



The Coalition Weekly Report

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Incidents

Mount Rainier NP Search In Progress For Missing Hiker

A major search is underway for Sam Dubal, 34, who has not been seen since heading out on a hike of the Mother Mountain Loop on October 9th. He was to return the following day.

Ground crews, canine teams, drones and helicopters have been employed in the search, which has been hindered by several recent winter storms that have blanketed much of the area in snow and temperatures that have been in the high 20s to low 30s.

Dubal is an associated professor in the University of Washington's anthropology department. His family members describe him as 5 feet 9 inches tall weighing about 160 pounds.

The National Park Service asks that anyone who may have information that could help investigators to contact the NPS Investigative Service Branch at (888) 653-0009 or email nps_isb@nps.gov.

Source: [KOMU News](#).

Bryce Canyon NP Overdue Hiker Found And Rescued

Missing hiker Mark Langenbach was located by search and rescue crews along the Under-the-Rim Trail near Yellow Creek on October 23rd. A helicopter crew flew him to the visitor center area for a medical assessment and to be reunited with his family. He was reportedly a little hypothermic, dehydrated, and confused, but otherwise in good shape.

Langenbach reportedly parked his vehicle at the Sheep Creek/Swamp Canyon trailhead. He planned to hike the four-mile loop and was expected to check in to a hotel in Bryce Canyon City later that evening, but failed to arrive.

Source: [KUTV News](#).

Saguaro NP Vandals Cut Down Saguaro Cacti

Park staff are searching for information after eight saguaro cacti were found cut down in the park earlier this month. The public's help is being sought as they investigate the vandalism near the Scenic Trailhead area.

The eight saguaros of various ages were cut down and left laying along the Scenic Trail. The saguaros ranged in height from one foot to 10 feet tall. The damage is believed to have occurred on or around October 3rd.

Source: [12News.com](https://www.12news.com).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Snowfall Checks Two Major Fires Burning Into Rocky Mountain NP

NIFC is now at Preparedness Level 3, two steps down from PL 5, its highest level.

Wildland fire activity moderated over the weekend. One new large fire was reported in Arizona on Monday. Firefighters continue to work toward their containment goals on the East Troublesome Fire in Colorado, which has currently burned 192,560 acres.

Park And Park-Related Fires

- *Rocky Mountain NP* – The park remains closed. The Cameron Peak Fire has burned 7,050 acres in the Cascade Creek, Hague Creek and Mummy Pass Creek drainages in steep, thick beetle-killed forests with significant standing dead trees as well as dead and down fuels. The total area burned by the fire has now reached 208,663 acres and is 64% contained. The East Troublesome Fire started last Thursday and subsequently spotted across the Continental Divide and became established in the park between the divide and Estes Park. The fire is burning in heavy timber stands in rugged terrain. High winds combined with critically dry fuels initially drove fire growth, leading to evacuations and closures that are still in place. Significant amounts of snow (six to twelve inches) fell on both fires on Monday. See [this InciWeb site](#) for more information on the East Troublesome Fire and [this InciWeb site](#) for more information on the Cameron Peak Fire.
- *Yosemite NP* – NIFC reports three significant fires in the park – the Blue Jay Fire (6,640 acres, up from 6,640 acres last week – it's 50% contained), the Wolf Fire (1,935 acres, up from 1,776 acres last week – 40% contained), and the Rattlesnake Fire (6,867 acres, up from 6,830 acres last week – 40% contained).
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs* – The Moraine Fire has burned 988 acres, up from 760 acres last week. It's now 70% contained.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	October 6	October 20	October 27
Area Command Teams	1	3	2
NIMO Teams	2	2	2
Type 1 Teams	15	9	6
Type 2 Teams	14	9	6
Crews	405	225	137
Engines	1,819	634	358
Helicopters	217	125	87
Total FF/Overhead	22,787	11,848	7,333

Fires/Acreage

Category	2010-2019 Ave	2020 Total	Difference

United States: YTD Fires	51,141□	46,907	– 4,234
United States: YTD Acres	6,357,425	8,533,711	+ 2,176,286

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

October 20 – The president signed into law [S. 1321](#), to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit interference with voting systems under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. (Public Law 116–179).

Senate Actions

October 22 –The Committee on the Judiciary approved the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett, of Indiana, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, along with other nominations.

House Actions

Nothing to report.

National Park Service

Around The Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order. Included are proposals in the works for new areas or changes in designation for current NPS units.

- *Dry Tortugas NP* – After 144 years, the deteriorating Tortugas Harbor Lighthouse is getting a much-needed rehabilitation. The \$4.5 million project to restore and preserve the lighthouse kicked off on October 19th. The iron-plated lighthouse has been exposed to the elements and the effects of salty ocean air since its construction in 1876. Over time, the iron has corroded leading to significant deterioration in many areas, particularly around its base. The three-phase project is expected to take about a year. The phases are as follows – Phase I: A restoration crew from Stone and Lime, Inc. will disassemble the 37-foot iron lighthouse structure piece-by-piece and transport the components from Garden Key to mainland Florida; Phase II: Metal conservation and repair of the lighthouse structure at the conservation facilities of subcontractor Robinson Iron in Alexander City, Alabama; Phase III: Reassembly of the lighthouse in its original location. [Read more at this link](#). Source: *National Parks Traveler*.
- *John Muir NHS* - The National Park Service is celebrating the acquisition of a historic farm in the Bay Area that will allow public access to 18,000 acres of open space containing land crucial to saving wildlife such as the red-legged frog, the American badger, and the golden eagle. The John Muir Land Trust bought Almond Ranch in Martinez after a massive \$4 million fundraising effort. Often referred to as the “missing piece,” Almond Ranch on the Franklin Ridge south of downtown Martinez now connects the Contra Costa County section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a 550-mile loop with stunning views that circumnavigates the entire Bay Area. [Read the full article at this link](#). Source: Andrew Chamings, SFGate.com.

- *Mohave NWT* – A 76-mile stretch of the Colorado River within Lake Mead National Recreation Area has been designated a national water trail by DOI. The national trail begins at Eldorado Canyon at the end of the Black Canyon National Water Trail and runs southwest to the Laughlin Bridge near Davis Dam. [Click here for the full article](#). Source: *Mohave Valley Daily News*.
- *Petrified Forest NP* – On October 16th, CNN reported on the discovery of fossils of “a bizarre 220-million-year-old reptile” in the park: “Apeculiar, 220-million-year-old species of burrowing reptiles that evaded scientists has been found, fossilized. A team of National Park Service interns are credited with its discovery. Hidden in a once-vibrant part of Arizona’s Petrified Forest National Park, the burgeoning paleontologists unearthed fossils of the *Skybalonyx skapter*, an ‘anteater-like reptile’ that probably predates dinosaurs, according to findings published this month in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*. It’s a new species of a reptile previously thought to only live in trees. The unusual *Skybalonyx skapter* belongs to the group *Drepanosaur*, often considered the ugly duckling of reptiles (perhaps partly because they bore some resemblance to fowl in life). The University of California Museum of Paleontology describes the creature’s features as ‘seemingly drawn at random from evolution’s spare parts box,’ with bird-like beaks and tails punctuated with a claw, almost too oddly fantastical to be real.” [Click here for the full article](#). Source: Scottie Andrew, CNN.
- *Shenandoah NP* – The Piedmont Environmental Council has completed the digitization of thousands of legal documents related to the Commonwealth’s 1930s-era condemnation of private lands in Rappahannock County for the creation of Shenandoah National Park. The digitization project has made all of the deed book records, court proceedings and individual case files for Rappahannock County properties that are now part of Shenandoah National Park publicly accessible and searchable for the first time. The online database is hosted by James Madison University and accessible from the [Piedmont Environmental Council’s webpage](#) on the project. [Click here for the full article](#). Source: *Augusta Free Press*.

Briefly Noted

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

- *National Park Safety Video* – A video has surfaced on YouTube entitled “The Brutally Honest National Park Welcome Video.” The subtitle: “This is exactly what many national park rangers and administrators would love to tell visitors... if only they could.” The narrator captures a number of things we’d like to tell visitors – like not getting in the face of wild animals or taking a selfie at a cliff edge – in pretty unsparing terms. While some are just a shade to blunt, most of his observations will ring true to career NPS employees. [You can see it at this link](#). Source: YouTube.

The Federal Government

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

- *New Executive Order Would Politicize Civil Service* – “President Trump [last Wednesday] signed an executive order creating a new classification of ‘policy-making’ federal employees that could strip swaths of the federal workforce of civil service protections just before the next president is sworn into office,” reports *Government Executive*. “The order would create a new Schedule F within the excepted service of the federal government, to be composed of ‘employees in confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating positions,’ and instructs agency heads to determine which current employees fit this definition and move them—whether they are members of the competitive service or other schedules within the excepted service—into this new classification. Federal regulations stating that employees hired into the competitive service retain that status even if their position is moved to the excepted service will not apply to Schedule F transfers. Positions in the new Schedule F would effectively constitute

at-will employment, without any of the protections against adverse personnel actions that most federal workers currently enjoy, although individual agencies are tasked with establishing 'rules to prohibit the same personnel practices prohibited' by Title 5 of the U.S. Code. The order also instructs the Federal Labor Relations Authority to examine whether Schedule F employees should be removed from their bargaining units, a move that would bar them from being represented by federal employee unions." [Click on this link to the article](#) for additional details on what's being called "the most profound undermining of the civil service system in our lifetimes." Source: Erich Wagner, *Government Executive*.

- *Public Administrators Decry Trump 'Weaponization' Of Mismanagement* – "More than 120 experts in the study and practice of public administration and public policy have signed on to an open letter decrying 'the intentional degradation and weaponization by many Trump administration appointees of bad public management as a purposeful strategy to influence and shape public policy,' writes Tom Shoop in *Government Executive*. The letter says this includes attempts 'to undermine traditional institutions of accountability; frequent efforts to control and manipulate scientific data and objective facts in a clearly deceptive manner for short term political ends; concerted efforts to undermine effective personnel and management practice to achieve narrow partisan goals; and a degree of senior leadership turnover truly unmatched in American history.'" The letter was circulated by Allan Rosenbaum, president-elect of the American Society for Public Administration and professor of public policy and administration at Florida International University. [You can read the article at this link](#). Source: Tom Shoop, *Government Executive*.
- *New DOI Deputy To FWP Assistant Secretary* – The administration has selected Jeremy Carl, a 47-year-old former senior fellow at the right-wing Claremont Institute in California, to serve as Interior's deputy assistant secretary of fish, wildlife and parks. In that role, Carl will guide policy decisions at both the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. He is described thusly by the *Huffington Post*: "A new high-ranking Interior Department official is a prolific politics writer who has called the Black Lives Matter movement 'racist,' defended accused killer Kyle Rittenhouse, dismissed white liberals as a 'cult of ethnic sado-narcissism,' and uncritically cited a white supremacist in a 2018 Fox News op-ed." [Go to the full article for more on Mr. Carl](#). Source: Chris D'Angelo and Sebastian Murdock, *Huffington Post*.

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.

- *Yosemite NP* – Numerous car clouts and thefts of bicycles from vehicle racks occurred in the park this summer. The MO was the same in each case - windows were broken out, locks punched out, and cable locks cut and removed while vehicles were parked overnight. Yellowstone and Grand Canyon had similar incidents over the summer. A suspect was identified when a camper informed rangers that an unidentified woman had told her that "Jetson" was stealing property in Yosemite. That name was known to investigators in Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Grand Teton. Jetson Davis, a criminal with a long history of arrests in California, Texas and Idaho, was a suspect in thefts that occurred at Grand Canyon in 1992, and had been convicted of car clouts in Yellowstone and Grand Teton in 1993. He had served time in federal prison, and was released in September of 1994. On October 7th, a Volkswagen Vanagon pop-up camper was stolen from a lot in Yosemite Valley. Two days later, rangers found another Vanagon, this one abandoned and missing its license plates, VIN (vehicle identification number) plate and ignition switch. It was eventually traced to Texas and to its owner - Jetson Davis. It appeared that Davis had stolen the matching vehicle and replaced the plates, VIN and ignition with those from his vehicle. That same night, four more bicycles were stolen from car racks in the valley. On October 12th, entrance station personnel spotted Davis entering the park in the stolen van. He was stopped and arrested by patrol rangers. A search

of the Vanagon led to the discovery of property taken in two Yosemite car clouts. The investigation is continuing. Submitted by Chief Ranger's Office.

- *Ozark NSR* – John Partney and his son, Andy, were indicted on seven counts of violating federal hunting laws on October 18th. The indictments stemmed from a joint investigation by rangers and investigators from Ozark, Jefferson National Expansion, Glacier and Yellowstone and officers and agents from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mark Twain National Forest, and the states of Missouri, Montana and Wyoming. The investigation began on February 15th when a Missouri conservation agent and Ozark investigators received information on persons involved in a buck deer kill that had taken place within the park and Big Spring Wildlife Refuge the previous month. Informants produced a copy of a hunting diary kept by John Partney which described his poaching exploits from 1961 to 1995. The Partneys are alleged to have killed white-tailed deer, turkeys, mule deer, a bear, birds, owls, big horn sheep, antelope, elk, and moose during closed hunting seasons and on federal and state lands closed to hunting in Montana, Colorado, Wyoming and Missouri. The execution of search warrants at Partney's residence and other locations led to the seizure of about 200 mounted deer racks, 288 wild turkey beards, 19 antelope antlers, two elk antlers, two big horn sheep horns, five rifles, video tapes, hundreds of photographs, maps, and the original diaries. A total of 48 federal and state charges have been filed to date. Other federal charges include selling ammunition to minors and obstruction of justice. Child endangerment charges were also filed which stemmed from Partney's hiring of two juveniles to grind off information from the back of antler plaques so new information could be entered, thereby concealing their origin. Additional charges are pending in Wyoming, Montana and Missouri. Submitted by South Unit Manager Tim Blank.
- *Grand Canyon NP* – The Fred Harvey Company advised park investigators on October 12th of a fraudulent practice being used by a tour company. Visitors were showing up at the lodge expecting reservations for rooms booked for them by a company known as "National Park Tours" with a business address of 1851 East 1st Street #900, Santa Ana, California. Investigators determined that the company solicits business through travel magazines using an 800 number (1-800-634-0933), and that they had also found a way to intercept calls to the park lodges by using 800 numbers. Calls would go to the "tour group", which would take the caller's credit card numbers to book a reservation in one of the park lodges. They would then call the victim back and tell him or her that the reservation had been made (even providing a phony confirmation number), call the lodge to make a reservation and get the right price, then bill the victim. The problem occurred when the lodge failed to ever receive payment from "National Park Tours" for any reservations and would accordingly cancel them. The unsuspecting victims would not be notified because the only address given on the reservations was "National Park Tours", and would only find out about the cancellation upon arrival in the park. Grand Canyon Lodges is trying to provide rooms at no charge to these visitors. There have been about 80 victims to date. So far, "National Park Tours" has collected approximately \$16,400 from them. Submitted by Criminal Investigator Franco Sidoti.

A Closing Observation

"The national park idea represents a far-reaching cultural achievement, for here we raise our thoughts above the average, and enter a sphere in which the intangible values of the human heart and spirit take precedent. Freedom prevails. The foxes are free to dig burrows where they will; to hunt ptarmigan, ground squirrels and mice as the spirit moves. The grizzlies wander over their ancestral home unmolested; dig roots and ground squirrels, graze grass, and harvest berries according to whatever menu appeals to them. The 'bad' wolf seeks an honest living as of yore. He is a respected citizen, morally on par with everyone else. Our task is to perpetuate this freedom and purity of nature, this ebb and flow of life."

Conservationist Adolph Murie

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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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