



The Coalition Weekly Report

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

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Incidents

Gulf And Atlantic Coastal Areas Tropical Cyclone Update

Parks along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts are being impacted by high waters propagated by Hurricane Sally, Hurricane Teddy, and Tropical Storm Beta. Brief reports have been posted by three affected areas:

- *Cape Hatteras NS* – Due to significant ocean overwash on portions of NC Highway 12 caused by large swells from Hurricane Teddy, the NC Department of Transportation has temporarily closed the road between Oregon Inlet and Rodanthe on Hatteras Island and between South Dock and the Pony Pens on Ocracoke Island. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Gulf Islands NS* – Both of the National Park Service's ferries were significantly damaged when Hurricane Sally slammed into Pensacola. The storm pushed the edges of both boats onto the pavilion off of Commendencia Street, causing them to crash through the surrounding railing. Marine salvagers are performing an on-site assessment, but may need to haul the boats to another location to look underneath their hulls for damage. Source: [Pensacola News Journal](#).
- *Padre Island NS* – North and South Beaches have been closed to vehicle access due to coastal flooding from Tropical Storm Beta. The flooding has been caused by exceptionally high tides from the tropical storm; water is reaching the dune line. Driving access will reopen when conditions allow. Source: [National Park Service](#).

Death Valley NP Hiker Dies On Park Trail; Hyperthermia Suspected

A possible hiker fatality near the Golden Canyon Loop trail was first reported around 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 6th.

Park rangers and a deputy with the Inyo County Sheriff's Office responded to the Zabriskie Pointe Trailhead that night to search for the hiker, but were unable to find anyone. A team of rangers and the sheriff's deputy met again the next morning and were able to locate the victim, who was about a mile from the trailhead.

He was taken to the Inyo County Coroner's office, which will determine the official cause of death, though the National Park Service suspects that extreme heat was a factor.

Source: Matthew Seeman, [KSNV News](#).

Golden Gate NRA Woman Attacked By Coyote

A woman was hospitalized this week after a coyote bit her leg on Tennessee Beach in the Marin Headlands.

The woman told rangers that the coyote was acting aggressively as it approached her last Tuesday afternoon on the remote beach. After the animal bit her, she walked the 1.7-mile trail back to Tennessee Valley Road and drove to a hospital, where she was treated for minor injuries.

Using a piece of the woman's clothing, park staff are attempting to collect a sample of the coyote's DNA. The genetic information will be used to identify and track the animal as part of a new program that aims to address the growing problem of coyotes approaching people in search of food in the park.

The program, which was launched this month, comes as the number of park visitors has skyrocketed during the coronavirus pandemic, resulting in increased interaction between humans and wildlife. Rangers have noted a large increase in reports of people feeding coyotes. As a result, food-conditioned coyotes are increasingly approaching visitors to beg for food.

In response, park workers have begun trapping coyotes and outfitting them with GPS tracking collars.. Roughly a half-dozen coyotes have been tagged and released since the program began. In the event that a coyote is found to repeatedly beg for food from park visitors, rangers will use "negative stimuli," including clapping, yelling and waving, to deter the animals from approaching humans.

"Having visitors and food-conditioned coyotes in close proximity sets up a bad situation for both," said the park's PAO. "Coyotes are wild animals, and although they appear docile, they can react aggressively to different human cues."

Source: Matthew Pera, [*Marin Independent Journal*](#).

Golden Gate NRA Father, Toddler Rescued From Park Cliff

A father and his toddler son were out for a walk near Fort Funston last Saturday morning when they decided to hike down a cliff. Halfway down, they realized they were stuck.

Firefighters arrived at 11:30 a.m. and spent the next hour conducting a three-rope rescue. As rescuers hauled the pair uphill, a National Park Service rescue team waited in the water below and a Highway Patrol helicopter hovered in the sky — contingency plans if the rope rescue failed.

Said a San Francisco fire lieutenant: "We want to congratulate and commend [the father]," who knew exactly where they had gone astray. "He called 911 and knew exactly where he was at and was able to give us specific directions. This could have had a much worse ending."

Source: Lizzie Johnson, [*San Francisco Chronicle*](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The National Park Service can be held financially responsible for failing to warn residents that a fire was headed toward Gatlinburg in 2016, a federal judge has ruled. The judge dismissed the Service's bid to escape a trial in lawsuits filed by victims and survivors of those who died in the Gatlinburg wildfires, which claimed 14 lives, damaged or destroyed 2,500 homes and caused \$2 billion in damage. The judge ruled that the NPS fell far short of its mandatory duty to warn Great Smoky Mountains National Park visitors and

residents in nearby communities in the days and hours leading up to the fatal fires. Source: Jamie Satterfield, [Knoxville News Sentinel](#).

- *Mesa Verde NP* – Last Thursday, search and rescue crews found human remains in the park. They are believed to be those of Mitchell Stehling of Texas, who disappeared on June 9, 2013. Stehling had gone on a solo hike to Spruce Tree House; when he failed to return after two hours, his wife alerted the park, kicking off what would be a massive search. Investigators determined that Stehling had taken the Petroglyph Point Trail, a longer path that connects to the Spruce Tree House trail and has some more difficult hiking terrain. He was reportedly seen by a group at the petroglyph panel. He then left and was never seen again. The body was located after the park received an anonymous tip that his remains were in a remote section of the park. The cause of death has not been determined. Source: Jonathan Romeo, [Durango Herald](#).
- *Rocky Mountain NP* – On September 14th, a body believed to be that of Steven Grunwald, 24, of Greenville, New York, was located by a search team in the Notch below McHenry's and Powell Peaks. Grunwald is believed to have embarked on the Glacier Gorge Traverse around August 19th, a difficult 19-mile route which crosses 11 mountain summits. He was last in contact with family and friends on August 28th, and his vehicle was found at the Glacier Gorge trailhead on September 10th, the same day a friend reported him missing. The cause of death has yet to be determined. Source: [KKTV News](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Nearly 32,000 Firefighters Fighting 80 Fires Nationwide

NIFC remains at Preparedness Level 5, the highest of five levels.

Nearly 80 large fires are active nationwide; collectively, they have burned 3.9 million acres. Nearly 32,000 firefighters and support personnel are assigned to wildfires across the West. To date, 43,598 wildfires have burned 6,982,242 acres, which is over one million more acres than the then-year average.

Two hundred thirty-three soldiers from the 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion based out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, have been deployed in support of the August Complex. Seven fire suppression crews, 18 fire engines and 55 overhead personnel from Canada are supporting fire suppression efforts in Oregon; another Canadian crew is supporting fire suppression efforts in northern California.

Park And Park-Related Fires

- *Yosemite NP* – The park closed to all visitors on September 17th due to wildfire smoke and hazardous air quality. Air quality in the park was projected to be in the unhealthy to hazardous range over the next several days; reopening would occur no earlier than this week. Park staff are monitoring air quality, fire activity and smoke and will assess when conditions improve enough for visitors and employees to come back. Source: Christina Zdanowicz, CNN.
- *Rocky Mountain NP* – The Cameron Peak Fire has burned 104,157 acres and is just 15% contained. There's been no increase in the acreage that has burned within the park. See last week's report for both acreage and closures.
- *Point Reyes NS* – The Woodward Fire has burned 4,929 acres – an increase of only a few acres from last week's report – and is 97% contained.
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs* – The Moraine Fire has burned 575 acres and is now 70% contained.

- *Crater Lake NP* – On September 10th, Crater Lake issued a Level 1 evacuation notice for the entire park. That warning remains in effect.
- *Oregon Caves NM* – The park has been closed due to the proximity of the Slater Fire.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	September 8	September 15	September 22
Area Command Teams	1	3	3
NIMO Teams	3	4	4
Type 1 Teams	14	20	19
Type 2 Teams	19	23	16
Crews	449	579	534
Engines	1,424	2,266	2,379
Helicopters	217	251	231
Total FF/Overhead	22,337	30,116	30,681

Fires/Acreage

Category	2010-2019 Ave	2020 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	45,885	43,785	– 2,100
United States: YTD Acres	6,001,379	7,012,294	+ 1,010,915

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

September 16 – The Senate passed:

- [S. 3051](#), to improve protections for wildlife. The bill concerns a number of programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Sec. 110 of the act reauthorizes the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network through 2025.
- [S. Res. 700](#), designating the week of September 19 through September 26, 2020, as “National Estuaries Week”.

September 16 – The nomination of Michael Rigas, of Massachusetts, to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget was transmitted to the Senate.

September 16 – The Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies held a hearing to examine the Department

of Health and Human Services' coronavirus response, focusing on a review of efforts to date and next steps. Testimony was provided by Brett Giroir, Assistant Secretary for Health, Bob Kadlec, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, and Robert Redfield, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, all of the Department of Health and Human Services.

September 16 – The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved the following bills, among others:

- [S. 804](#), to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to protect the cultural practices and livelihoods of producers of Alaska Native handicrafts and fossilized ivory products.
- [S. 3831](#), to authorize the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, to statutorily establish the United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.
- [S. 4286](#), to authorize appropriations for offsetting the costs related to reductions in research productivity resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

September 16 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining held a hearing on the following bills, among others:

- [S. 180](#), to streamline the oil and gas permitting process and to recognize fee ownership for certain oil and gas drilling or spacing units.
- [S. 1295](#), to require the Secretary of the Interior to develop and maintain a cadastre of Federal real property.
- [S. 3366](#), to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at no cost to members of Gold Star Families.
- [S. 3427](#), to require the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to digitize and make publicly available geographic information system mapping data relating to public access to Federal land and waters for outdoor recreation.
- [S. 3670](#), to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Gila River System in the State of New Mexico as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over certain Federal land in the State of New Mexico. Sec. 3 of the bill would transfer 440 acres of Forest Service land to the National Park Service to be added to the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument in New Mexico.
- [S. 4431](#), to increase wildfire preparedness and response throughout the United States. Testimony was provided by Senators Feinstein, Whitehouse, and Udall; Chris French, Deputy Chief, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Amanda Kaster, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

September 16 – The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing to examine the Navigable Waters Protection Rule under the Clean Water Act, focusing on the stakeholder reaction. Testimony was provided by public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

September 17 – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 705](#), proclaiming the week of September 21 through September 25, 2020, to be "National Clean Energy Week".

House Actions

September 14 – The House passed:

- [H.R. 4894](#), to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available, by a vote of 402 yeas to 1 nay.
- [S. 2193](#), to require the Administrator of General Services to issue guidance to clarify that Federal agencies may pay by charge card for the charging of Federal electric motor vehicles, by a vote of 403 yeas to 2 nays. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

- [H.R. 1668](#), to establish minimum security standards for Internet of Things devices owned or controlled by the Federal Government. This bill requires the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to take specified steps to increase cybersecurity for Internet of Things (IoT) devices. IoT is the extension of Internet connectivity into physical devices and everyday objects.
- [H.R. 2575](#), to authorize an AI (artificial intelligence) Center of Excellence within the General Services Administration.

September 14 – The Committee on Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations held a hearing entitled “Postal Update”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

September 16 – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change held a hearing entitled “Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Opportunities for an Equitable, Low-Carbon Recovery”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

September 16 – The Committee on Oversight and Reform approved the following bills, among others:

- [H.R. 7496](#), to require federal agencies to submit to Congress plans for responding to any resurgence of COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019).
- [H.R. 7107](#), to require the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to establish and maintain a public directory (website) of the individuals occupying Government policy and supporting positions (positions within the federal government typically filled by political appointees).
- [H.R. 7340](#), to ensure that personal protective equipment and other equipment and supplies needed to fight coronavirus are provided to employees required to return to federal offices.
- [H.R. 7548](#), to ensure availability of personal protective equipment during pandemics and other public health emergencies through stockpile requirements and domestic manufacturing incentives.
- [H.R. 7936](#), to protect federal employees from retaliation for the lawful use of federal records.
- [H.R. 8109](#), To clarify and increase the restrictions on political activities that are applicable to the members of the Postal Service Board of Governors, including the Postmaster General and the Deputy Postmaster General.

September 17 – The House agreed to [H. Res. 908](#), condemning all forms of anti-Asian sentiment as related to COVID-19, by a vote of 243 yeas to 164 nays with one answering “present”.

September 17 – The Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “Examining the Barriers and Solutions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Department of the Interior”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from the department at the hearing.

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.

- *FAA Sets Schedule For Developing Park Air Tour Management Plans* – On September 1st, PEER reported that “long-overdue plans to limit noise and disruption caused by air tours over national parks are finally taking off.” Under court order from a PEER lawsuit, the FAA has announced a schedule for developing air tour management plans for 23 national parks, all of which are to be finalized by May 1st. Under terms of the National Park Air Tour Management Act of 2000, the FAA and NPS were supposed to establish rules governing the number, routes, and schedules of helicopter and fixed-wing park tourist overflights with two years. Twenty

years later, not a single such plan has been adopted. In 2019, PEER and the Hawaii Island Coalition Malama Pono jointly petitioned the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to issue a writ of mandamus to compel the agencies to implement the act. In a May ruling, the court agreed and ordered the FAA to publish a schedule by August 31st for finalizing management plans within two years covering the 23 parks which legally require such plans (i.e., more than 50 flights per year). These 23 parks are located in 15 states, ranging from Hawaii to New York and from Washington to Florida. They report more than 45,000 air tours per year, topped by Hawaii Volcanoes which records an average of more than 22 overflights every day of the year. Affected park units also include Mount Rushmore, Everglades, Bryce Canyon, Arches, Great Smoky Mountains, Glacier, Golden Gate, Lake Mead, and Point Reyes National Seashore. Source: Paula Dinerstein and Kirsten Stade, [Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#).

- *Annual Visitation Through July Down Considerably* – While there's been a great desire during the coronavirus pandemic to get outdoors, closures and access restrictions have evidently played a role in a nearly 20 percent decline in visits throughout the system through July. According to the National Park Service's preliminary year-to-date visitation count, traffic to the parks was off by 36.4 million through July. Among the parks that had rather large declines in recreational visits were Acadia, Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canaveral, Death Valley, Gateway, Gettysburg, Glacier, Glen Canyon, Grand Teton, Grand Canyon, Great Smoky Mountains, Gulf Islands, Hawai'i Volcanoes, Joshua Tree, Klondike Gold Rush (Alaska), Natchez Trace, Pearl Harbor, Rocky Mountain, Yosemite and Zion. But not all units of the National Park System have seen declines this year through July. Among those that showed year-to-date improvements in visitation were Big Cypress, C&O Canal, Golden Gate and Valley Forge. Overall, the National Park System with its 419 units counted 155,447,752 recreational visits through July, down from 191,849,701 through July 2019, a drop of 18.9 percent. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *NPF, Marriott Partner On Park Travel Planning Website* – Marriott Bonvoy, Marriott International's travel program, has formed a marketing partnership with the National Park Foundation. The introduction of a dedicated travel planning website offers members discounted rates for stays at Marriott's 406 properties located near national parks, as well as the option to redeem points for America the Beautiful, the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Passes, and to donate points to the NPF. The website will also provide travel tips and inspiration from Marriott Bonvoy Traveler. Source: [Hotel Business](#).

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.

- *Appalachian NST* – More than 2,600 acres of land around Bald Mountain Pond in Somerset County, Maine – a popular destination along the Appalachian Trail known for its stunning views – has been protected for future generations through a land purchase by The Trust for Public Lands. The AT bisects the property near West Forks, which will now remain open to the public to enjoy paddling, fishing, hiking and camping. The newly acquired land will expand the protection zone around the Appalachian Trail to include another 1,500 acres of old growth forest – and it will protect from development nine miles of shoreline along Bald Mountain Pond. That area has been identified by the state as of “statewide ecological significance” because of the presence of Canada lynx, old-growth forest and the wild brook trout and rare Arctic char in the pond. The land was purchased from the timber company Weyerhaeuser for \$4,026,000 and will be managed by the National Park Service, the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife at the boat launch on the pond. Source: Deirdre Fleming, [Portland Press Herald](#).
- *Cape Hatteras NS* – Ocracoke Campground, which usually closes after Thanksgiving weekend, will stay open this winter. All 136 sites will be open for use. Oregon Inlet Campground on Bodie

Island will also remain open through the winter. "We are extending the camping season at the Ocracoke Campground through the winter to provide more opportunities for camping at the seashore," said Dave Hallac, the park's superintendent. "We will evaluate its use this winter and determine if year-round camping on Ocracoke will be continued in the future. Last year, we decided to keep the Oregon Inlet Campground open all winter and it was well-used. Extended camping seasons align with our plans to modernize campgrounds and broaden the opportunities for the public to have high-quality camping experiences." Source: [National Park Service](#).

- *Cuyahoga Valley NP* – Keleman Point Farm is the latest venture to grow crops and raise livestock within the park as part of its Countryside Initiative to preserve the rural landscape within its borders. The initiative, launched in 1999, seeks to identify and rehabilitate old farmsteads that are still suitable for agricultural use. The competitive application process requires prospective farmers to describe the plan for their farm, including sustainable farming practices and the ways it will welcome park visitors. Fourteen farmsteads have been rehabilitated, and ten farms currently operate in the park, including the Canal Corners Farm, Greenfield Berry Farm, Neitenbach Farm, Oxbow Orchard, Purplebrown Farmstead, Sarah's Vineyard, Spice Acres, The Spicy Lamb Farm and Trapp Family Farm. The farms bring more than 100,000 people into the park each year. Source: Robin Goist, [Cleveland.com](#).
- *Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial* – The National Park Service formally welcomed the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial as America's 420th unit of the National Park System on September 18th. The memorial honors Eisenhower's legacy as the supreme allied commander for the European Theater of Operations during WWII and has years as the nation's 34th president. Designed by architect Frank Gehry, the memorial features three bronze statues of Eisenhower by sculptor Sergey Eylanbekov, one featuring General Eisenhower with troops from the 101st Airborne the day before the invasion of Normandy, another depicting President Eisenhower in the White House surrounded by civilian and military advisors, and a third portraying "Little Ike" in his boyhood. The stone bas-relief images and inscription panels highlight passages from notable Eisenhower addresses and give context to the memorial's sculptures. Framing the entire memorial is a first-of-its-kind stainless steel woven tapestry by artist Thomas Osinski, which depicts the cliffs at Pointe du Hoc on the Normandy coastline. The memorial is located in a newly created, four-acre public park along Independence Avenue SW between 4th Street SW and 6th Street SW, across from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Flight 93 NM* – Ground was broken on September 4th for the first purpose-built section of the September 11th National Memorial Trail in Somerset County. The trail is a 1,300-mile network of roads and multi-use trails connecting the three sites where hijacked planes crashed on 9/11 – Flight 93 NM, the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center site. The route follows pre-existing roads and trails. The ceremony at the park marked the beginning of construction of the first section of multi-use trail built specifically for the national memorial trail. More information about the September 11th National Memorial Trail is available online at [911trail.org](#). Source: [The Tribune-Democrat](#).
- *Glacier NP* – As noted above, the FAA is at last moving on air tour management plans for 23 parks. The Quiet Glacier movement at the park has had a petition going for some time that presses for "peace and quiet in Glacier" through the development of a good ATMP for the park. It has collected more than 34,000 signatures to date. You can weigh in by signing it. The petition is available at [this link](#). Source: Member Rachel Potter.
- *Golden Gate NRA* – On September 18th, San Francisco got its first pandemic drive-in theater at the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, which is within the park. Billed as "Fort Mason Flix," the pop-up theater is located in the parking lot on the city's northern waterfront of the city. It will run a series of classic films six days a week through October 18th. The initial offerings include "The Matrix," "Xanadu," "Frozen," "Purple Rain" and "The Big Lebowski." In addition to the initial run of movies, special screenings will be hosted in partnership with film festivals and

other nonprofits to support programs that have been affected by the pandemic. Bay Area nonprofits Intersection for the Arts and the Long Now Foundation are among the first that will be able to use the drive-in for fundraising events. Source: Aidin Vaziri, [San Francisco Chronicle](#).

- *Grand Canyon NP* – The park has reopened the Silver Bridge to all foot traffic following a structural assessment. The bridge, which crosses the Colorado River along the Bright Angel Trail, is located near Phantom Ranch at the bottom of the canyon. During the third week of September, the park's trail crew stabilized the bridge. Structural engineers from the Federal Highway Administration also assessed the bridge and deemed it safe for pedestrian use. Routine maintenance of this light suspension bridge will be completed in the coming months. Source: [KOLD News](#).
- *Statue of Liberty NM* – The NPS has awarded a \$30.8 million construction contract to repair the historic seawall at Ellis Island. The contract went to Weeks Marine, Inc., a family-owned maritime construction company based in Cranford, New Jersey. The historic 6,736 linear foot-long seawall surrounding Ellis Island was built using several construction systems between 1913 and 1934. The repair will fix the poor condition of the seawall and address some structural needs, including repair of erosion at joints, work on the ferry slip, and replacement and restoration displaced granite basic blocks and grout throughout the island seawall. The project is expected to be completed in early 2023. Source: [National Park Service](#).

Briefly Noted

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

- *List Of "Unique" National Parks Published* – Men's Journal had an article entitled "9 Unique National Parks You've Probably Never Been To" in a recent edition. "[In this edition] we're taking a closer look at some of [the less known parks] that deserve a bit more recognition. Every selection is unique and proves you don't need to travel halfway across the world to witness truly awe-inspiring sites. From quiet coastal escapes to rugged mountainous retreats, each park below is sure to stoke your wanderlust." The nine parks are Channel Islands, White Sands, Mammoth Cave, Theodore Roosevelt, Isle Royale, Wolf Trap, National Park of American Samoa, Great Basin and Crater Lake. Source: Ian Centrone, [Men's Journal](#).
- *Park Trash Management, Thai Style* – Here's something most all of us have wanted to do at one time or another. Thailand's natural resources and environment minister has shared a new way of dealing with tourists who leave behind their trash – mailing it back to them. On his Facebook page, Varawut Silpa-archa posted a photo of a box of trash left at a national park that appeared ready to be mailed back to its original owners along with a note that said, "You forgot something at Khao Yai National Park." Varawut later posted that the government will take strict measures to blacklist visitors who damage national parks or are noisy and disruptive. Source: Natalie B. Compton, [Washington Post](#).

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.

- *"A World That's Ready To Burn"* – That was part of the headline on an article in last Wednesday's *New York Times*. "Wildfires are devastating the American West," reports the newspaper, "but the United States isn't the only place on Earth that's burning. This year, other countries have also experienced their worst wildfires in decades, if not all of recorded history. In each case, the contributing factors are different, but an underlying theme runs through the

story: Hotter, drier seasons, driven by the burning of fossil fuels, have made the world more prone to erupt in flames.” The article then summarizes the fire seasons in the Arctic and Siberia, Indonesia, Brazil, Argentina and Australia. Stephen Pyne, an emeritus professor at Arizona State who has studied and written about wildfires and their history, offered this observation: “We don’t have a fire problem; we have many fire problems. One, obviously, is a deep one. It has to do with fossil fuels and climate....We need to take action [on climate change], but that will take a long time. We are going to be living with an enhanced fire world for decades, at least.” Source: Veronica Penney, [New York Times](#).

- *Climate Transformation In The United States* – ProPublica posted an article entitled “New Climate Maps Show a Transformed United States” on September 15th: “According to new data from the Rhodium Group analyzed by ProPublica and *The New York Times Magazine*, warming temperatures and changing rainfall will drive agriculture and temperate climates northward, while sea level rise will consume coastlines and dangerous levels of humidity will swamp the Mississippi River valley. Taken with other recent research showing that the most habitable climate in North America will shift northward and the incidence of large fires will increase across the country, this suggests that the climate crisis will profoundly interrupt the way we live and farm in the United States.” The article is built around a series of detailed maps that show an array of dramatic changes that will take place in the next 20 to 40 years. Source: Al Shaw, Abraham Lustgarten, and Jeremy W. Goldsmith, [ProPublica](#).

National Park System Issues

Reports on climate and conservation issues impacting the parks, including the impacts of climate change, protection of native flora and fauna, battles against invasive and exotic species, impairment of park ecosystems and habitat, threats to park carrying capacity, impacts on parks from abutting areas, and systemic pollution of all forms.

Climate Change

- *Southwestern Parks* – Thousands of migrating birds have inexplicably dropped dead over recent weeks, falling out of the sky into nature reserves, golf courses, and driveways across the southwestern US. The culprit? A one-two punch of environmental changes: an extreme heatwave in August followed by fires across the west coast. The number of birds in North America has sharply declined over the past half-century—last fall, [a study published in Science](#) reported that an estimated three billion birds have died since 1970. Even then, this event is unprecedented. Martha Desmond, a professor at NMSU, told CNN: “We know this is a very large event, hundreds of thousands and maybe even millions of dead birds, and we’re looking at the higher end of that.” Source: Natasha Lasky, [Our Daily Planet](#).
- *Glacier NP* – The park recently posted a status report on its glaciers. When the park was founded in 1910, it had over 100 glaciers that covered about 25 acres and moved under their own weight. Now, “a couple dozen” are large enough to be considered glaciers, and all of them have suffered tremendous melt. Between 1966 and 2015, all of the 26 named glaciers in the park got smaller. Some have lost as much as 80% of their area, but the average loss has been 40%. The park has asked the public to submit thoughts and ideas on its future on Twitter under the hashtag #GlacierMovingForward. Source: Scottie Andrew, [CNN](#).

Invasive Species

- *Systemwide* – DO has released a draft plan for battling invasive species such as Burmese pythons and Asian carp that threaten to upset native species in national parks and other public lands. The plan was called for by Congress through the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act, which directed Interior and other relevant agencies to “develop a strategic plan for the implementation of the invasive species program to achieve, to the maximum extent practicable, a substantive annual net reduction of invasive species populations or infested acreage on land or water...” The plan emphasizes interagency

coordination, cost-effective control, science based practices and decision-making. It also allows for regional flexibility, asking the department to work with governors and other stakeholders. According to a release announcing the 60-day public comment period on the plan, it provides "a coordinated approach to further align programs and policies across the U.S. Department of the Interior and leverage more resources in addressing this important issue. In Fiscal Year 2020, Interior alone is investing an estimated \$143 million to manage invasive species." You can see a PDF file containing the draft of the plan [at this link](#). Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).

Native Species

- *Zion NP* – In late August, the park released an update on “1K,” the thousandth California condor chick of the species recovery program, after receiving the results of recent blood analysis that was done on the bird. It’s been determined that 1K is a male and that he’s making preparations for life on his own. In terms of human years, the condor is about the age of an adult just preparing to leave college or home for good. The celebrated bird left its nest for the first time last fall, but there still wasn’t much researchers knew about 1K until this year. Biologists captured the condor in May to conduct medical tests, such as measuring weight, drawing blood and administering vaccinations. They also learned its gender for the first time. Even though 1K will become more independent, it’ll still be another four or five years until he’s reached maturity. Source: Carter Williams, [KSL News](#).

Abutting And Through-Park Developments

- *Lake Mead NRA* – Environmental groups and City of Henderson residents are fighting a proposal to build a freeway through the park and eastern Henderson. Nevada DOT and the FHWA are moving forward with the development of the Interstate 11 Corridor Tier 1 EIS, which will study the impact of a planned freeway that would travel through the Las Vegas metropolitan area. The project is in the scoping phase, a period used to identify and develop corridor alternatives. One of the current proposed alternatives, the “eastern alternative corridor” would potentially run through either Lake Mead or along the border of the City of Henderson. Public comments on the proposed corridors closed on August 31st and will be included in the final summary report. See the following link for a map of the several proposed I-11 corridors and for comments on the project made by NPCA and the Center for Biological Diversity. Source: Jeniffer Solis, [Nevada Current](#).

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.

- *Great American Outdoors Act* – The Coalition [sent a letter](#) to Secretary Bernhardt and Congressional appropriators, encouraging DOI to provide for an objective and transparent process of administering funds from The Great American Outdoors Act:
- *Oil and Gas Leasing* – CPANP also issued a [sign on letter](#) to members, urging DOI to work with Congress to fix our broken oil and gas leasing system and recommending that they halt lease sales immediately and indefinitely until the pandemic subsides and Americans can fully engage in federal decision-making processes again. You can sign on through today, September 23rd.

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

NPS Alumni
Passing Of Ed Bearss

Legendary Civil War historian and interpreter Ed Bearss, 97, has died. Below are excerpts from the obituary written by Susan Claffey for The Civil War Roundtable:

Ed was born in Billings, Montana, on June 26, 1923. He grew up on his grandfather's ranch near Hardin, Montana, in the shadow of the Rosebud Mountains and within a bike ride of the Little Bighorn Battlefield.

"I was interested in history from the time I was in the second grade," he said. "At that time, I was interested in Lewis and Clark and the Nez Perce, because I grew up in Montana. I became interested in the Civil War in the seventh grade. My father liked to read both my brother and me books that he was interested in. He did not read children's books. Someone had given him a book by John Thomason on Jeb Stuart. My father read this book to me, and that captured me—I've been interested in the Civil War since then."

That interest was reflected by the fact that on the ranch, the E Bar S, he started naming the cattle for Civil War generals and battles. He often said his favorite milk cow was Antietam.

Ed attended a one-room school in Sarpy, Montana, and in 1937 was sent to St. John's Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin. He graduated from Hardin High School, and, with World War II underway, he immediately joined the Marine Corps (Ed's family has a long history with the Marines, his father, Omar, served in World War I. His father's cousin Hiram I. Bearss, a famous Marine colonel nicknamed "Hiking Hiram," fought in France during World War I and received the Medal of Honor for service in the Philippines in 1901. Ed's daughter and grandson also served in the Corps).

Ed served with the 3rd Marine Raider Battalion and 1st Marine Division, In the invasion of Guadalcanal and New Britain, Ed was seriously wounded by machine gun fire. He spent 26 months in various hospitals for multiple surgeries, bone grafts, and rehabilitation. In fact, it was only a couple of years ago that Ed was treated at VA hospital during a trip to Johnstown, Pennsylvania, for a piece of bone fragment that worked its way to the surface after 75 years. He got quite a kick out of telling that story.

After the war, Ed took advantage of the GI bill to study at Georgetown University, receiving a bachelor's degree in foreign service in 1949. He took a job with the Navy Hydrographic Office in Suitland, Maryland, where he stayed for three years. He then attended Indiana University and graduated with his MA in history, writing his thesis on Gen. Pat Cleburne.

Ed's career with the National Park Service got its start in 1955 when he was stationed at Vicksburg, Mississippi, as a park historian. While there, he did the research leading him and two friends to the long lost resting place of the Union gunboat *Cairo* and he was instrumental in raising it from the bottom of the Yazoo River. He also located two forgotten forts at Grand Gulf, Mississippi, and helped get Grand Gulf named a Mississippi State Military Monument. He was the founder of the Mississippi Civil War Round Table in 1956, which later consolidated with the Jackson Civil War Round Table.

In 1966, Ed was transferred to Washington, DC. He rose to prominence and became the chief historian in November 1981, a position he held until July 1994. Then he served as the director's special assistant for military sites until his retirement on October 1, 1995. But Ed never really retired; through lectures, television, writing, and as a renowned battlefield guide, he continued his association with our nation's military history. He spoke to many round tables, many, many times. He also served as a guide for more field trips and day tours than can be counted. His final field trip for us was the 2013 trip to Vicksburg.

Ed received numerous awards in the field of history and preservation: the T. Harry Williams Award; the Bruce Catton Award; the Alvin Calman Award; the Bell I. Wiley Award and others. He was chosen Man of the Year at Vicksburg in 1963. He received the Harry S Truman Award for Meritorious Service in the field of Civil War History. In 1964 he was chosen to become a member of the Company of Military Historians and was voted a fellow in that organization. In 1983 he won the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award, the highest award given by the department. He received a

commendation from the Secretary of the Army in 1985. He was a veteran of 50 years of government service.

Ed prepared detailed studies for the National Park Service for many areas – Vicksburg, Pea Ridge, Wilson's Creek, the Ray House, Fort Smith, Stones River, Fort Donelson, the battles around Richmond, Bighorn Canyon, Eisenhower Farm, the gold miners' route over Chilkoot Pass, LBJ Ranch, Fort Moultrie, Fort Point, William Howard Taft House, Fort Hancock, Boston Navy Yard, Herbert Hoover and others. He was instrumental in the establishment of Monocacy National Battlefield. In 1990, he was featured as a commentator on the PBS program "The Civil War," which is the most popular program ever to be broadcast by that network. More recently, he appeared on the Arts & Entertainment Channel's "Civil War Journal."

Ed was a force of nature and always at his best "on the ground" of a battlefield. Those of us who were privileged enough to see him in "full sway," with eyes closed and voice booming will never forget. He made history come alive and truly was its "Pied Piper." We won't see the likes of his amazing charismatic personality again.

Source: Susan Claffey, The Civil War Roundtable.

NPS Alumni **Passing Of John Benjamin**

John Benjamin passed away on September 16th at his home in Henderson, Nevada.

John had a distinguish career with the NPS, starting a Lake Mead NRA as a park ranger and continuing on to many other assignments in between until retiring as superintendent of Carlsbad Cavern NP, including Glen Canyon NRA, Grand Canyon NP, Boston NHP, and Everglades NP.

"He touched so many of us during our careers," writes Jon Dick. "His deep laugh will be a part of my memories of him. He was not only focused on the treasures held in his positions, but he wanted NPS employees he supervised to succeed in carrying out their responsibilities as stewards."

Condolences may be sent to John and Debra Benjamin at 1611 Shootout Place, Henderson, NV 89002.

Source: Jon Dick.

From The Archives

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

- *Glacier NP* – Park carpenter Lester Ashwood, 38, is recovering at the Kalispell Regional Hospital after undergoing surgery to clean puncture wounds he sustained in a surprise encounter with a grizzly bear on Tuesday morning. Ashwood and his wife had camped at Fifty Mountain on the night of September 11th. He had taken off by himself for a day hike early the next morning, and was identifying wildflowers along the trail about a mile north of the camp when he looked up and saw a grizzly charging him from about 150 yards away. Ashwood dropped into a fetal position just as the bear reached him. During the attack, which lasted no more than 20 seconds, the bear bit him on his head, neck, shoulder, hands and buttocks. After the attack, the bear sat on Ashwood's legs for several minutes, then left the area. Ashwood made it back to the campground around 8:45 a.m., where he received first aid from a camper trained as an EMT. Ashwood's wife, Rita, later hiked the twelve miles south to Granite Park Chalet to get help, arriving at 6:30 p.m. Ashwood was subsequently picked up by an ambulance and taken to the hospital. Ashwood, who had viewed grizzlies from the Granite Park Chalet where he'd worked all summer as a historic restoration carpenter, described the bear as small,

medium to dark brown in color, and possibly a sub-adult. He did not see any cubs. Rangers will continue to monitor the area to determine when it should be reopened to hikers and backcountry campers. Once the investigation into the incident is complete, the park will determine what action, if any, to take regarding the bear. Submitted by Public Affairs Officer Amy Vanderbilt.

- *Yosemite NP* – Rangers Keith Lober and Brent Taylor contacted a man engaged in disorderly conduct at the Curry Village amphitheater on August 26th. The large crowd present mandated a call for additional assistance, and rangers Brian Smith, Cameron Sholly and Chris Gomez responded. Initial efforts to keep the crowd under control were successful, and the man was arrested for possession of marijuana. As the rangers attempted to get him into a vehicle, they were suddenly surrounded by about 60 people, most of whom knew the man who'd been arrested. Two of them turned to the others and said that they weren't going to allow anyone to be arrested; one of them employed gang signs indicating a challenge to fight rangers as he blocked the path of the patrol vehicle. The crowd was ordered to disperse. Additional rangers arrived and formed a skirmish line. One of the men inciting the crowd to riot was placed under arrest after he successfully blocked the arrest of another instigator. The skirmish line moved the crowd backward and escorted the patrol vehicle out of the area. The crowd then quickly dispersed; several people wanted by rangers were able to evade arrest by blending into the crowd. At about the same time, a visitor entering the bathroom at Lower Rivers campground was confronted by six men who he verbally challenged for defacing the building with gang graffiti. The man was struck across the head with a flashlight or metal pipe. He was taken to the park clinic and treated. The six men were described as males in their late teens or early 20s, all with shaved heads and baggy clothing. Their gang initials, BSK, have been connected with three different southern Californian gangs. While stopping and identifying possible suspects in the assault on the following day, ranger Mark Harvey was able to get ten gang members from the near riot at Curry Village to stand and pose while making their respective gang signs. These two incidents were among many involving gang or suspected gang activity that have occurred in Yosemite in recent months. Submitted by Brian Smith.
- *Haleakala NP* – On the night of Tuesday, September 5th, David Landes went swimming with three friends in the pools of Oheo Gulch in the park's Kipahulu District. All members of the group had been drinking heavily prior to entering the stream, which soon became swollen from rain and rapidly rose to flood stage. Three of the four were able to get out of the stream, but Landes was swept away, carried over three waterfalls (one of them nearly 100 feet high), and carried into the ocean. Friends reported the incident; a joint park-county search of the rugged coastline and river banks was begun during the night, but was called off due to limited visibility. The search was resumed the following morning. Meanwhile, a resident of Koali who lived about three miles from the area called police at 4 a.m. to report that a man wearing only one sandal - Landes - was sitting in his yard. Landes told searchers that he blacked out and couldn't remember what had happened to him. He was scratched and bruised, but otherwise free of injury. Landes had survived the fall through three waterfalls and about five hours in shark-infested waters. He was apparently washed up on the shoreline some distance from the point where the stream flows into the ocean. Submitted by Phil Dendel.

A Closing Observation

"(The National Park Service) probably will never find a sense of mission as coherent, with such visionary appeal, or as successful a strategic guide as the one Mather and Albright fashioned for it. The forces of emerging modern society in the early twentieth century and the notion of progress which accompanied it had the power and charm to give the era a uniquely coherent vision of the good life, and it was on this vision that the agency's original sense of mission was founded. We are not likely to see such a coherent and persuasive vision again, but this need not condemn the Park Service to relic status as an agency which has outlived its usefulness. Exactly the contrary is the case. A creative Park Service with equal dedication to experimentation in meeting new social demands, to a tough pragmatism in evaluating these experiments, and to protecting the integrity of the System entrusted to

its care would remain an important part of the federal government and would ensure that the national parks remain an important part of American life."

Ronald Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*, 1984

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Emily Thompson, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, Duncan Morrow and Mark Forbes
- Issue Contributors: Bob Martin, Steve Pittleman, Jon Dick, Rachel Potter, Cathy Halainen, Bill Walters

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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