



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, January 20, 2021

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Incidents

Washington Area Parks Federal Agencies In DC At High State Of Alert For Inaugural

“Federal agencies are taking drastic measures to keep employees safe with the looming threat of violence surrounding President-elect Joe Biden’s inauguration, including by hosting additional federal security personnel and even telling some workers to evacuate their homes,” reports *Government Executive*. “Following the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol last week, federal offices in the Washington area and around the country are cautioning workers, many of whom are already working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to stay away, effective immediately.”

In an unprecedented move, the Mall and much of the surrounding area have already been closed to the public. Hundreds of thousands of spectators typically watch the ceremonies, but this year the Secret Service has launched a massive security operation to protect the Biden inauguration following this month’s short-lived insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Vehicle traffic in much of the city will be prohibited or limited to residents and businesses only. Metro is shuttering stations in the city’s core and near the Mall. Street closures will continue through Thursday, and are subject to change at the discretion of the Secret Service. Maps in the *Washington Post* ([click here](#)) provides further details on closures.

As noted in last week’s newsletter, the Washington Monument will be closed through January 24th and other NPS facilities around D.C. will be temporarily closed due to "credible threats" from groups involved in the January 6th Capitol invasion. The park released a statement on Monday that said, in part:

"[The] the National Mall and Memorial Parks is implementing temporary closures of National Park Service public facilities, parking areas and roadways in response to credible threats to visitors and park resources. Groups involved in the January 6, 2021 riots at the US Capitol continue to threaten to disrupt the 59th presidential inauguration on January 20, 2021. This includes the set up and execution of inaugural events, which occur in several park areas. In response, the National Park Service will suspend tours of the Washington Monument beginning January 11, 2021 through January 24, 2021 and may institute temporary closures of public access to roadways, parking areas and restrooms within the National Mall and Memorial Parks if conditions warrant, to protect public safety and park resources."

Full articles [here](#) and [here](#). Sources: Lauren Tierney, Tim Meko, Hannah Dormido, Laris Karklis and Joe Fox, *Washington Post*; Eric Katz, *Government Executive*.

Great Smoky Mountains NP

Boy Attacked By Black Bear

A bear attack in the park four days ago has left a 16-year-old boy hospitalized in Asheville, North Carolina.

The attack occurred in the Hazel Creek section of the park at backcountry campsite No. 84. The camp is about 4.5 miles from Lake Fontana's shoreline on the national park's North Carolina side.

The boy and his father were camping with food and equipment properly stored when he was ripped from his hammock by a black bear. Park officials state that the incident happened around 10:30 p.m.

Following the attack, the boy's father forced the bear from the campsite and began administering first aid to his son.

After hiking to Lake Fontana's shore, they were airlifted by Graham County Rescue EMS to Mission Health in Asheville.

[Full story](#). Source: Emily Morgan, *Outsider*.

Golden Gate NRA Hiker Swept Out To Sea, Presumed Drowned

A San Jose man in his 30s has been swept from the bluffs into the ocean in the Marin Headlands area off Point Bonita. The man and his friends were scrambling along the bluffs when the high surf caught him at about 2:30 p.m. last Sunday.

Rangers, personnel from the Southern Marin Fire Protection District, a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter and lifeboat, and a California Highway Patrol helicopter were all part of the search for the man, which was hampered by extreme ocean conditions. The search was suspended after nightfall, but was to resume on Monday.

[Full story](#). Source: Bay Area News Service.

North Cascades NP Search In Progress For Missing Man

North Cascades rangers are searching for an Everett man whose car was found in eastern Whatcom County.

Park rangers are looking for Christopher Jarman, 31, a white man who is 6-foot-3-inches tall and weighs approximately 160 pounds.

Jarman's 2008 Honda CRV was located by park personnel on January 13th along the north side of Highway 20 near the Goodell Creek Campground, approximately one mile west of Newhalem.

Jarman, who is believed to be suicidal, was last seen Monday at his Everett home. He is believed to be in possession of a firearm and traveling with a small, white Blue Heeler-type dog.

[Full story](#). Source: David Rasbach, *The Bellingham Herald*.

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Fire Activity Remains Light Nationwide

The national preparedness level remains at PL 1.

Six new large fires were reported last week, four in Texas and two in Montana. To date, 373 wildfires have burned 6,251 acres in the United States.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	December 18	January 8	January 15
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	0	0	0
Type 2 Teams	0	0	0
Crews	8	0	9
Engines	21	2	10
Helicopters	5	0	1
Total FF/Overhead	280	11	65

Fires/Acreage

Category	2011-2010 Ave	2021 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	482	373	+ 109
United States: YTD Acres	9,234	6,251	- 2,983

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

Nothing to report.

House Actions

January 11 – Read a letter from Paul D. Irving, in which he announced his resignation as Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives, effective January 7, 2021. Pursuant to the provisions of section 208(a) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, the Chair announced the appointment of Timothy Paul Blodgett of the State of New York to act as and to exercise the duties of Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives, effective today.

January 12 – The House observed a moment of silence in honor and remembrance of the dedication and service of the fallen United States Capitol Police Officers Brian D. Sicknick and Howard Leibengood.

January 12 – The House agreed to [H. Res. 21](#), calling on Vice President Michael R. Pence to convene and mobilize the principal officers of the executive departments of the Cabinet to activate section 4 of

the 25th Amendment to declare President Donald J. Trump incapable of executing the duties of his office and to immediately exercise powers as acting President, by a vote of 223 yeas to 205 nays.

January 13 – The House agreed to [H. Res. 24](#), impeaching Donald John Trump, President of the United States, for high crimes and misdemeanors, by a vote of 232 yeas to 197 nays.

January 15 – Read a letter from Representative Richmond, wherein he resigned as Representative for the Second Congressional District of Louisiana, effective today, January 15, 2021. Rep. Richmond has been designated to be the director of the White House Office of Public Engagement in the Biden Administration.

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.

- *US And Ireland Sign Sister Park Agreement* – DOI has signed a memorandum of understanding with Irish authorities pairing Glacier National Park and Killarney National Park in County Kerry, Ireland, as “sister parks.” The arrangement furthers international cooperation between the two countries and allows the participating parks to collaborate and exchange ideas about how to manage these cherished, protected places to the benefit of both countries. The sister park arrangement allows the participants to benefit by sharing experiences and approaches to collaboration, including local efforts to work with gateway communities, regional and local economies, friends groups, and partner organizations. This may be accomplished primarily through the exchange of managerial experience and best practices, technical and professional knowledge, information, data, technology, training, and experience. Source: National Park Service.
- *National Park Service Directory* – The NPS has published a new and detailed online directory with contact information for all its superintendents and WASO and regional managers. The listing includes current addresses and phone numbers and also has a color-coded map of the current regions. [You can reach it at this link](#). Source: National Park Service.

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.

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* – The historic Linville River Bridge, built in 1940, will be closed for the next few months while it undergoes a major rehabilitation, a project that has been in the works for several years. “Recent bridge drainage system investigations revealed deterioration of the existing cast iron and clay drains within the earth-filled interior,” said a park spokesperson. “The work will provide a comprehensive overhaul of the drainage system as well as installation of a new waterproofing system, reconstruction of the paving, walks and curbs, and rehabilitation of the extensive stonework.” During the \$2.3 million renovation, the parkway will be closed to all visitors from Milepost 316.5 at the Linville River parking area to Milepost 317.5 at the U.S. 221 underpass in Avery County. [Full story](#). Source: Karen Chávez, *Asheville Citizen Times*.
- *Death Valley NP* – The park continues to set records for high temperatures – even now in mid-winter. The park, which is the world record holder for the hottest temperature recorded on Earth, set another record on January 16th, reaching 90 degrees in January for the first time in its 110 years of records. The old January record was 87 degrees, set in 1962 and tied in 2015. Death Valley holds the world record for hottest temperature at 134 degrees, set during last summer’s extreme heat wave. [Full story](#). Source: Scott Sisteck, KOMO News.

- *Florissant Fossil Beds NM* – The park, located west of Colorado Springs in Colorado, grew by 280 acres in December, courtesy of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. The addition creates more access to address wildfire mitigation on the western side of the monument and provides additional montane habitat. [Full story](#). Source: *National Parks Traveler*.
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – For Nancy East (known to hikers as “Seal Mom”) and Christ Ford (known as “Pacer”), October 3rd marked a legendary moment in both their lives and history. The duo finished hiking all the trails in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in a new record-breaking time. According to *National Parks Traveler*, they finished in 29 days, 10 hours, and 12 minutes. To put into perspective the scale to which they hiked, the Smokies have more than 800 miles of winding, uphill trails. The two had to walk 947.9 miles or almost 32 miles a day. [Full story](#). Source: Madison Miller, *Outsider*.
- *Homestead NHP* – Legislation renaming the National Park Service site west of Beatrice as Homestead National Historical Park was signed into law last week. Congressman Adrian Smith, who introduced the bill in February, told other representatives that the word “monument” evokes images of a single statue, or natural feature, which does not fit the description of Homestead. The National Park Service site features a heritage museum, education center, hiking trails and 100 acres of restored tallgrass prairie. [Full story](#). Source: Scott Koperski, *Daily Sun*.
- *Jimmy Carter NHP* – President Trump has signed the bill that will upgrade the status of locales in Plains tied to former President Jimmy Carter. What was formerly called the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site is now the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park. The park will include the farm where Carter grew up, the train depot that once was headquarters for his presidential campaign, his former high school and the city center. After Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, die, their home and burial sites will also be included in the park. They are ages 96 and 93, respectively. [Full story](#). Source: Tia Mitchell, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home NM* – On December 10th, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi, became the 423rd unit of the National Park System. The monument was authorized by the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9), which was signed by President Trump on March 12, 2019. The new monument commemorates the legacies of two civil rights activists who, from their modest, three-bedroom ranch home, devoted their lives to ending racial injustice and improving the quality of life for African Americans. While the home is not currently open to public tours, in the coming months the National Park Service will work with partners and the community to develop plans to accommodate visitors. The national monument consists of an approximately 0.15-acre parcel of land and the Evers’ home. [Full story](#). Source: National Park Service.
- *Point Reyes NS* – There are so many massive seals coming ashore at Drakes Beach that officials have had to shut down the beach. The park closed off access to the beach because elephant seals were storming it, looking for a mate. The seals are massive (they can weigh up to 5,000 pounds, which is the same size as a small SUV), making visitor safety a serious concern. It’s not the first time the giant seals have taken over the beach. In 2019, officials had to close the area when elephant seals started having pups on the beach, parking lot and visitor center ramps. [Full story](#). Source: Maddie Capron, *Sacramento Bee*.
- *Yellowstone NP* – Yellowstone National Park is set to rehabilitate historic buildings in the Fort Yellowstone area this year, thanks to the funding via the Great American Outdoors Act. Fort Yellowstone was built between the 1880’s and early 1900’s by the U.S. Cavalry. It was designated as a National Historic Landmark District in 2003 and currently serves as the park’s headquarters and employee housing. Years of severe neglect have compromised many of its structures, though, which are in dire need of rehabilitation. Fort Yellowstone is included in the Mammoth Hot Springs Historic District in the northwest portion of the park and is composed of

35 structures. The buildings include the park's first-ever administrative and concessions facilities. [A detailed history of Fort Yellowstone is available at this link.](#) [Full story.](#) Source: Danielle Johnson, *Jackson Hole News and Guide*.

The Federal Government

News from around the federal government – including DOI, kindred agencies and the courts – of consequence to the NPS.

- *Trump Administration Push For Schedule F Running Out Of Time* – According to the *Washington Post*, the administration's efforts to institute a new job classification schedule, "an extraordinary effort to reshape large parts of the nonpartisan government workforce...appears to have lost steam, facing time constraints and legal hurdles as the administration prepares to leave office." The new administration is unlikely to keep the implementation process going: "Biden has not taken a public position on the order, which would dramatically remake the federal government if enacted. But he said during his campaign that he would reverse other mandates issued by the Trump White House seen as hostile to federal employees. House Democrats and experts in the civil service have said they believe Biden would not support any effort to remove job protections from the workforce..." [Full story.](#) Source: Lisa Rein, *Washington Post*.
- *DOI Official Ordered Employees To Promote Trump Campaign Tweet* – CREW, the publication of the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, published the following last week: "The spokesman for the Interior Department ordered agency employees to tweet pro-Trump content and tag the @realDonaldTrump Twitter handle in the weeks leading up to the 2020 presidential election, according to new Interior Department emails obtained by CREW. Agency officials raised concerns about whether doing so violated the Hatch Act, given that Trump used the account for campaigning, but ultimately complied with Communications Director Nicholas Goodwin's demands...Interior employees had good reason to be concerned about tagging the @realDonaldTrump account. The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from engaging in partisan political activity while on duty, and tagging the @realDonaldTrump handle in official tweets—especially in the weeks leading up to the presidential election—could very well be considered a partisan political act. The @realDonaldTrump account is not an official White House Twitter account; it is a personal account dating back to March 2009. Trump long used the account for partisan political purposes, including to promote his reelection campaign, attack his political opponents, and most recently to encourage followers to attend a protest in Washington DC that turned into a deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Twitter permanently suspended the account last week 'due to the risk of further incitement of violence.'" The article contains the text of some tweets and provides larger context to these Hatch Act violations. [Full story.](#) Source: Nikhel Sus, CREW.

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.

- *Letter To Biden Team On Conservation Work* – The Coalition [signed on to a letter](#) to President-Elect Joe Biden, requesting that as his team works to address the current public health crisis and develop an economic recovery plan, they take advantage of the opportunity to create a large number of green, long-term jobs performing vital conservation and restoration work.
- *Comments On Proposed Spaceport* – CPANP [signed on to a letter](#) sent to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources requesting that the comment period be extended and a public meeting be held regarding the proposed Coastal Consistency Determination for Spaceport Camden.

- *Restoring The National Parks* – The Coalition has developed and [released a roadmap](#) for the incoming Biden administration to protect national parks and public lands, among numerous other recommendations on issue areas ranging from the climate to the federal workforce. This roadmap follows four years of what the Coalition calls the “politicization of our national parks” and “a disdain for the NPS mission and its employees.”

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

Passages

A listing of the deaths of retired and active NPS employees and NPS friends from the past few months:

- *George Whitmore*, 89, a rock climber who made the first ascent of The Nose, died from Covid 19 on January 1st. Whitmore, Warren Harding, and Wayne Merry made the ascent, requiring 45 days of fixing pitches over 3,000 feet. The team spent 12 days on the final push which they completed on November 12, 1958, at 6 a.m. Whitmore worked as a pharmacist and continued to climb through his 89 years, including, in his mid-70s, making an ascent of Cathedral Peak in Tuolumne Meadows. He was an activist and lobbied for the California Wilderness Act of 1984, which protected the Ansel Adams Wilderness, the Dinkey Lakes Wilderness and Monarch Wilderness, and sections of the John Muir. His hard work culminated in the creation of both the Mineral King Wilderness and the Kaiser. His wife Nancy survives him. [Full story](#). Source: *Gripped*.

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:

- *Kym Hall*, currently the superintendent of Colonial NHP, has been selected as the new director for the National Capital Area. Prior to her time at Colonial NHP, Hall served as the acting superintendent of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Wright Brothers National Memorial and Fort Raleigh National Historic Site in North Carolina and at Glacier National Park in Montana, where she held the position of deputy superintendent from 2011 to 2013. From 2005 to 2011, Hall served in permanent and acting park manager positions in Southeast Arizona and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. She also served for four years in the NPS’s national office in Washington, DC as the regulations program manager and later as special assistant to the assistant secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, advising on park policy and project management. [Full story](#). Source: National Park Service.
- *John Broward*, chief ranger at Hawaii Volcanoes, has been selected to serve as the permanent superintendent of Kaloko-Honokōhau and Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Parks. Broward began his career with the park service as a summer volunteer in 1983 at Biscayne National Park in Florida. He later worked as a seasonal employee at Crater Lake and Everglades national parks as well as Canaveral National Seashore. In 1994, he accepted his first permanent position as a backcountry area ranger at Crater Lake National Park. In 2001, he moved to Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park where he served as a field ranger, emergency services supervisor and eventually as chief ranger in 2015. [Full story](#). Source: *Big Island News*.
- *Ahna Wilson* has been named the superintendent of Women’s Rights National Historical Park. She will also oversee the management of Harriet Tubman National Historical Park. Wilson currently serves as the site manager for Eisenhower National Historic Site. She joined the NPS in 2009 as a historian for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. [Full story](#). Source: FingerLakes1.com.

From The Archives

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1996. All entries appear in the original verb tense; "submitters" are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Shenandoah NP* – The report below is a follow-up on the incident reported in last week's edition concerning the searches conducted for people caught out in a 1996 blizzard that dropped up to 47" of snow in the park: All active searches for people in the park have concluded. The park received a total of 28 reports of missing or stranded people or groups. These resulted in five rescues of 10 people; the remaining 23 cases were closed through investigations. One search team snowshoed into Loft Mountain campground to investigate tracks in the snow which had been spotted from aircraft. There they found evidence that someone had broken into the office and fashioned make-shift snowshoes from crutches, badminton rackets, wire, duct tape and cardboard. Tracks indicated that the person who used these "snowshoes" had been successful in reaching a plowed road. The snowshoes were abandoned at that point, but have been recovered and retained for historical interest. The incident management team is now focusing on restoring the park's normal SAR/emergency service capability by clearing SAR/fire facilities and returning and rehabilitating SAR equipment. Residential areas are also being cleared so that required occupants can return. Submitted by Greg Stiles.
- *Denali NP* – On October 7th, Darren English, who runs a masonry and concrete cutting business in Fairbanks, called the park and reported that Thomas Lofgren, a Swedish national, had apparently removed a number of geodes from Denali. English reported that Lofgren had brought the geodes to him and asked to have them cut; during their conversation, Lofgren told English that they'd been taken from the park. Ranger Sandy Kogl recalled having issued Lofgren a backcountry permit, located the document, and noted that Lofgren had returned from his backcountry trip on October 3rd. District ranger Tom Habecker faxed a description of Lofgren to Canadian customs officials at Beaver Creek, who subsequently identified him, found some "rocks" in his vehicle, and called the park. Habecker asked them to seize the geodes and obtain a written statement from Lofgren. The customs officials told Lofgren that they could deny him entry into Canada if he refused to cooperate. He then provided them with a statement admitting the theft of the geodes from the Cathedral Mountain area within Denali. The geodes were tagged as evidence and transferred to the park by Alaska state troopers. Lofgren was mailed a citation for violation of natural resource preservation regs. Lofgren reportedly intends to return to the park next year to climb Mt. McKinley. If he fails to pay his fine, INS in Anchorage will be notified and he will be met upon arrival at the airport. Submitted by Ken Kehrer.
- *Mount Rainier NP* – Winter campers David Joiner and Kelli Howard were caught in a storm during their overnight trip to Camp Muir last weekend. On Sunday, they contacted park rangers by cellular phone to report that they were lost, but were okay for another night. Rangers gave them instructions on how to descend the snowfield and return to Paradise. The pair camped at the 9,000-foot level on Mount Rainier that night, then called the park the following morning. The battery in their phone died in mid-conversation, however, so rangers were uncertain on their condition or situation. The weather on Monday was severe, with strong winds, blowing snow and very limited visibility, thereby precluding any possibility of a search. On Tuesday, a ground team headed toward Camp Muir. A break in the weather later permitted a helicopter search of the upper snowfield, but the effort proved fruitless. The helicopter then descended below the cloud level and found footprints in a remote drainage far east of the Muir snowfield. The helicopter crew eventually found Joiner and Howard at the mountain's 6,000-foot level. They were hypothermic, exhausted and on their second day without food or water. They had abandoned all their gear at the 9,000-foot level and had spent Monday night huddling in a snow cave that they'd dug with their hands. The helicopter flew them to a local hospital for evaluation and treatment. Submitted by Rick Kirschner.

A Closing Observation

"Visits to national park areas have multiplied threefold in less than a generation. Far more of us than ever before walk in wilderness now and time-travel in history simultaneously. As we enjoy and save our parks, building their defenses in our hearts, the parks help save us. Interconnections form in our depths. The pattern of the whole grows stronger. We hear again the great orchestra of earth and life, and our spirits begin again to sing, tentatively yet, but more and more in harmony."

Darwin Lambert, cited in *National Parks in Crisis*, 1982

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Emily Thompson, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, Duncan Morrow and Mark Forbes
- Issue Contributors: Steve Hastings

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.

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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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