to be the center of myriad news stories regarding his loose interpretation of federal rules. Here are brief excerpts from them with the usual links to the full stories:

- *DOI IG Refers Probe Of Zinke Violations To DOJ* – “The Interior Department’s Office of Inspector General has referred one of its probes into the conduct of Secretary Ryan Zinke to the Justice Department for further investigation, according to two individuals familiar with the matter...A referral to the Justice Department means prosecutors will explore whether a criminal investigation is warranted. While an agency’s inspector general regularly issues reports on the findings of its inquiries, it refers cases to the Justice Department only when it has determined that there could be criminal violations.” Source: [Washington Post](#).
- *White House Concerned Zinke May Have Violated Federal Rules* – “The White House is growing increasingly concerned about allegations of misconduct against Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, according to two senior administration officials, and President Trump has asked aides for more information about a Montana land deal under scrutiny by the Justice Department. Trump told his aides that he is afraid Zinke has broken rules while serving as the interior secretary and is concerned about the Justice Department referral...” Source: [Washington Post](#).
- *‘Vise Tightens’ Around Zinke* – “Embattled Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is finding himself with fewer defenders inside or outside the Trump administration, as one-time supporters in industry drift away and his sagging popularity in his native Montana appears to be keeping him off the campaign trail. The pileup of ethics investigations into the former Navy SEAL and congressman is not only placing Zinke in potential legal jeopardy. It’s also alienating many of the same industry groups and Trump allies who welcomed his arrival at the Interior Department just 19 months ago...” Source: [Politico](#).
- *Zinke’s Heir Appears Ready To Step In* – “Zinke has long been expected to join a post-election exodus from the Trump administration, even before this week’s reports that Interior’s internal watchdog had referred at least one investigation into the secretary’s ethical problems to the Justice Department. And he already has an heir apparent: Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt, a longtime lobbyist for the oil and gas and water industries, who would be well placed to execute President Donald Trump’s pro-fossil fuel, anti-regulatory policies.” Source: [Politico](#).

- *President Hedges On Support of Zinke* – The president “offered less-than-effusive praise Monday for embattled Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, while saying he might not ‘be happy’ with the outcomes of the investigations into Zinke’s behavior.” Source: [Politico](#).

National Park Service and System

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

“Proving Parks Belong To All Americans” – *National Geographic* has a story on its travel webpage on three approaches the NPS is employing to get more visitors from under-represented groups to visit the parks – changing internal culture, expanding outreach and education, and improving affordability. It cites in particular the Find Your Park initiative, “part of NPS’s decades-long efforts to improve accessibility for people of color, LGBTQ+ people, people of lower incomes, and other underrepresented groups.” Also mentioned are efforts like [Brown People Camping](#), [Allies for Inclusion](#), [Pride Outside](#), and [Every Kid In A Park](#). Source: [National Geographic](#).

Staying Alive In The Parks – [Deadspin](#), a sports news and blog website, has a regular section called “Adequate Man” that recently ran a story entitled “A Simple Guide To Staying Alive In The National Parks.” Author Brian Lauvray opens with an overview of the recent big spike in visitation to the parks (“nothing short of steroidal”), then talks about a related jump in deaths and injuries: “In 2017, 13,131 visitors were reported injured in the national parks. The most recent year from which the NPS has data on the number of deaths that occurred in the parks is 2014, when 192 people died within the parks.” He notes that most people have safe visits, but adds that visitors nonetheless need to be careful, as there are “plenty of ways to seriously mess yourself up in the wilderness.” Although the tips he offers are familiar to all of us, such as staying away from large animals and not relying on cellphones to get you out of trouble, they are all useful and provide a good summary for visitors. Best of all is this observation: “Most obviously and importantly, you should always have a keen sense of where you are and possess a brutally honest understanding of what your physical limitations are.” Source: [Deadspin](#).

Around The Parks – Brief reports on parks and regions, culled either from park press releases or from newspapers, with links to the source news articles. The reports are in alphabetical order by park name.

- *Amistad NRA* – Three mussel-detecting dogs and their handlers from Working Dogs for Conservation, a Montana-based nonprofit that trains dogs to help preserve natural environments, are in the park through mid-November to sniff out invasive quagga mussels. The dogs, a Labrador and two border collies, are checking visiting boats for mussels before they are allowed to enter the lake, a task that they can complete in seconds but would take an inspector five or ten minutes. Following most of a month at Amistad, the dogs will move on to six other parks – Glacier, Bighorn Canyon, Grand Teton, Yellowstone, Lake Roosevelt, Chickasaw and Lake Meredith. Source: [Del Rio News-Herald](#).
- *Cape Cod NS* – The park has closed Highland Light in order to make extensive structural and safety repairs required to remediate years of degradation caused by changes to the lighthouse’s ventilation system. The project also includes repairs to the masonry, removal and reapplication of exterior coating, replacement of windows and corroded parts, and general safety upgrades. Source: [Cape Cod Times](#).
- *Everglades NP* – The governor of Florida has directed that \$3.5 million in state transportation funds be allocated toward the completion of a project to raise a highway across the Everglades. A one-mile section was raised in 2013; the completed project will allow water to flow under nearly six miles of the highway into the park. The governor also directed the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to request \$40 million more in state money to complete the project. Raising the Tamiami Trail is part of a massive Everglades restoration plan that requires both state and federal participation. Source: [Miami Herald](#).

- *Grand Canyon NP* – Following a series of breaks in the cross-canyon waterline last month, the park reports that it now has enough water in storage to scale back to Level 1 basic water conservation measures (the standard park water conservation level). In Level 1, park residents and visitors are asked to take an active approach to conserving water by turning off the faucet while brushing teeth or shaving, limiting showers to five minutes or less, selectively flushing toilets, running dishwashers and washing machines with full loads or in eco-mode, and reporting drips, leaks, or other water loss to appropriate offices. Source: [Grand Canyon NP](#).
- *Grand Canyon NP* – On October 25th, the National Geographic Society reported on a new finding in the park: “About 310 million years ago in what's now Arizona, a primitive creature trundled along on all fours through towering sand dunes that spilled into the sea. Normally, this creature's tracks would have vanished like other footfalls on a beach. But in a rare case, the tracks hardened into sandstone—preserving this flash of ancient behavior. Exposed by a rockfall, the footprints are now the oldest ever discovered in the Grand Canyon... The prints are also noteworthy for their strangeness: Each one is angled 40 degrees from the direction of walking, as if the animal had a diagonal gait.” The article includes an illustration showing possible ways that these angular prints were made. Source: [National Geographic Society](#).
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The Appalachian Trail Conservancy has awarded the park’s friends group \$4,000 to repair food storage cables at campsites and shelters along the stretch of the Appalachian Trail within the park. “This grant is funded by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s specialty license plate sales in North Carolina,” reports the *Asheville Times-Citizen*. “Funds are used to purchase materials to repair food storage cables at shelters and campsites along the Appalachian Trail. The grant also supports seasonal staff and two wildlife interns who assist with food-storage cable repairs, as well as other bear management and monitoring.” Source: [Asheville Citizen-Times](#).
- *Gulf Islands NS* – Gulf Coast Marine Services Inc., the company that has been providing ferry service from Pensacola to the park via two 150-person ferries, has terminated its operations. The boats, which cost \$2.6 million each and began operating in late June, were funded by the National Park Service with \$4 million in restitution money from the 2010 BP oil spill and another \$1.2 million in federal grants. The company’s owner cited “the extremely high cost of the ferry operations and the unexpectedly low ridership” for the decision. The park will seek another operator. Source: [Pensacola News Journal](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – Kilauea may be quiet for now, but, according to USGS, it remains the nation’s most dangerous volcano. The United States has 161 active volcanoes – all in the western U.S. – but only 18 are classified as a “very high threat.” The top five include Kilauea, Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens in Washington, Redoubt in Alaska, and Mount Shasta in California. The full report, a 50-page PDF file, can be read at this link: [2018 Update to the U.S. Geological Survey National Volcanic Threat Assessment](#). Source: [USA Today](#).
- *Point Reyes NRA/Golden Gate NRA* – Comments are now being taken on an EIS and GMP amendment for Point Reyes and Golden Gate’s north district that will update management guidance for more than 28,000 acres of NPS lands, including all lands currently leased for ranching. You can comment at [this PEPC site](#). The comment period runs through November 30th. Source: [Point Reyes Light](#).
- *USS Arizona Memorial* – Current projections are that the USS Arizona Memorial dock repair project will be completed by this coming March, making it possible for visitors to again access the memorial. The design phase of the project was recently completed, allowing for the development of a more precise timeline for the repair process. Unfortunately, it will not be completed in time for National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7. Source: [KHON News](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – For a few moments respite from so much disheartening news, check out this story on a “renegade llama” from the Idaho Falls *Post-Register*. “Ike”, the llama in question, got

loose from a pack train on a guided tour in August. Numerous efforts, all of them unsuccessful, were subsequently made to round him up before the park's harsh winter season began. Then Susi Huelsmeyer-Sinay, of Yellowstone Llamas, also a park concession, came up with a novel plan that was approved by the park – since llamas are social animals, she brought three to an area where he'd last been seen, figuring he might want to join them. Sure enough, the lonely llama came right out and greeted the trio. Ike's prior owner gave him to Huelsmeyer-Sinay in return for her services. Source: [Post-Register](#).

- *Yellowstone NP* – The current issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* has an article entitled “The Bison Returns to the Great American Plains” about an upcoming transfer of many park bison to the Sioux and Assiniboine tribal nations at Fort Peck Reservation, in northeastern Montana: “This winter, if all goes as planned, a caravan of livestock trucks will carry dozens of American bison out of Yellowstone National Park on a 500-mile journey into the past. Unlike their ranched cousins, which are mainly the result of 20th-century attempts to cross bison with cattle, the Yellowstone animals are wild and genetically pure, descendants of the original herds...On a practical level, the relocation program is simply a way to keep the Yellowstone population in check. But it is also much more than that. The move begins to restore wild bison to the Great Plains and the Plains Indians, who depended on them for food, clothing and shelter...” Source: [Smithsonian Magazine](#).
- *Zion NP* – Washington County has purchased land in hopes that it will help shuttle visitors to the park, though the park-and-ride project has not been approved yet. The county bought 300 acres of land at a cost of \$1 million, paid for by the Utah Office of Tourism. Source: [KUTV](#).

Environmental and Land Management Agencies

Stories on federal and state agencies that are responsible for environmental oversight or the management of America's public lands.

New Film On Wildland Firefighters – The PBS series Independent Lens aired a new hour-long film called “Wildland” last week. It follows the creation and activation of a [Grayback Forestry](#) crew from recruitment to deployment on a major fire in California. Here's a synopsis from the Independent Lens webpage: “Filmed during two recent wildfire seasons, ‘Wildland’ is a sweeping yet deeply personal account of a wildland firefighting crew as they struggle with fear, loyalty, dreams, and demons. This is the story of ordinary people with nothing left to lose facing a test of mind, body, and spirit.” The entire film can be viewed at the website that follows. Source: [“Wildland,” Independent Lens, PBS](#).

EPA Applies ‘Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind’ Rule To Climate Change – The following is from *The Guardian's* November 1st edition: “More than a year after the US Environmental Protection Agency took down information on climate change from its website for an ‘update,’ it now seems uncertain whether it will ever reappear. In April last year, the EPA replaced its online climate change section with a holding page that said the content was being updated to ‘reflect the agency's new direction under President Donald Trump.’ Information previously found at www.epa.gov/climatechange made it clear that human activity was warming the planet, resulting in harm to Americans' health as well as crucial ecosystems on which humans depend. The ‘update’ page has now given way to a page that simply states: ‘We want to help you find what you are looking for.’” A former EPA administrator made this observation about the change: “It's an embarrassment. It is a ghost page. It's a bit like Amazon not allowing the public to order books via its website – it's that fundamental. There's no other issue at the EPA more important than climate change; it affects air, water, health and whether large parts of the world will survive.” Source: [The Guardian](#).

The Conservation Crisis

This section covers the myriad interconnected, conservation-related threats that are transforming the national parks, their ecosystems, and the world ecosphere, often simultaneously.

A note to readers: Many of these threats, of course, are not exclusive to the National Park System; they often apply as much to cities and nations worldwide as they do to wildlands and their flora and fauna. Nonetheless, our national parks, by virtue of the fact that they are more or less snapshots of the natural world as it appeared before the incursions of population expansion and development, are often among the first places where changes with national or international ramifications are first felt. Such changes also have serious implications for our cultural and historical sites. This section, therefore, casts a broad net for stories on the impacts of climate change and conservation challenges to the NPS in particular and the nation and world in general – successes and potential solutions as well as crises and challenges.

Yale Issues Findings In Study Of American Views On Climate Issues – The first step in resolving a problem is to get a majority to agree on its causes and solutions. An article in the November 1st *New York Times* provides cause for optimism that maybe we've turned a corner. The article summarizes new data from a study by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication that show how Americans across the country view climate and energy policies. Although divisions remain, the broad-based study revealed that sizable majorities agree that global warming is happening, that it's caused mostly by human activities, and that it is affecting the weather. There's better news on solutions. "A majority of Americans in almost every county [in the nation] support requiring electric utilities to produce at least 20 percent of their power from wind, solar and other renewable sources," reports the Times. "Americans also overwhelmingly support funding research into renewable energy (nationally, 85 percent say they are in favor) and providing consumers with energy-saving tax incentives (82 percent say the same)..." The survey asks a wide array of questions and provides responses county by county nationwide, which makes it possible for you to see what your neighbors think. You can find them by clicking on "Select Question" at [Yale Climate Opinion Maps 2018](#). See the article at the following link for a general overview of the study with some good maps. Source: [New York Times](#).

'100th Meridian' Aridity Line Moves East – A [Columbia University study](#) that appears in the American Meteorological Society's journal has confirmed the existence of a climate boundary between the arid west and humid east – famously described by John Wesley Powell as following the 100th meridian – and that it is slowly shifting east due to climate change. Researchers have found that this divide is caused by three factors: the Rocky Mountains stopping moisture from the Pacific Ocean reaching further inland, Atlantic winter storms bringing moisture to the eastern half of the U.S., and moisture from the Gulf of Mexico moving north and curving eastward during the summer months. Studies of rainfall and temperature data since 1980 show that this climatic boundary has already shifted east about 140 miles, that it now sits closer to the 98th meridian, and that it will continue to move east as warming global temperatures increase evaporation from the soil and change precipitation patterns. Source: [Yale Environment 360](#).

New Documentary On Rising Ocean Threat To Cities – A new PBS series entitled "[Sinking Cities](#)" documents the challenges faced by four of the world's major cities: New York, London, Miami and Tokyo. The first episode, which is on the greater New York City area, appeared last week. It talks about the vulnerable areas of the city, the history of how they evolved, what will happen if no action is taken on rising waters and increasing storm surge, and a number of innovative actions to mitigate these problems that are either being considered or have already been begun. Planners expect a sea level rise of six feet by 2100. This rise will be compounded by high tides and inevitable storm surge and will threaten much of the city, potentially including Liberty and Ellis Islands, parts of Gateway NRA, and perhaps units of Manhattan Sites. [Click on this link](#) for information on future episodes in the overall series, entitled "Peril and Promise: The Challenge of Climate Change;" [click on this link](#) to see the 55-minute episode on New York City. Source: [PBS](#).

Ozone Levels In National Parks Now Similar To Large Cities – This is a bit of old news from last July, but new to this publication. According to a [study](#) by researchers at Iowa State University and Cornell University, concentrations of ozone in many U.S. national parks are now similar to those in America's largest metropolitan areas. According to one of the researchers, about 10 percent of all park visitors since 1990 (or about 80 million people) have been exposed to ozone levels that are unhealthy

for sensitive groups, including older adults, children, and individuals who have a lung disease or are exercising outside. Source: [Citylab](#).

Good News For Outer Banks Parks – North Carolina, the state once infamous for mocking even the existence of climate change, has dramatically changed its position. On October 29th, Governor Roy Cooper signed an executive order that “calls for agencies to integrate climate change mitigation into programs, sets up a new interagency council to address the issue, increases energy and water conservation and use of zero-emission vehicles. It states unequivocally in its introduction that North Carolina will support the 2015 Paris Climate Accord and sets a statewide goal of reducing greenhouse gasses by 40 percent by 2025. The governor [also] called on greater cooperation between government and the private sector to build out clean energy infrastructure in North Carolina.” According to a [recent article in the Washington Post](#), a big part of the reason for the change of heart comes from the hurricanes that have hammered coastal North Carolina and the Outer Banks in recent years. Source: [Coastal Review Online](#).

Many Species Populations Crashing Worldwide – “Sixty percent of all animals with a backbone have been wiped out by human activity in the past 40 years, according to a new [World Wildlife Fund Living Planet report](#),” according to an article in *The Hill*. “The report also found that the current rate of species being loss is 100 to 1,000 times higher than it was several hundred years ago...” Said one researcher: “The statistics are scary. Unlike population declines, extinctions are irreversible.” Said another: “A healthy, sustainable future for all is only possible on a planet where nature thrives and forests, oceans and rivers are teeming with biodiversity and life.” Source: [The Hill](#).

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.

- *Grand Canyon NP* – On September 19th, a former Grand Canyon concession employee was arrested in Chubbuck, Idaho, for a series of car clouts which had occurred in Yellowstone and Grand Teton the previous day. Investigators now suspect him of having committed motel room burglaries in Grand Canyon and Yosemite and auto burglaries in Sequoia National Forest and in Laughlin, Nevada, near Lake Mead. These burglaries occurred after the man fled his supervisory position with the park concession at Grand Canyon on August 7th. He was the prime suspect in a year-long investigation of over 75 non-forced motel room burglaries in the park, where he'd worked since 1987. It's believed that he used his position as supervisor of the concession rooms inspectors and concession guest room attendants to gain access to motel rooms. Investigators suspect that he returned to the park on September 10th and committed seven more motel room burglaries, possibly with stolen concession master keys. At the time of his arrest in Idaho, he was found in possession of items stolen in those burglaries. Two other recent concession employee arrests at Grand Canyon may also be linked to him. On October 5th, a concession guest room attendant was arrested following an investigation of the theft of a \$20,000 diamond ring from a motel room. The ring was in the employee's possession and was recovered. Two days later, a concession rooms porter was arrested on a \$10,000 felony arrest warrant from Yosemite following a room burglary investigation at that park. Reported by Chief Ranger's Office.
- *New River Gorge NR* – On October 19th, three hunters from the local area were hunting along the Admin Road leading down from Grandview when one of them, a 27-year-old man, was shot in the head and killed under circumstances that at the time were not clear. The incident occurred around 4 p.m. and was reported by the other hunters about two hours later. A rope litter raising was used to recover the man's body from the bottom of a steep ravine. The family of the victim arrived on scene at this time, and the victim's brother, who was intoxicated, had to be arrested for obstructing the investigation. The victim's father threatened to kill the man who he believed to have killed his son. It appears from the evidence at the scene that the victim was illegally turkey hunting and had been drinking. Two days later, rangers arrested

one of the man's companions for negligent shooting and hunting without a license. The investigation is continuing; further charges may be forthcoming. Reported by Bill Blake.

- *North Cascades NP* – Five people were arrested on the night of October 23rd in an interagency anti-poaching operation conducted along the Highway 20 corridor in Ross Lake. Rangers and officers set up two remote control deer decoys at different locations along the highway and arrested the five individuals on charges of hunting with the aid of artificial light, shooting from the roadway, and transport of a loaded firearm in a vehicle. Five weapons were seized with an estimated worth of nearly \$4,000. The individuals involved face fines that could collectively exceed \$5,000. Joining North Cascades rangers in the operation were officers from the Washington Game and Fish Department, the Forest Service and Watcom County. The operation received media coverage from a Seattle television station. Footage shot during the operation will appear in a news special on wildlife poaching sometime in late November. Reported by Pete Cowan.

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
- Issue Contributors: Cyndy Holda, Mark Forbes, Bill Walters, Joan Anzelmo, Mike Murray, Elvira Arnberger, Warren Hill

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

“The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy, and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it and to foster its renewal is our only hope.”

Writer and environmentalist [Wendell Berry](#)

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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.

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