



## The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, August 26, 2020

Volume 4

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### Incidents

#### **Lake Mead NRA Three Severely Dehydrated Hikers Rescued**

On the afternoon of August 5th, rangers and Mohave County Sheriff's Office deputies rescued three dehydrated hikers from a location near Hoover Dam.

The hikers – two women and a man, all in their late teens – had gone hiking down the Colorado River within a closed area of the park. They'd begun their hike around 7 a.m. and had soon become severely dehydrated and unable to return to the trailhead.

Medical responders treated the hikers for dehydration, which allowed them to continue the last mile and a half back to the trailhead with some assistance. The hikers had two small dogs with them that were also dehydrated; they were carried back to safety.

Temperatures were in excess of 110 degrees in the area at the time of the rescue. This park is closed for hiking between May 15th and October 15th every year due to the extreme heat and the lack of water resources for hikers. The hikers were each cited with federal charges for trespassing.

Source: Facebook entry, Mohave County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue.

#### **Noatak NP Pilot Uninjured In Crash On Upper Noatak River**

On Wednesday, August 12th, a search was begun for a pilot after a friend of his reported that he was overdue and hadn't been heard from in three days.

The pilot reportedly flew from Fairbanks on Sunday to check on a river rafter in a remote area on the upper Noatak River. His plane overturned when landing.

The park dispatched one of its fixed wing pilots to conduct an initial overflight and discovered the overturned red and white Super Cub. The NPS pilot was not able to land but was able to talk to the river rafter at the site, who climbed into the wrecked plane to establish radio contact. The rafter reported that the pilot had begun walking upriver on Monday to find help.

The NPS contracted a Northern Pioneer helicopter working in the area to assist in the effort. When the helicopter was unsuccessful in locating the pilot, the NPS sought assistance from the Coast Guard, which has FLIR (forward looking infrared radar) capability. A US Coast Guard helicopter was dispatched out of Kotzebue in the evening and found the pilot. He required no medical attention. The pilot chose to remain in the field to repair his aircraft with logistical assistance from the NPS.

This SAR was a coordinated effort between the Alaska State Troopers, the US Coast Guard and the NPS.

Source: Jan Maslen, [PublicNow.com](#).

### **Mount Rainier NP Body Of Missing Hiker Recovered**

The body of a missing 74-year-old hiker has been recovered from the park.

Craig Goodwin of Black Diamond was reported missing last Tuesday when he failed to return from an overnight hike. Searchers found his car at the Paul Peak trailhead the next day and scoured the area, focusing on Golden Lakes, Sunset Park and the South Mowich River trail crossing.

On Wednesday evening, searchers in a helicopter spotted Goodwin's body on a gravel bank downstream of the trail crossing. A ground team was able to recover his body.

A coroner will determine the cause of death, but it appears that it stemmed from an attempt to make a stream crossing.

"River crossings can be extremely hazardous this time of the year," said Tracy Swartout, the park's deputy superintendent. "The park's cold, swift-flowing waters require a high level of caution, even for hikers with extensive experience, knowledge and skills."

Source: [The Olympian](#).

### **National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents**

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

- *US Park Police* – On August 20th, a federal judge ruled that a lawsuit filed by the parents of Bijan C. Ghaisar, who was shot to death by two U.S. Park Police officers in 2017, will go to trial on November 16th, one day short of the three-year anniversary of the slaying. The judge, however, must first rule on the federal government's motion to delay the civil case indefinitely until criminal proceedings, if any, are finished in Fairfax County. Source: Tom Jackman, [Washington Post](#).
- *Padre Island NS* – The park will reopen to the public on Thursday as staff continue to repair damage sustained during last month's Hurricane Hanna. The public will have access to the North and South Beaches, the Bird Island Basin day-use area and boat ramp, and Malaquite Beach. Developed campgrounds at Malaquite and Bird Island Basin are still closed, but primitive camping will be allowed on North and South Beaches. Overnight parking will resume at the Bird Island Basin boat ramp, but the dock there is being rebuilt and will remain closed. Source: [KPRC News](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – On August 25th, Kilauea Overlook reopened following a two year closure to repair eruption damage. The 2018 Kilauea eruption and summit collapse created unsafe conditions at the overlook and caused numerous earth cracks and gaping sink holes on Crater Rim Trail leading to the overlook. The trail has been repaired and post-and-cable barriers near the crater's edge have been upgraded. Extensive repairs to Crater Rim Drive near Kilauea Military Camp and to the road leading to Kilauea Overlook have also been completed, and the parking lot has been resurfaced and striped. Source: [Big Island Video News](#).
- *New River Gorge NR* – A federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging Julie Wheeler, 44, and her husband Rodney Wheeler, 48, with conspiracy to obstruct justice. The indictment alleges that, while awaiting sentencing for a federal health care fraud conviction, Julie Wheeler

conspired with her husband Rodney Wheeler and others known to the grand jury to obstruct justice by falsely reporting her fall from Grandview Park overlook in New River Gorge NR. According to the indictment, Rodney and a known person falsely reported her fall to the National Park Service, prompting an emergency 911 call. A massive search and rescue operation ensued. Source: [WWVA News](#).

## National Fire Situation

### **National Interagency Fire Center NIFC Goes To Preparedness Level 5**

Late last week, NIFC raised the national preparedness level to PL 5, the highest of five levels. PL 5 goes into effect when national resources are fully committed and there is high potential for new, significant wildland fires.

As of yesterday, 93 large fires were active nationwide; together, they'd burned more than 1.8 million acres – nearly 1.4 million of the total in California. California currently has the most fire activity with 28 large fires; Arizona and Oregon are tied for second with 14 large fires each.

By this time in 2019, California had recorded 4,292 fires that together had burned a total of 56,000 acres. So far this year, there have been 7,002 fires, a 63 percent increase from last year.

### **Park And Park-Related Fires**

- *Point Reyes NS* – The 2,487-acre Woodward Fire is burning actively in the park between the towns of Olema to the north and Bolinas to the south. Many structures are threatened. The park has been closed; an evacuation warning has been in effect since last Tuesday for the 11.5-mile area west of Highway 1 between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Olema south to Bolinas. On Friday, that warning was expanded to include Olema, Inverness, Inverness Park and Sea Haven. A Type 1 IMT and 228 firefighters are currently committed. The fire is only five percent contained. Sources: NIFC Sit Rep; Matthew Pera, [Marin Independent Journal](#).
- *Rocky Mountain NP* – The Cameron Peak Fire is burning on USFS land just outside the park's northwest boundary. The park has accordingly closed wilderness campsites, cross country zones and trail systems in the northwest section of the park. Trail closures are also in effect – Mummy Pass Trail, Comanche Peak Trail, Mirror Lake Trail, Poudre River Trail, Crater Trail, Colorado River Trail, Red Mountain Trail, Grand Ditch Access, Skeleton Gulch Trail, Thunder Pass Trail, Little Yellowstone Trail and Holzwarth Historic Site access beyond the historic site. Closed cross country travel zones include Cascade Creek, Cache La Poudre, South Cache La Poudre, Hague Creek and Mosquito Creek. Twenty wilderness campsites are also included in this closure area. If the fire moves into the park, fire managers will employ a full suppression strategy. Sources: [Rocky Mountain NP](#); [InciWeb](#).
- *Mojave NP* – The Dome Fire has now burned a total of 43,000 acres, but is 98% contained. A total of 56 firefighters and overhead personnel remain committed. Source: NIFC Sit Rep.
- *Saguaro NP* – The 385-acre Spud Rock Fire is burning in timber and short grass. It's five percent contained. There are 25 firefighters working to suppress the fire. Source: NIFC Sit Rep.
- *Yellowstone NP* – The newly-reported 256-acre Lone Star Fire is burning 23 miles southwest of West Yellowstone. Twenty-nine firefighters are committed. Source: NIFC Sit Rep.

### **Resource Commitment Trend**

Category	August 4	August 11	August 18
Area Command Teams	0	0	0

NIMO Teams	1	1	3
Type 1 Teams	1	6	17
Type 2 Teams	8	6	19
Crews	278	226	501
Engines	906	802	2,297
Helicopters	113	132	223
Total FF/Overhead	12,747	11,158	27,668

### **Fires/Acreage**

Category	2010-2019 Ave	2020 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	40,525	38,286	- 2,239
United States: YTD Acres	5,081,252	3,590,164	- 1,491,088

Sources: [NICC Incident Management Situation Report](#); [National Interagency Fire Center](#); [IMSR Archives](#); [InciWeb Incident Information System](#).

### **Congressional Actions**

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

#### **New Public Laws**

Nothing to report.

#### **Senate Actions**

**August 21** – The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing to examine the finances and operations of the United States Postal Service during COVID-19 and the upcoming elections. Testimony was heard from Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer, United States Postal Service.

#### **House Actions**

**August 22** – The House passed [H.R. 8015](#), to maintain prompt and reliable postal services during the COVID-19 health emergency, by a vote of 257 yeas to 150 nays.

### **National Park Service**

#### **National Park System**

A summary of articles pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the National Park System, or to either all or parts of the entire system.

- *Acting Director Says Lack Of Rangers Shouldn't Limit Access* – Words of wisdom from our new acting director, plus a response from Coalition Chair Phil Francis, excerpted from an article in *National Parks Traveler*. “A shortage of rangers due to the coronavirus pandemic should not be an excuse for limiting access in the National Park System, the National Park Service's latest acting director has told the agency's regional directors. ‘Within the sideboards of guidance, outdoor spaces should be accessible, including outdoor areas such as picnic areas, parking lots, overlooks, open-air areas in forts and gardens, and campgrounds should be fully

accessible,' Margaret Everson, on the job for less than three weeks, told the regional directors in an email [last week]. 'Staffing limitations should not be a constraining factor in providing access to outdoor spaces,' wrote Everson, who also serves Interior Secretary David Bernhardt as his legal counsel....Everson's directive was condemned Friday by Phil Francis, chair of the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks. 'This directive from Acting Director Everson demonstrates her complete lack of understanding regarding how parks operate and what National Park Service employees actually do,' said Francis. 'Her comment should disqualify her from serving as the acting director, as it demonstrates her lack of experience and support for NPS staff and the protection of park resources. Her suggestion that all outdoor facilities, including campgrounds and picnic areas, should be open despite staff shortages suggests she thinks these facilities run themselves. They do not...NPS employees are required to empty the trash, clean the restrooms, take water samples for public health, handle campground issues, respond to medical emergencies, and so much more. To suggest that all these facilities remain open despite staff shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic is a further insult to the dedicated managers and employees of these national parks and puts their health at further risk.'"

Source: Kurt Repanshek, [National Parks Traveler](#).

- *New Online Memorial Commemorates NPS Line-Of-Duty Deaths* – Death on duty or in the line of duty should be honored, so Jeff Ohlfs, a retired chief ranger, compiled an honor roll of National Park Service dead. On the 104th anniversary of the National Park Service, NPSHistory.com released the compilation, entitled NPS Employee Memorial. It can be viewed at: <http://npshistory.com/employee-memorial/> . Ohlfs has spent over thirty years researching and honoring these individuals. He was at Hot Springs National Park when he heard about the 1927 murder of park policeman James Cary. Ohlfs became concerned about remembering all NPS employees who gave their lives to the preservation of our nation's parks. In finalizing this memorial, Ohlfs reached out to NPSHistory.com, which agreed to be its permanent host. This memorial honors and remembers the 260 employees of the National Park Service who have paid the ultimate sacrifice — having died on duty or in the line of duty. "Jeff Ohlfs had hoped to complete the memorial before his retirement," says Dr. Harry Butowsky. "Never one to give up, he contacted me and I agreed to host it on the spot. Obviously, the preservation of our nation's natural and cultural heritage has also carried great personal risk. Our thanks to Jeff for his devotion in assembling this memorial — we pray no one else will be added. The National Park Service now manages 419 separate sites nationwide with more than 20,000 permanent and seasonal employees — all are on the front lines when it comes to tragedy." Please take a moment to reflect and remember these fallen members of the NPS family. Omissions and additions may be sent to [info@npshistory.com](mailto:info@npshistory.com) . Please note that NPSHistory.com is a private, non-commercial electronic library that is not affiliated with the National Park Service. Source: Dr. Harry Butowsky.

## **Around The Parks**

Park reports are in alphabetical order. Included are proposals in the works for new areas or changes in designation for current NPS units.

- *Gettysburg NMP* – The Licensed Battlefield Guides at Gettysburg are raising the alarm over a recent vote in the U.S. House of Representatives to have all Confederate monuments, statues and commemorative placards removed from the park, as well as all other federal parks nationwide. "We urge the U.S. Senate to strip out this provision that would destroy the unequalled collection of monuments, Union and Confederate, that set Gettysburg apart as a great battlefield park and a top visitor destination," said Les Fowler, president of the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides. Fowler said the legislation in question – [HR-7608](#) – recently passed the full House. It would direct the National Park Service to remove all Confederate monuments, memorials, placards and statues at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Antietam, Chickamauga, Manassas, Petersburg, Fredericksburg and 18 other battlefields and historic sites within six months. These Civil War battlefields and their monuments and interpretive plaques have been preserved to help Americans and foreign guests visualize and understand the terrible ordeal that forged this nation. The monuments at Gettysburg from both sides allow us to interpret this national struggle for freedom as it continues today. The provision to remove

Confederate monuments and markers is buried deep within a 727-page bill that also funds the State Department, Agriculture Department and EPA. Despite the House's action, there is still an opportunity to save the important story told at these Civil War parks by urging the Senate to remove this provision from the final funding legislation. Source: Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides.

- *Grand Canyon NP* – A cliff that collapsed in the park has revealed 313-million-year-old footprints. The tracks were in plain view to hikers, but weren't discovered until Allan Krill, a Norwegian geology professor, was hiking with students and saw a boulder containing "conspicuous fossil footprints." Researchers said the footprints show two separate animals passing on the slope of a sand dune, which is significant because of the distinct arrangement of the footprints. "These are by far the oldest vertebrate tracks in Grand Canyon, which is known for its abundant fossil tracks," said Stephen Rowland, a paleontologist at the University of Nevada. "More significantly, they are among the oldest tracks on Earth of shelled-egg-laying animals, such as reptiles, and the earliest evidence of vertebrate animals walking in sand dunes." Source: Maddie Capron, [Sacramento Bee](#).
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The park has launched a campaign to stop an increasing problem with visitors making dams and/or aligning rocks in park streams. Moving rocks in creeks and streams from their natural resting places can alter water flow and affect aquatic life in the waterways. The park's educational message is "Don't Move Rocks." Source: [WBIR News](#).

### **Briefly Noted**

Other matters of interest pertaining to the parks and their people.

- *Bear Spray Alert* – UDAP, a bear spray manufacturer, has issued an alert concerning UDAP Safety Orange Bear Spray purchased from Costco between March and August, 2020. The company reports it received complaints the canister did not work when test fired. If you own the spray, the company advises you check the following lot codes: P1709, P1804, P1805, P1806, P1807, or P1817. UDAP urges you to contact them directly with any issues at (866) 232-7911. Source: [NBCMontana.com](#).

### **The Coalition**

Summary of recent developments within the Coalition, including some of the actions that CPANP took on your behalf. Links to specified documents are embedded in each entry.

- *Presidential Nomination Acceptance Speech Locale* – In response to the president's recent announcement that he is considering both Gettysburg National Military Park and the White House as the setting for his upcoming speech to accept the Republican Presidential nomination, the Coalition [issued a statement in opposition and sent a letter to the acting director](#) of the National Park Service, which says in part that "it is profoundly inappropriate to stage a high profile and partisan political event, such as a major political party's presidential nomination acceptance speech, at Gettysburg National Military Park, a hallowed site that belongs to all Americans."
- *Presidential Campaign Events* – As a follow-up to President Trump's proposal to issue his acceptance speech at Gettysburg, CPANP [issued a broader letter](#) to express our concerns about continuing reports that the Trump Campaign or Republican National Committee is planning to hold upcoming campaign events in units of the National Park System.
- *Presidential Campaign Events, Continued* – CPANP [submitted a FOIA request](#) for more information concerning the NPS closure of portions of Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial on August 17th to allow filming of a Republican political campaign ad involving Vice President Mike Pence.

- *Curecanti Authorization* – The Coalition [sent a letter to Congressional leadership](#), urging them to keep the Colorado Outdoor Recreation & Economy (CORE) Act as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act when the conference committee meets in the coming weeks. This act would also officially authorize the establishment of Curecanti National Recreation Area, thus making it a full-fledged member of the National Park System.
- *Utah Oil and Gas Lease Offering* – BLM’s Utah state office has announced that it will defer all of the controversial 87,000 acres of oil and gas lease parcels in southeastern Utah’s redrock country that it had proposed to be offered for lease in the September 2020 sale. CPANP has issued [several statements and op-eds](#) about this sale and issued this joint release following the announcement:
- *Director Vela’s Departure* – Coalition Chair Phil Francis [spoke to several media outlets](#) following the news of David Vela’s departure as acting director of the NPS.
- *Great Smokies Mountain Bike Trail* – The Coalition has [submitted comments](#) on the proposed mountain biking trail system that would be developed within a section of the Foothills Parkway, an area administered by Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It is extremely rare, if not unprecedented, for the NPS to develop a new single-track “mountain bike trail system” and associated facilities on park lands.
- *ANWR Drilling* – The Coalition [issued a short statement](#) condemning the Trump Administration’s decision to open a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling.

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

## **Park People**

### **NPS Alumni**

#### **Director Stanton Receives Murie Award**

Former National Park Service Director — and the latest Murie Award honoree — Robert Stanton underscored his former agency’s important role in preserving the nation’s history of racial conflicts during his award acceptance on August 11th.

In his comments, Stanton told the virtual audience that historic sites like Sand Creek, Manzanar and Little Rock Central High School are important additions to the system because they tell the story of America, both good and bad.

Stanton received the Murie Spirit of Conservation Award from the Teton Science Schools. The Science Schools gives the annual award to someone who has demonstrated “an exemplary commitment to the protection of wildlife and wild places.”

The award is named for the legendary Wyoming conservation family that was involved in creation of the Wilderness Act, the establishment of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other initiatives. Stanton received the award at a time of social unrest and as the country reckons with its history of racism.

“Why would we want to preserve places of difficulty, places of shame ... places of injustice?” Stanton asked. “To remind us we can overcome difficulties. To learn, inspire and become better citizens. That is why we preserve these places.”

Stanton saw significant progress during his time with the Park Service. While serving at his first post, the Grand Teton National Park Buffalo Valley entrance station at Moran in 1962, President Kennedy signed a bill preserving the home of escaped slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass as a national historic site.

Douglass, who said all progress is “born of earnest struggle,” resonates with Stanton, Stanton said. Douglass’ spirit “burns deeply within me,” he said, and continues to inspire those seeking justice today.

“I applaud the young people who are in the streets,” Stanton said of today’s Black Lives Matter supporters. Recent tumult and the coronavirus pandemic further expose inequities, disparities and unfairness among races in the U.S., he said.

Americans have erred, made misjudgments, stumbled and faltered “on that noble journey [toward] freedom, justice, equity and dignity,” Stanton said. “There are many deficiencies ... shortcomings in our journey,” he said. But “we will not wallow in remorse.”

Source: [WyoFile.com](http://WyoFile.com).

### **NPS Alumni Passing Of Charlie Peterson**

Charlie Peterson, 71, a career NPS ranger and chief ranger, died of brain cancer in Ivins, Utah, on August 17th. The following obituary was prepared by his family:

“Charlie’s life was full of adventure. He loved the outdoors, creating, and most of all helping people. He was not afraid to try new things – scuba diving, caving, kayaking, building furniture, making pottery, weaving a Navajo rug, rowing the Colorado River, and backpacking.

“He had a great curiosity about the world and was never afraid of a little hard work. He believed very strongly that he could accomplish hard tasks by staying focused, setting goals, digging deep down and channeling inner strength. He wanted everyone to succeed in their pursuits and was willing to help others without taking any credit.

“He grew up in East Texas with his parents, Harmon and Mary, and his two brothers, Tommy and Jimmy. After graduating from college with a degree in industrial engineering, Charlie was looking forward to working in that field when fate stepped in. In 1968, he was hired for a seasonal position with Carlsbad Caverns NP as a fire control aid. He found his calling and switched gears to law enforcement and fire.

“He joyfully gave the next 36 years of his life to protecting our nation’s national parks and their visitors. He also found the love of his life, Marta. She joined his adventure on December 30, 1970 and they became partners and a force to be reckoned with. Their son, David, completed their family a few years later.

“Over his career, he worked at Carlsbad Caverns NP, Buffalo NR, Sequoia/Kings Canyon NP, Lake Mead NRA, Arches NP, Yosemite NP, twice at Grand Canyon NP, and Bryce Canyon NP. In 1983, he saved his diving partner’s life during a diving accident at Yosemite NP. He received the Department of Interior Valor Award and was honored on the floor of the House of Representatives in Washington DC in 1985. In 2004, he finished out his career and retired as the chief ranger of Mesa Verde National Park.

“Retirement was just the beginning for him. Marta was always worried about how he would keep busy after retirement. Her concern was misplaced. He never really retired. After being introduced to the new pottery studio near his home, he started making pottery and discovered new ways to create. Within the year, he was running the studio and selling his work. His days were full of pottery, backpacking and river trips. He loved taking his granddaughters on adventures. He took them hiking, bike riding and exploring, even showing them scorpions in the backyard in the dead of night with a black light. At the same time, he missed the adrenaline from his time as a park ranger.

“In 2004, after retirement, he returned to his true passion, wildland firefighting, and spent the next 15 years working seasonally. He first volunteered with the National Park Service and then the State of

Utah. He then moved on to support the local fire departments of Ivins and Santa Clara, finishing as the transitional fire chief for the newly formed joint Ivins/Santa Clara fire department. He was on his last wildland fire, digging lines and hauling equipment in 2019 at the ripe old age of 70.

“Charlie freely shared his life with his family, friends and even strangers. He was always available to mentor young firefighters and considered men and women equal in the fire world. A person of character can impact the world and what a hole is created when that person is no more. Charlie exemplified the importance of character and he will be greatly missed.

“He is survived by his wife, Marta, his brothers, Jimmy and Tommy, his son, David (Christie) and his two granddaughters, Keegan and Rowen. Charlie’s wishes were to celebrate his life and chose not to have a formal service for his death. In lieu of flowers, you may choose to honor him with a donation to the National Park Foundation or, in his words, go take a hike.

“My father taught me the importance of hard work, determination, toughness, compassion, and generosity,” says David. “He was the strongest man I’ve ever known. He loved to teach and to help others. Whether it was how to change out a water pump, helping a neighbor with their fire alarm or teaching his granddaughters to make pottery. I am thankful for all the time I was able to spend with him. If I am able to be half as good a man as him then I will have lived a very good life.”

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Charles "Charlie" Milton Peterson please visit the Tribute Store (below).

Source: [Tribute Archive](#).

### **NPS Alumni Passing Of Al Schneider**

Al Schneider, 88, a career ranger with the NPS, died on August 12th.

After completing a geography degree at Syracuse University, he began a 33-year career with the National Park Service. With assignments from coast to coast, Al and Mary, his wife of 64 years, made many life-long friends and raised their family in Gettysburg, Washington DC, Cape Cod, Grand Canyon, Death Valley and finally to Mineral and Red Bluff, where Al served as chief ranger of Lassen Volcanic. He retired from that position in 1992.

Al was preceded in death by his five brothers and sisters. Al is survived by wife, Mary, children, Shawn, Scott, Kurt, and Sabrina, nine grandchildren, daughters-in-laws, and many nieces and nephews.

You can leave notes for his family at [www.chapeloftheflowers.net](http://www.chapeloftheflowers.net) . In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Lassen House Senior Living employees, where Al received excellent loving care.

Source: [DignityMemorial.com](#).

### **National Park Service Recent NPS Management Changes**

Here’s a listing of recent personnel changes in the NPS. Click on the links following the brief summaries for additional details:

- *Shiloh NMP* – Allen Etheridge has been named the park’s new superintendent. He begins his new assignment on October 11th. Since 2015, Etheridge has served as superintendent of the Southeast Arizona Group, consisting of Chiricahua NM, Coronado NM, and Fort Bowie NHS. His permanent assignments include service at Assateague Island, Everglades, Natchez Trace and Big Bend. Source: [Savannah Courier](#).

- *Guadalupe Mountains NP* – Eric Leonard will take over as the park’s superintendent this coming Sunday. He comes to the position from Minuteman Missile NHS; prior to that, he served as the chief of interpretation and education at Andersonville. Source: [Jessica Onsurez, Carlsbad Current-Argus](#).
- *Shenandoah NP* – Patrick Kenney has taken over as the park’s superintendent and will also be overseeing Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP. Kenney has been deputy superintendent at Yellowstone since 2017; prior to that, he served as superintendent at Cape Lookout. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Home of FDR NHS* – Amy Bracewell will become the park’s superintendent on September 13th, overseeing three other sites as well – Eleanor Roosevelt NHS, Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, and Martin Van Buren NHS. She’s currently the superintendent at Saratoga NHP. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Southeast Utah Group* – Patricia “Patty” Trap has been named superintendent of the Southeast Utah Group, which consists of Arches, Canyonlands, Hovenweep and Natural Bridges. She came to the group from MWRO, where she had been deputy regional director since 2012. Source: [The Times-Independent](#).

## **From The Archives**

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1995. All entries appear in the original verb tense; “submitters” are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Mount Rushmore NP* – The annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, which was held in the Black Hills last week, had a significant impact on both visitation and operations at Mount Rushmore and other area parks. As of last Thursday, over 41,000 bikers had visited the park - all in addition to normal visitation. Traffic was highly congested, and there were numerous law enforcement, EMS and visitor service incidents. Members of more than 20 outlaw biker gangs have been seen in the park. Rally organizers estimated that as many as 200,000 bikers would be in the Black Hills during the week, making this the biggest biker rally in the nation. The rally officially began on August 6th and ended on August 13th. Submitted by Chief Ranger Mike Pflaum.
- *Everglades NP* – On August 7th, four Navy SEALs embarked on a cross-country trip through the park, launching two kayaks from Pa-Hay-Okee overlook along the main park road. The SEALs, who were engaged in a non-military orientation exercise, intended to travel across the flooded sawgrass prairies of Shark Slough for two days, then connect with a coastal river at its headwaters and follow deeper saltwater rivers back to Flamingo. By 1 p.m. the following afternoon, the team was suffering from heat exposure, caused by high temperatures and humidity and a high solar radiation factor, and was also finding travel via kayak difficult in this terrain. Rangers Ben Morgan and John Anthony responded to their radio call for aid by traveling to the area in separate airboats, rendering assistance, and guiding the SEALs to the main park road. GPS instruments used by the SEALs and the responding rangers helped the rangers find them. Airboat rescues are not common in the Everglades due to the fact that private use of airboats is prohibited in most areas of park. Few visitors attempt to cross this remote wilderness by other means. Submitted by District Ranger Bob Panko.
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* – While driving to work on August 6th, ranger Tony Welch came upon a man holding a gallon container of antifreeze at the Soco Gap overlook - an area which had been under surveillance since June, when resource specialist Rebecca Silvers found several cups of antifreeze in the area. Welch asked the man, subsequently identified as Valastimil Trejbal, if he'd been placing the containers of antifreeze in this area. Trejbal affirmed that he had, saying that they were being used to collect a genus of beetles that he was studying. Trejbal was arrested on charges of collecting without a permit, illegally taking wildlife, illegally possessing

wildlife, and destroying natural resources. Shortly thereafter, ranger Darius Jones came upon a second man at the overlook. Rostislav Sehnal, a Czech national who spoke little English, said that he was awaiting a friend. Jones subsequently determined that Sehnal was Trejbal's assistant. Sehnal was arrested on the same charges. During the investigation, rangers found field notes showing other collections sites in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia - sixteen in national parks, six in national forests, ten in state parks, and five on private lands. The pair may also have collected in Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas; sites there are still under investigation. Some collection sites were marked with shredded white plastic bags, used as flagging. Each site had from six to 33, 16-ounce plastic cups filled with antifreeze. The cups were buried in the ground, with their tops level with the surface, and were covered with bark, rocks or boards. Indications are that larger mammals ingested the contents of some of the cups at each of the sites. Trejbal and Sehnal have since been convicted of illegal taking of wildlife; they have been banned from all NPS and USFS sites for six months (Sehnal) to three years (Trejbal), fined, and required to identify all collection sites, remove all containers, and surrender all specimens to the NPS. Submitted by Protection Specialist Larry Freeman.

## **A Closing Observation**

"Ever since I have been old enough to be cynical I have been visiting national parks, and they are a cure for cynicism...They were cooked in the same alembic as other land laws...but they came out as something different. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst. Without them, millions of American lives, including mine, would have been poorer. The world would have been poorer."

Author [Wallace Stegner](#)

## **Acknowledgements**

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

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- Issue Contributors: Ed Whitaker, Larry Frederick, Bill Walters, Dr. Harry Butowsky, Mike Greenfield

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.

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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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