



The Coalition Weekly Report

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Volume 4

Number 3

Incidents

Yellowstone NP

Man Rescued After Illegally Rappelling Into Canyon

An Indiana man was rescued uninjured from the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone last week – but was cited for being off trail and in a closed area.

Dave Christensen, 55, of Indiana, was reported rappelling into the canyon around 11 a.m. on January 6th. Christensen had dropped his backpack near the end of his 360-foot rope and went off to retrieve it. He slid down the canyon wall toward the Yellowstone River and could not climb back up. A friend who was communicating with him from the top through a radio was able to confirm he was not injured.

After two hours, Christensen requested assistance and 11 search and rescue team members responded. A rescuer was lowered down about 800 feet to his location. It took four hours to raise Christensen and the rescuer to the top of the cliff. Blowing snow and below freezing temperatures made the rescue difficult.

Christensen received citations for creating a hazardous condition for everyone involved and for his off-trail travel in a closed area. The court date to see a judge in the park is pending.

Source: Mari Hall, [*Billings Gazette*](#).

North Cascades NP

Investigation Underway Into Serious ARPA Violation

Rangers are investigating damage to the Newhalem Rock Shelter archeological site near Newhalem that was discovered last summer.

The shelter is a significant archaeological site that is recognized as a mountain goat hunting camp and for artifacts that establish its connection to exchange networks through the greater Pacific Northwest. The archaeological site is “extremely significant” to the culturally associated tribes, and this illegal excavation has caused irretrievable damage to the site and the tribes’ heritage.

The Upper Skagit Indian Tribe is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction of those responsible.

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

National Park System Park Operating Status Summary

A summary of recent openings, closures and other changes in the status of parks and their facilities,

- *Zion NP* – A rockfall last summer dumped over 435,000 cubic feet of debris onto Weeping Rock and other nearby trails and a new report from the Utah Geological Survey finds similar rockfalls could happen at any time in the area. The park has accordingly closed Weeping Rock trail, Hidden Canyon trail, and Observation Point trail (East Rim from Weeping Rock) for an indefinite period. Lower Emerald Pools trail will remain closed until this spring. “[Zion] is a place where geology happens,” said the park’s chief of resource management. “Canyon carving isn’t a past tense thing.” Source: Lexi Peery, [St. George Spectrum and Daily News](#).
- *Harpers Ferry NHP/Appalachian NST* – The pedestrian bridge crossing the Potomac River, which was partially destroyed in December when a CSX freight train derailed in Harpers Ferry, remains closed. The bridge connects West Virginia to Maryland as part of the Appalachian Trail. Questions remain about funding for repairs and the soundness of the railway bridge trusses. Discussions are continuing regarding the possibility of providing shuttle service for those who wish to access the C&O Canal or Maryland Heights from Harpers Ferry. Source: Toni Milbourne, [Shepherdstown Chronicle](#).
- *Colonial NHP* – The Williamsburg Tunnel on the Colonial Parkway will be closed for repairs from February 3rd to March 2nd. Repairs being made include replacing damaged pavement, sealing roadway joints, sweeping and pressure washing the road surface, installing a centerline, repairing the brickwork in the south portal arch, upgrading some of the light fixtures, and replacing bulbs. Source: Madison Pearman, [WAVY-TV News](#).
- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – The Holei Sea Arch overlook at the end of Chain of Craters Road has been closed until further notice due to new cracks and instability observed on the coastal cliffs. The park is consulting with subject matter experts regarding the extent of the hazard. Source: [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Yosemite NP* – The park and the Public Health Service are working with Aramark, the operator of Yosemite’s many restaurants, snack shops and hotels, to carry out an ‘extensive clean-up and disinfection’ of food service areas in the valley. No dining facilities have been closed. At least a dozen people were confirmed sick in the outbreak, reported in the last issue of this newsletter. Symptoms reported by most patients match those of norovirus, which is easily spread from person to person via direct contact, contaminated food, or contaminated surfaces and utensils. Symptoms include severe diarrhea, vomiting, nausea and stomach pain. According to an update from CNN last Friday, about 170 people – both visitors and employees – have been sickened. Most of the incidents occurred around the first week of January; the number of reported cases has since declined. Coral Beach, [Food Safety News](#); Faith Karimi, [CNN](#).
- *Joshua Tree NP* – Human remains found in the park last month have been confirmed to be those of Paul Miller, who was the subject of a search when he disappeared while hiking alone in July 2018. His remains were found near the 29 Palms Oasis Trail. Source: [Guelph Mercury Tribune](#).

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

January 13 – The Senate passed [H.R. 434](#), to amend the National Trails System Act to provide for the study of the Emancipation National Historic Trail, extending approximately 51 miles from Galveston, Texas, to Freedmen's Town and Emancipation Park in Houston, Texas, following the migration route taken by newly freed slaves and other persons of African descent from the major 19th century seaport town of Galveston to the burgeoning community of Freedmen's Town, located in the 4th Ward of Houston, Texas.

January 16 – The Senate received the managers appointed by the House of Representatives who presented and exhibited Articles of Impeachment against Donald John Trump, President of the United States.

House Actions

January 14 – The House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a hearing on:

- [H.R. 1834](#), to direct the Secretary of Commerce to issue regulations prohibiting the use of sunscreen containing oxybenzone or octinoxate in a National Marine Sanctuary in which coral is present.
- [H.R. 2236](#), to improve the management of forage fish.
- [H.R. 4679](#), to require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report examining efforts by the Regional Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the National Marine Fisheries Service to prepare and adapt United States fishery management for the impacts of climate change,
- [H.R. 4723](#), to require the identification of salmon conservation areas.
- [H.R. 5126](#), to require individuals fishing for Gulf reef fish to use certain descending devices.
- [H.R. 5548](#), to improve the Fishery Resource Disaster Relief program of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Testimony was heard from members of Congress, Rear Admiral Timothy Gallaudet, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Deputy NOAA Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and public witnesses.

January 14 – The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation held a hearing entitled "The Path to a Carbon-Free Maritime Industry: Investments and Innovation". Testimony was heard from Joshua Berger, Governor's Maritime Sector Lead, Washington Department of Commerce; and public witnesses.

January 14 – The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress held a hearing entitled "Article One: Restoring Capacity and Equipping Congress to Better Serve the American People". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

January 15 - The Committee on the Budget held a hearing entitled "Why Federal Investments Matter: Stability from Congress to State Capitals". Testimony was heard from Jeanne Lambrew, Commissioner, Maine Department of Health and Human Services; Mark Poloncarz, County Executive, Erie County, New York; Larry Walther, Chief Fiscal Officer and Secretary, Arkansas Department of

Finance and Administration; Kim Murnieks, Director, Ohio Office of Budget and Management; and a public witness.

January 15 – The Committee on Natural Resources approved the following bills, among others:

- [H.R. 306](#), to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site of the Kettle Creek Battlefield in Wilkes County, Georgia, and adjacent property.
- [H.R. 1702](#), to waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans' demonstrations and special events at war memorials on Federal land.
- [H.R. 3465](#), to authorize the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.
- [H.R. 5552](#), to amend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to affirm that the Migratory Bird Treaty Act's prohibition on the unauthorized take or killing of migratory birds includes incidental take by commercial activities, and to direct the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to regulate such incidental take.

January 15 – The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing entitled "An Update on the Climate Crisis: From Science to Solutions". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

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.

- *Native Plant Restoration* – On January 8th, Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) announced that they have introduced legislation to promote the use of native plants in the parks. [The Native Plant Species Pilot Program Act](#) would, according to Sen. Collins, encourage the National Park Service to increase the use of native plant materials on lands it cares for. Sen. Collins' office described the bill as a bipartisan effort to preserve biodiversity and reap the numerous benefits local flora provide to wildlife, human health, and the environment. The act would establish a pilot program to prompt the Service to give preference to locally adaptive native plant materials and incorporate efforts to prevent the spread of invasive, non-native species. It would also authorize the Department of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the cost-effectiveness of using native plants. Source: Griffin Stockford, [News Center Maine](#).

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.

- *Fort Sumter NHP* – The walls of Fort Sumter have become "wavy" as pounding seas and poorly placed reinforcing rocks have scraped divots into the brick exterior. The outer brick walls are being damaged by loose riprap – huge stones placed along the wall to slow wave energy – and also by large swells from roiling storms and large containerships. In places where there is no riprap, the brick masonry has begun to fail, according to an environmental assessment completed by the NPS last October. The park has sought to build a breakwater around the fort for years, as a sort of outer wall that would slow waves before they reach the actual fort. The current concept would incorporate some of the rocks piled against the existing outer wall, placing them on a newly constructed breakwater, filling in gaps with sand and planting the structure. That would potentially create a "living shoreline" – a barrier that can incorporate grasses, shellfish or other natural features – to help hold the breakwater together. The space between that and the fort would then be filled and become marshy. Exact plans have not been completed, however, leaving it unclear how much the project will cost and when it could be

completed. The planning phase will unfold over the next year. Source: Chloe Johnson, Charleston [Post and Courier](#).

- *Gateway NRA* – Moonbeam Leasing & Management LLC, the newly selected operator of Great Kills Marina, is planning on making a number of improvements to the facility, including the addition of 100 new boat slips. The 250-boat slip marina was badly damaged when Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc on Staten Island's shoreline; it took 19 months for repairs to be made. Moonbeam is also planning other upgrades for the marina, including reorganization of the current boat storage area, improved parking capacity, creation of an "event pad," and extension of the existing harbor promenade along the waterfront to the end of the marina. Source: Tracey Porpora, Staten Island [Advance](#).
- *Golden Gate NRA* – The Presidio of San Francisco has become the first park in the United States – and America's first national park site – to earn the prestigious Green Flag Award, which recognizes the highest standards for visitor experience and management of parks and green spaces around the world. The Presidio joins over 2,000 parks and green spaces in 15 countries that fly the Green Flag Award, including sites in Australia, Mexico, and the United Arab Emirates. Founded in 1996 in the United Kingdom, the aim of the Green Flag Award is to ensure that everyone has access to a quality green space to enable healthy lifestyles. Source: [Richmond Review/Sunset Beacon](#).
- *Johnstown Flood NM* – The first phase of a restoration of the bed of the lake whose waters wiped out Johnstown in 1889 has begun. It will begin with manual clearing to remove as many trees and woody shrubs as possible. The objective is to expose the lake bed, abutments and sluiceway while ensuring minimal impact to wetlands and streams. This phase will restore areas of the lake bed to what they looked like shortly after the flood, making it possible for visitors to better visualize the flood's aftermath. Source: Mary Pickels, [TribLive.com](#).

Commenting On NPS Projects

An alphabetical listing of National Park Service projects – physical, paper and otherwise – which have solicited public comments, plus due dates and URL's to related sites.

- *Alaskan Parks* – All of the parks in Alaska have opened up their proposed park compendium changes for 2020 for public review and comment. Links to each of the dozen parks can be found at [Alaska Region's proposed compendium changes webpage](#). Comments are due by February 15th.
- *Arches NP* – EA analyzing the effects of allowing bicycle use on the newly constructed Arches Visitor Center Connector Trail. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes February 11th.
- *Flagstaff Area NMs* – Draft backcountry management plan. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes January 31st.
- *Mesa Verde NP* – Upgrades to the mesa top loop roads. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes January 30th.
- *Voyageurs NP* – Possible expansion of tour boat operations. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes February 8th.

Briefly Noted

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

- *Latest NPS List* – The media's penchant for making lists about national parks – once a more or less summer phenomena – now continues throughout the year. The latest, compiled by USA Today, lists the most popular unit in each state, as determined by visitation stats (alas, First State doesn't keep such numbers so Delaware is not included). Each has a photo of the park accompanying it, some of them quite good. Source: [USA Today](#).
- *"Forest Mascots" Remembered* – Although not pertaining strictly to the NPS, a recently discovered article in *Atlas Obscura* is too good to pass up: "[Smokey The Bear] wasn't always

alone in his publicly fire-hating ways. Since the 1940s, American organizations have marshaled a whole menagerie of spokesflora and fauna to guilt, tempt and cajole us into giving a darn about the environment... Although all were eventually defeated by Smokey and his sidekick, Woodsy Owl, they still have things to teach us.” Click on the article to read about six of them (and also see some pretty amusing art] – Johnny Horizon (who most of us old rangers remember), Woody the Log, Howdy the Good Outdoors Manners Raccoon, Sam Sprucetree, Spunky Squirrel, and the mysterious Guberif (really). Source: Cara Giaimo, [Atlas Obscura](#).

The Federal Government

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

- *Rehiring Former Feds* – Under a new plan from the Office of Personnel Management, federal agencies would be able to rehire former federal workers at a higher pay grade than their previous jobs, provided they were high performers. OPM officials hope to expand the use of rehiring federal workers outside the competitive hiring process by allowing agencies to bring them back at a higher pay grade. In order to qualify for being rehired outside the competitive process, a former federal employee must fulfill two criteria – the candidate must have quit his/her previous agency job at least one year prior to rehiring and he/she must have been rated at least “fully successful” in the final performance evaluation for the prior position. Earlier this year, the Health and Human Services Department and the National Park Service successfully completed pilot programs where HR officials brought subject matter experts into the hiring process and used a combination of regular resumes and supplemental skills assessments to identify qualified candidates, rather than the standard federal resume review process. Source: Erich Wagner, [Government Executive](#).

Climate and Conservation

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

National and Worldwide Issues

Reports on the national and international climate and conservation crisis.

- *Last Year Second Warmest On Record* – On January 15th, NASA and NOAA released a joint press release entitled “NASA, NOAA Analyses Reveal 2019 Second Warmest Year on Record.” Globally, 2019 temperatures were second only to those of 2016 and continued the planet’s long-term warming trend: the past five years have been the warmest of the last 140 years. “The decade that just ended is clearly the warmest decade on record,” said Gavin Schmidt, director of Goddard Institute for Space Studies, a lab managed by NASA. “Every decade since the 1960s clearly has been warmer than the one before...We crossed over into more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit warming territory in 2015 and we are unlikely to go back. This shows that what’s happening is persistent, not a fluke due to some weather phenomenon: we know that the long-term trends are being driven by the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.” Source: Steve Cole and Peter Jacobs, [NASA/NOAA](#).
- *Three-Quarters Of New Power Plant Capacity Will Be From Wind, Solar* – Now and then, albeit rarely, good news shows up on the climate front. “Of the 42 gigawatts of new power plant capacity projected to go online nationwide (this year) – about the capacity in New York State today – 76 percent will come from wind and solar, based on the latest batch of data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration,” reports *Clean Economy Weekly*. “That would be a record share, up from 64 percent of new capacity added in 2019. And it would be despite the Trump administration’s hostile stance toward renewable energy, including tariffs on imported solar panels and refusal to extend some tax credits... Natural gas plants are 22 percent of the 2020 total expected addition, down from 34 percent last year. The same EIA report shows that

11 gigawatts of power plant capacity is scheduled to shut down this year, 51 percent of which is coal-fired power...No new coal plants are listed as being planned, which, along with plant closings, is why the future looks so bleak for the coal industry. The mix of new power plants in 2020 is thoroughly dominated by wind, solar and gas, with all other power sources adding up to less than a gigawatt, or about 2 percent.” Source: Dan Gearino, *Clean Economy Weekly*.

National Park System Issues

Climate Change – News concerning the impacts of climate change on park lands, waters, species and other assets.

- *Desert Parks* – A new study published in *Parks Stewardship Forum: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Place-based Conservation* – [“Collapse of a desert bird community over the past century driven by climate change”](#) – reports on the impact of climate change on desert birds. As you’d expect, it’s not good: “Desert birds persist near the edge of their physiological limits, and climate change could cause lethal dehydration and hyperthermia, leading to decline or extirpation of some species. We evaluated how desert birds have responded to climate and habitat change by resurveying historic sites throughout the Mojave Desert that were originally surveyed for avian diversity during the early 20th century by Joseph Grinnell and colleagues. We found strong evidence of an avian community in collapse. Sites lost on average 43% of their species, and occupancy probability declined significantly for 39 of 135 breeding birds. The common raven was the only native species to substantially increase across survey sites. Climate change, particularly decline in precipitation, was the most important driver of site-level persistence, while habitat change had a secondary influence. Habitat preference and diet were the two most important species traits associated with occupancy change.” Source: Kelly J. Iknayan and Steven R. Beissinger, [Parks Stewardship Forum](#).
- *Big Bend NP* – The park recently published a report – [Climate Change for the Water Supply of the Chisos Mountains Developed Area](#) – that examines the implications of current and projected climate on Oak Spring, an important source of water within Big Bend. Using historical data, the report’s authors confirmed Oak Spring discharge correlates with the amount of precipitation falling in the spring’s recharge zone approximately two months prior. This underscores that future changes to rainfall may likely influence the reliability of Oak Spring as a water source. Using peer-reviewed climate models, the report authors developed a range of plausible future climate projections. These projections included a “best case” scenario, where yearly precipitation increases 25%, and a “worst case” scenario where annual rainfall declines by 31% over the years 2050-2080. These scenarios of changing rainfall were then examined using a statistical model to estimate changes in the future flow of Oak Spring. Source: Larry Perez, [Big Bend NP](#).

Native Flora and Fauna – Recent news pertaining to the protection, propagation and advancement of species now or formerly native to the national parks:

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs* – “Giant sequoia trees, the largest living organisms on the planet – some more than three millennia old – have started dying from beetle attacks linked to the climate emergency, the preliminary findings of a new study have revealed,” reports *The Guardian*. “The deaths of the trees, some of which lived through the rise and fall of hundreds of empires, caliphates and kingdoms – not to mention the inauguration of every US president – have shocked researchers in their speed and novelty.” Over the last six years, 28 giant sequoias in Sequoia-Kings Canyon have died from a seemingly deadly interaction between bark beetles, drought and fire damage. “It’s unheard of. It’s never happened before,” said the park’s chief of resource management and science. “You think giant sequoias don’t die in fire, you think giant sequoias can’t be killed by insects. That’s not true any more.” These deaths collectively constitute just a small percentage of the parks’ 6,000 or so sequoias, but the Service is taking no chances. Climate crisis contingency plans for giant sequoia tree deaths and high severity wildfires made for the 2050s are being enacted now. Ecologists have taken measures such as planting seedlings at higher elevations outside the areas sequoia trees usually grow and

increasing prescribed burns to thin the forest as much as possible. Source: Patrick Greenfield, [*The Guardian*](#).

- *Wind Cave NP* – The park will be using teams of hunters over the first weeks of February to reduce the number of elk inside the park. The objectives are to maintain the population at the desired target level, as defined in the park’s 2009 elk management plan and EIS, and to test the animals that are taken for chronic wasting disease (CWD). The project is being conducted in conjunction with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. Source: [*Brookings Register*](#).

Invasive and Exotic Species – News on exotic or invasive species that have appeared or may soon appear in NPS areas and efforts to counter them:

- *Systemwide* – A new and important report on invasive species in the parks – [*The Unaddressed Threat of Invasive Animals In U.S. National Parks*](#) – was published this past December. “We assert that the global threat of invasive animals substantially undermines the National Park Service mission,” say the researchers who drafted the report. “Engagement by NPS leadership to create a Systemwide approach to address the challenge of managing invasive animals can magnify existing individual cases of success into a program of much broader scale success. The integrity of U.S. National Parks depends on it.” It’s estimated that about half of the 419 NPS units have issues with non-native animals, with over 1,400 populations of those invasive animals and more than 300 species. Click on the following link to *National Parks Traveler* for a good summary of some of its contents and recommendations. Source: Kurt Repanshek, [*National Parks Traveler*](#).

Ecosystems and Habitat – News about actions that affect park and adjoining ecosystems and habitat:

- *Everglades NP* – On January 15th, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis announced “a massive land buyout” that will kill a plan to drill for oil in the Everglades. The state will buy 20,000 acres in western Broward County owned by Kanter Real Estate LLC, which had won approval for an exploratory oil well, a project that had generated international outrage. The price is \$16.56 million to \$18 million, depending on when the deal closes. See the article for a map showing the location of this parcel of land. Source: David Fleshler, [*Florida Sun Sentinel*](#).
- *Biscayne NP* – The variety and number of fish in the park has diminished radically over the past two decades. Conservationists have accordingly been pushing for closing off small parts of park waters to fishing by establishing the same sort of zones that have protected reefs and their denizens along the Florida Keys for years. But there’s a lot of opposition among local fishermen and state wildlife managers, and such closures are not being considered. The *Miami Herald* summarized the causes of the problem in a recent article: “[The] park, which covers almost 174,000 acres of Biscayne Bay waters and small islands, has suffered from its proximity to a sprawling urban area: deteriorating water quality, marine debris, increased boat groundings, and rising fishing pressure due to population growth. Heavy boat traffic, trap lines, and anchors have damaged corals, seagrass meadows, and mangroves along the shoreline. The fish have come under pressure not only from the fast-growing population but also because GPS devices and other gear make finding and catching fish a lot easier than 20 years ago, when fishing-management restrictions were first being discussed. Pollution has also worsened inside the park and in Biscayne Bay in general. A recent study by NOAA looking at water quality between 1995 and 2014 showed that the bay could be facing a ‘regime shift’ as its lush seagrass beds are gradually being smothered by thick algae that are being fed by rising nutrient levels in the water...” Source: Adriana Brasileiro, [*Miami Herald*](#).

The Coalition

Summary of recent developments within the Coalition, including some of the actions that CNPCA took on your behalf.

- *Proposed NEPA Changes* – The Coalition issued a statement strongly condemning the proposed changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). You can read it [at this link](#).
- *Blog Entry* – A new entry has been posted in the CPANP blog in the “Focus on Friends” series, this one featuring the great work of Harpers Ferry Association. It can be found [at this link](#).

Please note that the Coalition has a new mailing address: 1346 4th Street SE #908, Washington DC 20003.

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

Rosie the Riveter NHP Ranger Betty Soskin Returns To Work

Betty Reid Soskin, 98, the Service’s oldest ranger, who suffered a stroke in September, reports that she will soon be back at her visitor center post “every Wednesday into the future” if all goes as planned.

Soskin also offered a good piece of advice, particularly for all the retirees among us: “I would suggest that anyone continue to do what they love doing as long as they can. I think that’s what gives life its meaning.”

FYI: Soskin has written an autobiography about her remarkable life entitled *Sign My Name to Freedom: A Memoir of a Pioneering Life*. It’s available on Amazon and elsewhere.

Source: [NBC Bay Area](#).

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:

- *Cape Cod NS* – Barbara Dougan, the park’s education specialist, who’d worked at Cape Cod NS since the 1970s, retired on December 31st. She was part of the Parks as Classrooms program from the time of its inception in 1992. Source: Denise Coffey, [Cape Cod Times](#).
- *Fort Union Trading Post NHS* – Alice Hart, a long time federal employee, has been selected as the park’s new superintendent. Hart is an eight-year veteran of the National Park Service and 14-year veteran of federal service, most recently serving for five years as director of the General George Patton Museum, a U.S. Army museum at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. She also served as the Bureau of Land Management’s national curator with oversight of BLM’s Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act program, and for eight years as the curator at Grand Teton National Park, where she graduated from the Park Services’ GOAL Leadership Academy. Earlier on, she was a seasonal museum technician at Yellowstone National Park. Source: Mitch Melberg, [Williston Herald](#).
- *Wind Cave NP* – David Thomson has been detailed to the park as its acting superintendent, idal Dávila, who recently retired. Thomson is regional program manager of the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program for the National Park Service. Prior to that he was a park landscape architect at several national parks, including Rocky Mountain, Glacier, and Grand Teton. Thomson is expected to serve at Wind Cave through the end of May. Source: [KNBN News](#).

- *Mount Rushmore NP* – Patricia Trap began serving as the park’s acting superintendent on January 6th and will continue in that position until it’s permanently filled. Trap is currently the deputy regional director for IMR. Source: [Rapid City Journal](#).

From The Archives

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1994. All entries appear in the original verb tense; “submitters” are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Delaware Water Gap NRA* – Between October 29 and December 24, 1994, eight rangers from the park’s Pennsylvania District participated in a Wildlife Enforcement Team (WET) operation which led to two arrests and the issuance of 116 violation notices to 70 suspects. The WET was developed recently to interdict hunting/poaching violations. A large number of the operations were coordinated with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Several tactics were employed in the operations, including roving surveillance (patrol) during the day and night, hunter vehicle check points, and simulated wildlife (decoy) placements. The decoys included pheasants, ruffed grouse, turkey, deer, and bear. The most effective tactic was the daytime use of the decoy. A local television station filmed the WET at the beginning of an operational period as part of a bear poaching story. The team also conducted many other types of resource protection patrols and resource management projects during times when hunter activity was low. Submitted by Chief Ranger Doyle Nelson.
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – On December 20, 1994, Charles "Bubba" Norvell and Travis Williams were found guilty in jury trial for possessing a silenced weapon which had been used while killing a deer in the Cades Cove historic district in 1991. The charges had been filed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. They are to be sentenced later this month. The two men, both firefighters from St. Lucie, Florida, had driven to the area and taken a room in a local motel. Each night, one of them would drop the other off at the Cades Cove loop road before it closed, survey the area, then kill a trophy buck with a silenced weapon. When summoned by CB radio, the partner would then return for the pickup. Before heading off on their trip, however, Norvell and Williams made the mistake of telling their co-workers about their plan to come to the park to shoot trophy bucks. One of them called the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency's toll-free number for reporting poachers, and TWRA in turn notified the park. Rangers confirmed their registration at the motel, staked out the area, and caught them on their way out of the park with a deer - the second they'd taken. They were convicted on the poaching charges on an earlier date. They subsequently lost their weapon, vehicle, jobs and wives, and are now looking at between 18 and 24 months in prison. District ranger Jack Piepenbring led the investigation. Submitted by Chief Ranger Jason Houck.
- *Glacier NP* – An extended investigation into the theft of nearly \$30,000 worth of merchandise from the Many Glacier Hotel gift shop has culminated in indictments and/or convictions of several former Glacier Park, Inc., employees - Robert Finch, 20, of Raleigh, North Carolina; Jennifer Chase, 21, of Glen Ellyn, Illinois; Mary Woolley, 21, of Atlanta, Georgia; Anthony Hamilton, 22, of Centralia, Illinois; Lori Martinez, 35, of Las Vegas, Nevada; David Tinder, 21, of Miami, Florida; and Andrea Phillips, 21, also of Miami. Finch, Chase, Woolley and Hamilton were charged with misappropriation of property and convicted in magistrate's court in Great Falls last August. Martinez was indicted in December on felony charges of theft and conspiracy; Hamilton was indicted for possession of stolen property and conspiracy. Tinder and Phillips have been issued summons and are to appear before a federal judge this month. Assisting in the investigation, which was led by Glacier rangers, were criminal investigators from Lake Mead, detectives from Overland, Missouri, and investigators from the New York State Police. Submitted by Public Affairs Officer Amy Vanderbilt.

Acknowledgements

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

- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Bob Martin, Denny Huffman, Mike Watson, 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.

* * * * *

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."

To receive a copy of this free publication, join or support the coalition. Any current, retired or former salaried employee (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) of the National Park Service can join the Coalition ([click on this link](#)). Coalition supporters can also join and receive the newsletter ([click on this link](#)). If you need to contact the Coalition office on other matters, including changes of address, [click on this link](#).

--- ### ---