



## The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, February 10, 2021

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### Incidents

#### **Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P Two Killed In Plane Crash**

A plane that crashed last Thursday morning in Wrangell-St Elias National Park and Preserve, killing two, may have broken up in midair, federal investigators say.

The Cessna 185 was operated by Copper Valley Air Service and carried a pilot and one passenger, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. A Rescue Coordination Center crew flew to the site in a helicopter Thursday and confirmed that neither survived. On Saturday, state troopers and National Park Service rangers were able to recover the bodies of both the pilot and passenger from the plane. They were taken to the state's medical examiner for identification.

The plane, which also carried U.S. mail, was flying from Gulkana to McCarthy. The debris came to rest in forested, mountainous terrain that's difficult to access.

The crash occurred about 13 miles northeast of Chitina. The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center was notified of the crash at about 11:41 a.m. Thursday by an emergency locator transmitter, troopers said. The rescue crew described the wreckage as being in two distinct places. The main fuselage landed in one location and the tail and other debris were found about 200 yards behind it, which would indicate the airplane broke up in flight.

Midair breakups are fairly unusual, and often involve flying in bad weather. Investigators are looking into the weather at the time, which was cold but didn't immediately appear to be a factor. It was minus 20 in Gulkana on Friday morning.

[Full story](#). Source: Zaz Hollander, *Anchorage Daily News*.

#### **Golden Gate NRA Man Killed In Fall From Cliff In Marin Headlands**

Rangers are investigating the death of Luis Vicente, 28, who fell off a cliff in the Marin Headlands in an attempt to help a friend who slipped.

The park received a call around 4:30 p.m. on January 21st, reporting that three people were stranded while hiking on the bluffs below Conzelman Road near Battery Rathbone. A rescue team was dispatched.

One of the survivors was able to climb to safety and the other required rescuing by helicopter.

Vicente and his two friends are suspected of having being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the fall.

[Full story](#). Source: Adrian Rodriguez, *Marin Independent Journal*.

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

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

- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – Kilauea Volcano is erupting. Lava activity is confined to Halema‘uma‘u with lava erupting from a vent on the northwest side of the crater. As of the morning of February 9th, the lava in the western, active portion of the lake in Halema‘uma‘u was about 700 feet deep, with the eastern portion of the lava lake solidified at the surface. SO2 emission rates remain elevated. Geodetic monitors indicate that the upper portion of the East Rift Zone (between the summit and Pu‘u ‘Ō‘ō) contracted while the summit deflated at the onset of this eruption. There is no seismic or deformation data to indicate that additional magma is currently moving into either of Kilauea’s rift zones. [More information](#). Source: USGS.

**National Fire Situation**

**National Interagency Fire Center  
Little Fire Activity Reported Nationwide**

The national preparedness level remains at PL 1.

Five new large fires were reported last week, two each in Oklahoma and Texas and one in Florida. To date, 2,039 wildfires have burned 45,375 acres – slightly more than the 10-year average.

**Resource Commitment Trend**

Category	January 22	January 29	February 5
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	1	1	1
Type 2 Teams	0	0	0
Crews	5	0	1
Engines	51	1	11
Helicopters	0	0	1
Total FF/Overhead	334	11	49

**Fires/Acreage**

Category	2011-2020 Ave	2021 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	2,025	2,039	+ 14
United States: YTD Acres	41,113	45,375	+ 4,262

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**

**February 1** – The Senate agreed to [H. Con. Res. 10](#), permitting the remains of the late United States Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick to lie in honor in the rotunda of the Capitol.

**February 3** – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 27](#), relative to Senate procedure in the 117th Congress. This resolution sets the rules by which the Senate will run its proceedings.

**February 3** – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 28](#), to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

- Committee On Appropriations – Mr. Leahy (Chair), Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Reed, Mr. Tester, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Coons, Mr. Schatz, Ms. Baldwin, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Manchin, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Heinrich.
- Committee On Energy And Natural Resources – Mr. Manchin (Chair), Mr. Wyden, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Heinrich, Ms. Hirono, Mr. King, Ms. Cortez Masto, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Hickenlooper.
- Committee On The Environment And Public Works – Mr. Carper (Chair), Mr. Cardin, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Merkley, Mr. Markey, Ms. Duckworth, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Padilla.

**February 3** – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 29](#), electing Sonceria Ann Berry as Secretary of the Senate.

**February 3** – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 32](#), to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees for the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen.

- Committee On Appropriations – Mr. Shelby (Ranking Member), Mr. McConnell, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Graham, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Moran, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Boozman, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Kennedy, Mrs. Hyde-Smith, Mr. Braun, Mr. Hagerty, Mr. Rubio.
- Committee On Energy And Natural Resources – Mr. Barrasso (Ranking Member), Mr. Risch, Mr. Lee, Mr. Daines, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Cassidy, Mrs. Hyde-Smith, Mr. Marshall.
- Committee On The Environment And Public Works – Mrs. Capito (Ranking Member), Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Cramer, Ms. Lummis, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Ernst, Mr. Graham.

**February 3** – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources approved the nomination of Jennifer Mulhern Granholm, of Michigan, to be Secretary of Energy. The committee held a hearing to examine data and analysis by the United States' and world's leading authorities on global climate trends from energy related sectors, focusing on where and how progress has been made in addressing climate change. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**February 3** – The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine the nomination of Michael Stanley Regan, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

**February 4** – The Senate received notification from the Biden administration of withdrawal of 32 nominations for federal judgeships and federal agency positions that had been sent to the Senate by the Trump administration on January 3, 2021.

**February 5** – The Senate agreed to [S. Con. Res. 5](#), setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2021 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2022 through 2030, by a vote of 51 yeas to 50 nays, with the Vice President voting yea.

### **House Actions**

**February 1** – The House agreed to [H. Con. Res. 10](#), permitting the remains of the late United States Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick to lie in honor in the rotunda of the Capitol.

**February 1** – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “No Time to Lose: Solutions to Increase COVID–19 Vaccinations in the States”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**February 1** – The Committee on Oversight and Reform held an organizational meeting. The committee adopted its rules for the 117th Congress, without amendment. Subcommittee Chairs and the full committee Vice Chair were agreed to.

**February 3** – The House agreed to [H. Con. Res. 11](#), establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2021 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2022 through 2030, by a vote of 218 yeas to 212 nays.

**February 3** – The House agreed to [H. Res. 92](#), electing Majority Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives. These members are in addition to those noted in last week’s coalition report.

- Committee On Natural Resources – Ms. McCollum, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Tonko, Ms. Tlaib.

**February 3** – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled “Road to Recovery: Ramping Up COVID–19 Vaccines, Testing, and Medical Supply Chain”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**February 4** – The House agreed to [H. Res. 72](#), removing Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene from certain standing committees of the House of Representatives, by a vote of 230 yeas to 199 nays.

**February 4** – The Committee on Appropriations held an organizational meeting. The Committee adopted its rules for the 117th Congress, and confirmed its subcommittee jurisdictions.

**February 4** – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce held a hearing entitled “Safeguarding American Consumers: Fighting Fraud and Scams During the Pandemic”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**February 4** – The Committee on Financial Services held a hearing entitled “More than a Shot in the Arm: The Need for Additional COVID–19 Stimulus”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

**February 4** – The Committee on Homeland Security Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Examining the Domestic Terrorism Threat in the Wake of the Attack on the U.S. Capitol”. Testimony was heard from Christopher Rodriguez, Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, Washington D.C.; and public witnesses.

**February 5** – The House agreed to [H. Res. 101](#), providing for the adoption of [S. Con Res. 5](#), setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2021 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2022 through 2030, by a vote of 219 yeas to 209 nays. This action allowed the House to approve the Senate version of the budget resolution that had passed earlier the same day, in lieu of the version the House had passed on February 3 (see above).

## [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.

- *NPS Implements Mask Requirement* – To protect the health of those who live, work and visit our national parks and facilities and in support of the President’s Executive Order on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, the National Park Service has implemented a mask requirement for employees, visitors, partners and contractors. Face masks are now required in all NPS buildings and facilities. Masks are also required on NPS-managed lands when physical distancing cannot be maintained, including narrow or busy trails, overlooks and historic homes. Additional public health measures are in place across the service, from capacity limits to one-way trails, or even temporary closures in response to local conditions. [Full story](#). 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.

- *Shenandoah NP* – Over 900 acres of woodlands in Page County acquired by the Shenandoah National Park Trust will be donated to the park in the near future. The trust worked alongside the Commonwealth of Virginia and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the DuPont Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration settlement to acquire the land. The land was acquired from three different landowners; it borders Shenandoah National Park, the surrounding flanks and most of Chapman Mountain. [Full story](#). Source: WHSV News.
- *Tuskegee Airmen NHS* – On Monday, the United States Mint began accepting orders for products featuring the 56th and final coin in the America the Beautiful Quarters Program. The coin honors the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Alabama. The coin’s reverse (tails) depicts a Tuskegee Airman pilot suiting up to join the fight during World War II with the Moton Field control tower in the background. The pilot looks upward with pride and confidence as two P-51 Mustangs pass overhead. The inscription “They Fought Two Wars” is arced across the top as a reference to the dual battles the Tuskegee Airmen fought – fascism abroad and racial discrimination at home. Inscriptions are “Tuskegee Airmen” “Alabama,” “2021,” and “E Pluribus Unum.” The obverse (heads) features the 1932 portrait of George Washington by sculptor John Flanagan, with the inscriptions “United States of America,” “Liberty,” “In God We Trust,” and “Quarter Dollar.” [Full story](#). Source: *Sierra Sun Times*.
- *Valles Caldera NP* – The National Park Service and the International Dark Sky Association announced late last month that Valles Caldera National Preserve has been certified as an International Dark Sky Park. This certification recognizes the exceptional quality of the preserve’s night skies and provides added opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through astronomy-based interpretive programming. The International Dark Sky Places Program was founded in 2001 to encourage communities, parks, and protected areas around the world to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting polices and public education. Valles Caldera now joins more than 100 locations that have received dark sky certification. This is the 20th NPS site to receive the recognition. [Full story](#). Source: National Park Service.

- *Zion NP* – The park is set to receive \$33 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation to replace aging shuttles. The new fleet will consist of 26 battery-electric buses and 27 charging stations and will arrive at Zion within the next few years. Park officials said the "engineering and service connections" have been completed for the first phase of charging stations, set to be installed this year. [Full story](#). Source: K. Sophie Will, *St. George Spectrum and Daily News*.

## **The Federal Government**

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

- *New DOI Appointees Announced* – DOI has announced the names of a dozen new members of its management team. All of them, including short biographies for each, can be found on the DOI press release at the link below. Two of them are particularly relevant to the Service. Mario Castro will be DOI's special assist for the NPS; Judy Fong will be a special assistant for USFWS and the NPS in the Office of the Assistant Secretary. [Full story](#). Source: Department of the Interior.
- *Trump's Top 100 Harmful Environmental Actions* – Past Director Jon Jarvis, his former science adviser, Gary Machlis, and a team of more than a dozen conservationists have completed and released a list of the top 100 environmentally damaging actions taken by the Trump administration. The report is the product of the Restoration Project, an effort to repair all the harm done over Trump's four years in the White House. The report, which can be found below, lists all 100 actions plus brief descriptions of what remedial actions need to be taken. [Full story](#). Source: Restoration Project.

## **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.

- *Reversing Trump's Environmental Harm* – Former Director and Coalition member Jon Jarvis and partners released a tactical plan that produced [a prioritized list](#) of the top 100 immediate and important actions that can be achieved by executive order, administrative action, regulation or policy to reverse the environmental harms done by the Trump administration:
- *Protecting The 0025 Ranger Series* – The Coalition, in partnership with ANPR, has been a vocal advocate for the protection of the protection ranger profession. This week, we published [a success story](#), celebrating the guidance that no NPS 0025 positions would be converted to the 1801 series:
- *Member Book Featured* – Member Sheridan Steele was featured on an [episode of NPCA's Park Talk](#), discussing his new book, *From Bear Dens to the Oval Office*, stories from his 38 years with the NPS.
- *Covid FOIA Request* – The Coalition has submitted yet [another FOIA request](#) – our ninth – asking for the number of COVID-19 cases to date among NPS employees

Source: Emily Thompson, Associate Director of Engagement, Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

## **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* – On August 21, 1995, eleven men in Rockingham and Green counties were arrested for violations of numerous federal and state wildlife laws and other criminal offenses which occurred over a three-year period in and around the park. A total of 56 federal and 90 state charges were lodged against the men, including hunting within a national park, possession and use of firearms within the park, conspiracy to illegally hunt and take wildlife, Lacey Act violations, and commercialization of deer, bear and reptile products. On January 23rd, four of the men were sentenced in magistrate's court in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Allen Shifflett, Senior, received a five-month jail sentence and was ordered to pay \$1,000 in restitution costs; Allen Shifflett, Junior, received a two-month jail sentence and was ordered to pay \$500 in restitution; Jason Price received a two-month jail sentence and was ordered to pay \$1,000 in restitution. David Shifflett was not sentenced to any jail time or financial penalty. All four were placed on supervised release for a year, put on probation for five years, and lost their hunting and fishing rights for three years. The magistrate also set some special probation conditions. The men are prohibited from entering the park, possessing firearms or wearing camouflage clothing during the probation period. Five firearms and five seized deer mounts were forfeited to the government. The remaining seven men are scheduled to appear in state court next week. Submitted by Skip Wissinger.
- Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – At 8:30 a.m. yesterday morning, staff at the Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory called the park communications center and reported that earthquake swarms were occurring under the Keanakakoi area of the summit caldera and that marked inflation of the summit was occurring. They estimated that a lava upwelling was just a kilometer below the surface and advised the park to go on eruption alert. The park did so, implementing ICS (with Yvette Ruan, chief ranger, as IC). The coastal backcountry was closed and evacuated, and the Chain of Crater Road and a portion of Crater Rim Drive were closed. Hawaii County Civil Defense and the FAA closed air space above the summit because of the potential hazard of eruption debris and because of the need for safe air space for any needed USGS and NPS air operations. Park liaison was established with USGS and all cooperators were informed of the eruption emergency. By 11:30 a.m., the lava was less than a half kilometer below the surface; by 11:47 a.m., it became evident that the lava was moving toward the Southwest and Southeast Rift zones, the latter the site of the Pu'u O'o vent which has been active for the past 13 years. At 1:15 p.m., observatory scientists reported that the summit of Kilauea was deflating, and that most of the lava had moved into the Southeast Rift zone and Pu'u O'o area. The vent became very active, with a large, agitated lava pond and flows issuing from the base of the cone. A large number of surface flows with dome fountains appeared on the slopes below the vent. The park was advised that it would be safe to reopen Crater Rim Drive and the summit trail system for visitor use, but that Chain of Craters Road should remain closed because of seismic activity still occurring in the area between Chain of Craters and Makaopuhi. These actions were taken, and the air closure over the summit was lifted. Increased flows in the Pu'u O'o area will not adversely affect visitation and may in fact enhance visitor viewing of volcanic activity, particularly in the evening hours after Chain of Craters Road is reopened. The increased flows will pose a threat, however, to the remaining endangered Akia shrub land on the coast and to area archeological features, including the Wahaula Heiau. Submitted by Superintendent Jim Martin.
- Mount Rainier NP* – Relatively high temperatures and heavy rains - over 11 inches in four days - combined to cause flooding in and around the park on February 7th and 8th. Damage within the park was limited to basement flooding and some water over roads in the Longmire area. Most roads leading to the park were flooded and closed for periods of time, and the south approach to the Kernahan bridge over the Nisqually River was washed out. The bridge is located about two miles west of the park and provides the only access to a community of about 75 families and to numerous vacation cabins (currently vacant). At the county's request, the park combined resources with the local fire department to provide emergency access to the area. The park plowed open the service road behind Longmire which provides access to the isolated area. Fire department personnel are directing emergency traffic through this unimproved section of road for three hours in the morning and three hours in the evening. The park will attempt to maintain the road in conjunction with other priorities. Flood damage is so

extensive in counties surrounding the park that it may be some time before the bridge approach is repaired. Submitted by Bill Larson.

## **A Closing Observation**

"We want to keep our American wilds, quite simply, because we are among the last industrial people who have had sustained contact with the kind of land we now call wilderness; it has been among us and within us, sometimes dominating our puny attempts at civilization, for as long as we have agreed to make a nation together. Love it, hate it, or ignore it, wilderness is in our American soul, and we are loath to give it up, or see it become so diminished, so vestigial, that it ceases to be what it has always been to us those cussed, godforsaken, dangerous patches of outback full of things that can kill us. Carry water and use your wits."

Author Donald Snow in *Testimony: Writers of the West Speak On Behalf of Utah Wilderness*

## **Acknowledgements**

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Emily Thompson, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, Duncan Morrow and Mark Forbes
- Issue Contributors: Dick Martin, Roberta D'Amico

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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