



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Volume 5

Number 6

Incidents

Crater Lake NP Hunter Pleads Guilty To Poaching Trophy Elk In Park

On February 4th, 2021, a White City, Oregon man was sentenced for violating the Lacey Act by illegally poaching a trophy bull elk in the park

Adrian Duane Wood, 44, was sentenced to five years' federal probation to include a six-month stay at a residential reentry center. The court also ordered that Wood be banned for life from Crater Lake National Park, be restricted from hunting for the duration of his probation, and pay \$42,500 in restitution to the National Park Service.

In July 2014, the NPS, FWS, and Oregon State Police (OSP) began a multi-year investigation into Wood's illegal hunting activities based on reports that he was poaching wildlife in the park. At least two people reported that Wood had killed several deer and elk on the west side of the park after baiting them into meadow with rock salt. OSP received further reports that Wood was illegally poaching wildlife at night.

In August 2014, an OSP trooper observed Wood and his son leaving the national park after dark. When the trooper approached him, Wood hurried toward his vehicle and acted as if he were trying to hide something. After speaking with Wood, the trooper located a loaded AR-15 semi-automatic rifle outfitted with night optics beneath his truck. Wood initially claimed the rifle was for bear hunting, but after the trooper pointed out that the rifle was not lawfully equipped to hunt any wildlife, Wood then claimed it was for personal protection. The trooper cited Wood for being a felon in possession of a firearm and seized the rifle. Wood was convicted in state court of the charge and placed on probation.

Throughout 2015, NPS and OSP continued receiving reports of Wood's illegal poaching. NPS rangers found carcasses and piles of rock salt in an area of the park frequented by Wood. In October 2015, an NPS ranger found an elk skull, jaw, and vertebrae in the national park. The remains were determined to be near a custom track log found on Wood's GPS unit. Investigators later learned Wood entered and won second or third place in a Sportsman's Warehouse Big Bull elk hunting contest.

In August and September 2016, Wood engaged in several incriminating text conversations. On August 28, 2016, Wood texted his wife about his attempt to locate a bleeding elk he had shot. A photo later discovered on Wood's phone, taken on August 28, appeared to depict a trail of blood. Investigators also found a custom waypoint named "Hit" on Wood's GPS device created the same morning as the date-stamped photo. The "Hit" location was within the boundaries of the national park.

On September 7, 2016, Wood texted another individual, bragging about his hunting activities: "I've been in the elk since opening season and passed up 5 last Sunday because I have a problem shooting

a small 5 point when there is a monster 50 yards away screaming at me...I'm pretty good at finding elk around here, I've killed 24 and get one every year."

On September 22, 2016, OSP contacted Wood in his vehicle as he was pulling a horse trailer near the boundary of the national park. Although Wood stated he had not been hunting in 2016, the trooper observed blood on Wood's hands and clothing. Wood then gave the trooper a partially validated Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) archery elk tag, which also had blood on it. The next day, an OSP trooper returned to the area where they had contacted Wood, walked a short distance into the national park, and discovered a freshly killed and partially butchered elk. The carcass was in the same meadow wherein Wood was previously reported to have hunted elk. The trooper noted that the elk's head was sawed off and some meat was removed. Shortly thereafter, Wood texted photos of himself posing with the elk. OSP obtained the photos and matched them to the carcass.

On October 4, 2016, FWS agents executed a federal search warrant on Wood's residence. They located multiple firearms, assorted ammunition, and several wildlife specimens. FWS special agents later searched Wood's GPS units and confirmed he was in the national park when he killed the bull elk on September 22 and had marked the location of the kill. They further confirmed that the majority of his GPS hunting waypoints and track logs between 2011 and 2016 were within the boundaries of the national park.

Forensic scientists at the FWS National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Lab, conducted forensic examinations and genetic analyses of the wildlife specimens taken from Wood's residence and compared them to animal remains recovered in the national park. DNA analyses revealed that Wood possessed parts of at least 13 elk, 12 deer, and one black bear, and the blood found on Wood's ODFW archery tag matched the DNA of the elk poached on September 22. A forensic pathologist further determined the elk killed on September 22 had been killed by a gunshot. In total, investigators definitively linked six seized specimens to elk or deer poached by Wood in the national park in 2015 and 2016.

On May 1, 2019, Wood was indicted by a federal grand jury in Medford, Oregon for violating the Lacey Act by unlawfully taking and transporting a trophy bull elk from Crater Lake National Park and illegally possessing ammunition as a convicted felon. On August 17, 2020, Wood pleaded guilty to the Lacey Act charge and agreed to pay restitution to NPS for the wildlife illegally taken from the national park.

[Full press release](#). Source: United States Attorney's Office, District Of Oregon.

Rocky Mountain NP SAR Team Rescues Woman Who Fell 70 To 100 Feet

On Tuesday, February 9th, park rangers were notified that a 21-year-old Texas woman had suffered serious injuries near Emerald Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park. The woman slid down a snow-covered slope about 70 to 100 feet into a talus slope on the south side of Emerald Lake.

The park's SAR team provided initial medical care upon arriving on scene. They then used a rescue toboggan to take the woman from Emerald Lake to the Bear Lake Trailhead, where she was transported by ambulance to Estes Park Health and then taken to a nearby trauma center.

Some parts of Rocky Mountain National Park are under temporary closure to protect nesting raptors: Loch Vale area, Checkerboard Rock, Lightning Rock, Batman Rock, Batman Pinnacle, Sundance, Thunder Buttress, The Parish, The Book, and Twin Owls, and Rock One.

Last summer, park instituted a time reservation system to protect visitors from the pandemic. That system ended in October and park officials recently said they plan to stay away from that in the 2021 summer.

[Full story](#). Source: NewCountry99.1/com.

Lake Mead NRA Rangers, State Wardens Rescue Man From Lake Mead

A kayaker at Lake Mead recently had a frightening close call. Game wardens from the Nevada Department of Wildlife and National Park Service rangers said they came to the aid of a kayaker last week when he became separated from his kayak and spent more than an hour in 40-degree water.

The wardens were alerted to the trouble by a 911 call. They spotted the victim struggling in the water about 500 yards from shore near the lake's fishing pier.

A rescue boat was launched and game wardens used a rope to pull the kayaker to the person on board. The man was treated for extreme hypothermia. He told the wardens he had become separated from his kayak and the wind made retrieving it impossible.

Game Warden Zachary Blackwood said the rescue was "definitely a case of right place, right time." Blackwood explained that he was scheduled for land patrol, but a meeting with other wardens at the boat launch meant he was close enough to launch his boat quickly.

Blackwood was able to retrieve the man's kayak and equipment from the lake and after a few hours warming up on the boat harbor, the kayaker felt well enough and refused any further treatment.

Blackwood credits the good ending to the kayaker wearing a life jacket.

[Full story](#). Source: Ron Keller, KVVU News.

Hawaii Volcanoes NP Follow-up: Kilauea Eruption Continues

Kilauea Volcano continues to erupt, but there's been no significant change in activity since last reported in this newsletter.

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 13th, 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. The most recent sulfur dioxide emission rate measurements are lower than the emission rates from the pre-2018 lava lake.

The summit tiltmeters show inflationary tilt continuing. Seismicity remains elevated but stable, with elevated tremor and a few minor earthquakes.

[Full story](#); [photos and videos of the current eruption](#); [Kilauea webcams](#). Source: USGS Hawaii Volcano Observatory.

Chiricahua NM Follow-up: Investigation Resumed Into Missing Ranger

Ranger Paul Fugate, 41, went for a hike on the afternoon of January 13, 1980 and vanished without a trace. Fugate was working at the time and was in uniform.

Numerous intensive searches were conducted at the time, but no sign of him was ever found. In 2018, the NPS resumed the investigation, offering a \$60,000 reward for information leading to the resolution of the case.

The winter issue of *Outside Magazine* provides an update, but it's necessary to be a subscriber to read the article. You can obtain it [at this link](#).

National Fire Situation

**National Interagency Fire Center
Very Little Large Fire Activity Reported**

The national preparedness level remains at PL 1.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	January 29	February 5	February 12
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	1	1	2
Type 2 Teams	0	0	0
Crews	0	1	0
Engines	1	11	2
Helicopters	0	1	0
Total FF/Overhead	11	49	11

Fires/Acreage

Category	2011-2020 Ave	2021 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	2,675	2,392	- 283
United States: YTD Acres	51,644	54,458	+ 2,809

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 8 – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 42](#), honoring the memories of the victims of the senseless attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, 2018.

February 9 – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 47](#), to provide for related procedures concerning the article of impeachment against Donald John Trump, former President of the United States, by a vote of 89 yeas to 11 nays. This resolution set the rules by which the trial of the former president would be conducted. Additionally, the Senate agreed that it be in order for former President Donald John Trump to be subject to a Court of Impeachment for acts committed while president, by a vote of 56 yeas to 44 nays. This vote affirmed that it is constitutional to try a former president after he has left office.

February 9-13 – The Senate continued consideration of the Article of Impeachment against Donald John Trump, former President of the United States.

February 9 – The Committee on Environment and Public Works approved the nomination of Michael Stanley Regan, of North Carolina, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; and a resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee and adopted its rules of procedure for the 117th Congress.

February 9 – The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing to examine the nomination of Neera Tanden, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The nominee was introduced by Senators Klobuchar and Booker, and testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

February 10 – The Committee on the Budget held a hearing to examine the nomination of Neera Tanden, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The nominee, who was introduced by Senators Klobuchar and Booker, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

February 12 – The Senate passed [S. 35](#), to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Officer Eugene Goodman in recognition of his heroic actions on January 6, 2021, during the attack on the U.S. Capitol building.

February 12 – The Committee on Appropriations announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 117th Congress:

- Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies: Senators Merkley (Chair), Feinstein, Leahy, Reed, Tester, Van Hollen, Heinrich, Murkowski, Blunt, McConnell, Capito, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, and Rubio.
- Senators Leahy and Shelby are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

February 12 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered favorably reported a resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee for the 117th Congress.

February 13 – The Senate, sitting as a Court of Impeachment, found former President Donald John Trump not guilty as charged in Impeachment Article I, Incitement of Insurrection against the government of the United States by a vote of 57 yeas to 43 nays, two-thirds of the senators present not having pronounced him guilty.

House Actions

February 8 – The House observed a moment of silence in remembrance of the late Honorable Ron Wright of Texas, who passed away of Covid-19. The Speaker announced to the House that, in light of the passing of the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Wright, the whole number of the House is 431.

February 9 – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change held a hearing entitled “Back in Action: Restoring Federal Climate Leadership”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

February 9 – The Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution Civil Rights and Civil Liberties held a hearing entitled “Constitutional Means to Prevent Abuse of the Clemency Power”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

February 11 – The House agreed to [H. Res. 111](#), electing Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives as follows:

- Committee On Natural Resources: Ms. Matsui, Mrs. Trahan.

These members are in addition to those previously designated to serve on the committee.

February 11 – Representative-elect Claudia Tenney presented herself in the well of the House and was administered the Oath of Office by the Speaker. Earlier, the Clerk of the House transmitted a copy of a letter received from Mr. Robert A. Brehm and Mr. Todd D. Valentine, Co-Executive Directors, New York Board of Elections, indicating that, according to the preliminary results of the Special Election held November 3, 2020, the Honorable Claudia Tenney was elected Representative to Congress for the Twenty-Second Congressional District, State of New York. The Speaker announced to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentlewoman from New York, the whole number of the House is 432.

The Federal Government

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

- *New Secretarial Order Restores Intent Of LWCF* – On February 11th, Acting Secretary of the Interior Scott de la Vega moved to restore the Land and Water Conservation Fund to its intended potential by overturning Secretarial Order 3388 and a host of last-minute changes to the State Assistance Program made by the previous administration. A new Secretarial Order restores funding to improve outdoor access for communities with the greatest need, reverses restrictions on federal conservation projects, and brings LWCF programming back in line with the intent of Congress. “Today’s Secretarial Order is a critical step by the new administration to restore the Land and Water Conservation Fund to its full, intended potential by rejecting and reversing the last-ditch attempt by the previous administration to rewrite the rules for the program and undermine Congress’ intent in passing the Great American Outdoors Act last fall,” said Tara Brown, Senior Government Relations Representative at The Wilderness Society. The pandemic has brought into sharp relief just how vital equitable access to the outdoors is to the health and wellbeing of communities, and we are pleased to see the Biden administration has restored funding to the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program for parks and greenspaces in the communities and cities that need it most. Using the momentum of today’s order, we must now pass the Outdoors for All Act and codify the ORLP program to ensure similar attacks don’t happen in the future.” [Full story](#). Source: Kerry Leslie, The Wilderness Society.

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.

- *James River Power Line* – The Coalition submitted [extensive comments](#) (thanks Mike!) on the Army Corps of Engineers' Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Transmission Line Project across the James River.
- *Repeal Of Last Administration’s Secretarial Order On LWCF* – CPANP issued a [statement of support](#) after DOI repealed former Secretary of the Interior Bernhardt’s Secretarial Orders on LWCF which imposed unnecessary, top-down requirements that delayed the National Park Service’s ability to address its backlog of land acquisition needs.
- *Protecting Employees From Pandemic* – The Coalition issued [a statement](#) on NPS employees and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, urging the NPS to prioritize the health and safety of frontline NPS employees through PPE, training, and vaccinations. The statement aligns with the priorities we sent to the Biden Transition Team for their first 100 days in office.

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

Park People

Passages

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

- *Frederick “Jack” Wallace Caresia* died on January 31st in Burley, Idaho. He was 93. He spent his growing-up years in the Wyoming coal camps of Reliance and Dines. He served in the U.S. Army at the end of World War II, then worked several jobs over the next couple of years in the coal mines and for the railroad. In May 1949 he went with some friends to Grand Teton National Park and got a job working on trails. That job became a career with the National Park Service that lasted more than 30 years. Jack’s career took him to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park, Death Valley National Monument, Montezuma Well National Monument, Grand Canyon National Park and Petrified Forest National Park. After a decade of making these transfers he took his family back to Grand Teton, where he worked until he retired in 1980. A family gathering and celebration of his life will be planned for this summer. In lieu of flowers, please donate to LatterDaySaintCharities.org. A webcast of the service will be available at RasmussenFuneralHome.com. [Full obituary](#). Source: Rasmussen-Wilson Funeral Home.

Management Changes

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

- *Shannon Estenoz*, a fifth-generation Key West native known as a fierce and pragmatic Everglades restoration advocate, will lead the Department of Interior’s U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service. Estenoz, who oversaw Everglades restoration at the department under President Barack Obama’s administration, was named principal deputy assistant secretary in January. She was already part of President Joe Biden’s Interior transition team. [Full story](#). Source: Adriana Brasileiro, *Miami Herald*.
- *Maija Katak Lukin*, former mayor of Kotzebue, has been selected as the native relations program manager for Region 11, encompassing all National Park lands in Alaska. Lukin begins her new position March 1st. Currently, Lukin serves as Region 11’s superintendent for Western Arctic National Parklands, where she manages three NPS areas in Northwest Alaska – Noatak National Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park, and Cape Krusenstern National Monument. Throughout the nine million acres of parklands, Lukin manages operations, subsistence, tribal consultation, resource stewardship, budget and finance, information technology, human resources, acquisition, contracting, training and recruitment. [Full story](#). Source: Victoria Petersen, *Arctic Sounder*.
- *Diana Bramble* has been selected as the new superintendent for Cowpens and Kings Mountain, effective March 14th. Bramble will also oversee the management of Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail and Ninety Six National Historic Site. Bramble has managed the four units on temporary assignment since September. [Full story](#). Source: Ashley Dill, *Herald-Journal*.

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.

- *National Capital Region* – The eight passengers killed in the February 16th accident between the Maryland commuter train and the Amtrak passenger train in Silver Spring, Maryland, were all corpsmen at the Harpers Ferry Job Corps Center. All were in their late teens and early 20’s and were from metropolitan areas on the East Coast. They were on leave and heading home for the three-day weekend at the time of the crash. Counselors from the field area’s employee assistance program provided counseling to other corpsmen and the center’s staff. A memorial

service will be held at the center this Friday morning. Labor Secretary Robert Reich will speak; representatives from the NPS will include NCFA Director Robert Stanton and a delegation of about a dozen interpretive and protection rangers. The latter will serve as greeters and as members of the color guard. Submitted by Bill Lynch and Einar Olsen.

- *Big Bend NP* – On the afternoon of February 10th, Annie Lawson, 19, a trail volunteer who had just arrived in the park, headed out for a hike to the summit of Emory Peak, the highest peak in the park. Lawson missed a critical trail junction, however, and ended up climbing the very steep, north facing scree slopes on Toll Mountain. Lawson climbed a 90-foot vertical face to reach what she thought was the summit, only to find herself stranded on an isolated pinnacle with no safe descent route. Visitors heard her cries for help and notified rangers late in the afternoon. Ranger Gary Carver reached an area near Lawson within two hours, but was unable to climb safely to her by himself. Rescuers could not be flown to a safe location above Lawson before dark, so rescue efforts were suspended for the night. Carver spent the night on a ledge near Lawson and maintained voice contact with her throughout the night. Lawson was dressed in only thin pants and a t-shirt; the temperature dropped to 34 degrees and was accompanied by strong, gusty winds. Chief ranger Jim Northup led a technical climb to the victim at first light. She was safely lowered and treated for hypothermia. Submitted by CRO.
- *Joshua Tree NP* – In January, 1995, park investigators, with the assistance of local deputies, state highway patrol officers, and BLM rangers, served three search warrants for archeological thefts and wildlife violations and seized two carloads of artifacts. Included in the collection were two large, intact ollas; three baskets containing an estimated 2,000 pottery sherds; over 60 prehistoric knife blades and scrapers; two dozen manos and metates; and boxes of other artifacts. Investigation revealed that Elda Plumb and Rocky Arnold, both of Yucca Valley, California, had collected the artifacts from a variety of locations, including national parks and forests and BLM lands. A total of eight misdemeanor charges were filed against the pair in state court late last year. Arnold and Plumb agreed to a plea bargain agreement shortly thereafter, then failed to show up for sentencing. Warrants were issued and served last month. The two were found guilty of two misdemeanors each, placed on probation for three years, ordered to pay restitution, and jailed for a day. Many of the recovered artifacts will be placed on display at a new BLM visitor center in the Santa Rosa Mountains near Palm Springs. Submitted by Criminal Investigator Todd Swain.

A Closing Observation

"At a conscious or subconscious level, American continues to be 'the land of the free and the home of the brave' because we can still go to places that are fresh, primitive, and untamed. No one would ever describe France this way. But we think of ourselves as free and brave because we had to be to live in the landscape of our beginning. Wilderness has always fueled our imagination, nurtured our sense of freedom, and kindled our entrepreneurial energies. Without this taproot into our past, we will forget what we have been and may not like what we become. Our relationship with the land has both nurtured and challenged us, giving us those characteristics we consider uniquely American: heartiness, ingenuity, curiosity, toughness under fire, individualism, passion, creativity, warmth, good humor, optimism, and hope....Wilderness is as American as apple pie: food for our soul. We need all of it that is left, for without it we shall surely starve."

Author Karen Shepherd

Acknowledgements

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

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

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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