



The Coalition Weekly Report

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Incidents

Cape Hatteras NS Ranger Saves Lives Of Two Caught In Rip Current

On October 18th, ranger Valerie Streiff responded to a call regarding two swimmers who were in distress at Ramp 4 near Bodie Island Lighthouse. On that particular afternoon, the risk of rip currents was high, and a small craft advisory had been issued due to high surf. While en route, she learned over emergency radio that ocean rescue personnel were not in route and it was uncertain when a U.S. Coast Guard vessel out of Oregon Inlet would reach the swimmers.

When Streiff and ranger Brian Waters arrived at the beach, they could see two people in the water about 60 yards offshore. "You could see their heads bobbing up and down, and I could see they were in a rip current," said Streiff. "They weren't making any progress and were getting further out." She quickly made the decision to rescue them herself.

A certified EMT and an experienced former lifeguard, Streiff took off her uniform so she could swim more easily with just a T-shirt and pants. She dropped her duty gear in her truck, put on a life jacket, and grabbed a boat floatation cushion before entering the water.

Due to the rough ocean conditions, it was difficult for her to keep her eyes on the victims, so Waters directed Streiff from the beach until she reached them. Once reaching the swimmers – a father and a son about 10 years old – Streiff gave them the floatation cushion to hold on to and swam them out of the rip current.

This wasn't the first time Streiff acted quickly to save lives. While working in Maryland as a Park Police officer, her quick response to two automobile accidents also resulted in lives saved. She was recognized by the Park Police with a lifesaving award for those two actions.

Streiff says she's learned to be quick on her feet with her training and background. "I just feel like I was at the right place at the right time," she added. "If I'm able to save someone's life, that's what I am going to do."

[Click here for full story](#). Source: Michelle Wagner, *Outer Banks Voice*.

Yellowstone NP Visitors Cause Buffalo Stampede

After leaving the Lamar Valley, park visitor Lisa Stewart stopped along the highway when she saw a bunch of people by the river, thinking it might be a wolf sighting. Instead, it was several tourists acting recklessly as they approached a herd of bison and caused a stampede.

“The people saw them and started walking closer and closer toward the bison,” Stewart explained. “They [the bison] kept getting more agitated by the minute. They walked farther down out of my sight, but I could still hear them grunting and blowing. While I had my iPhone up taking a picture, I heard the rumble of the stampede and immediately moved my camera from still photos to video and captured the video you see.” [You can see the video in the article link below]

“You only see about four-to-six people on the video, but there were more in the same spot the bison come running from,” Stewart said. “The fishermen grabbed their stuff and ran, and then you see the bison running, and I felt relief the people didn’t get trampled. All of a sudden you see the bison appear between the fishermen and tourists, then they turn and run toward the tourists. I was scared for a second, but the second wave of stampeding bison turned again and ran across the river to join the herd on the other side.”

“It was amazing that they didn’t heed the warning of grunting, snorting and stomping feet!” Stewart said. “I stopped filming cause I really thought that someone out of view had to have been hurt and was going to help if needed.”

Afterward, the tourists made their way back to their vehicles, but they heard an earful from bystanders.

“Thank goodness nobody was hurt,” she said, “and I hope they all learned a lesson. It reaffirmed the awesome power of such beautiful creatures in my eyes.”

[Click here for story, photo and video.](#) Source: David Strege, *USA Today*.

Glen Canyon NRA Man Falls To Death While Taking Pictures

A 25-year-old man fell to his death while taking pictures near a park overlook.

Orlando Serrano-Arzola, 25, was on top of the rim overlooking the Colorado River on the morning of October 4th when he fell about 100 feet and then slid another 150 feet.

A sheriff’s deputy rappelled to his location. The deputy reached him around 30 minutes after the fall and confirmed that he’d died.

Investigators believe that Serrano-Arzola had climbed up some rocks to get a better view. When he tried to climb back out, he evidently lost his footing.

[Click here for full story.](#) Source: Phil Helsel, NBC News.

Lake Meredith NR Search In Progress For Missing Hunter

A search is underway for a 46-year-old man who had been hunting in the park and failed to return. Rangers were notified on Monday, October 26th, and started searching hunting areas on foot. The man’s wife confirmed that he’d brought a boat to the park, so the search area includes Lake Meredith.

The man is retired from the Air Force, but his wife is currently serving in the Air Force and stationed outside of Texas.

Other agencies assisting in the search include Laughlin Air Force Base, United States Border Patrol Texas Game Wardens and the Val Verde County Sheriff’s Office.

Several different techniques are being used to aid in the search, including tracking dogs, patrol vessels, infrared and night vision during the night search, drones and helicopter support.

[Click here for article](#). Source: Erin Rodriguez and Vanessa Croix, KENS News.

Great Smoky Mountains NP Searchers Find Lost Hiker

Fred Braden, 56, of Powell, Tennessee, was reported missing just after 7 p.m. on October 27th when he failed to return from a day hike on the Middle Prong Trail on the Tennessee side of the park. The park started searching for him the next morning and found him later that day.

More than 30 people assisted in the operation, including members of BUSAR, an all-hazards search and rescue team that assists with operations inside the park. Responders searched over 20 acres of off-trail areas along with 30 miles of park trails.

The incident command team established a mobile base of operations in the Tremont area using a new ICS trailer donated by the Friends of the Smokies.

There are about 100 search and rescue operations a year in the park.

[Click here for news article](#). Source: Karen Chávez, *Asheville Citizen Times*.

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Zion NP* – The Washington County Sheriff's Office has opened an investigation into the case of Holly Courtier, who was found by searchers after being missing for ten days. Courtier, a 38-year-old from Los Angeles, was seen on October 6th getting off a shuttle at The Grotto shuttle stop, a starting point for several trails in the park. She was found alive by a rescue team in a thickly vegetated area along the Virgin River. Though questions have been raised about the lost hiker's story, officials say that at this point in their investigation they have found no evidence to support the allegations that the incident was committed intentionally as an effort to achieve financial gain. [Click here for full story](#). Source: Ashley Fredde, KSL News.
- *Mount Rainier NP* – The search for University of Washington anthropology professor Sam Dubal, who has been missing since October 9th, when he embarked on a 17-mile overnight hike on Mount Rainier, has ended after a 15-day intensive search. Dubal began his hike in the Mowich Lake area, which includes rugged, remote wilderness. He was supposed to return from the 17-mile loop trail the following day, but did not. The park launched a search, which was suspended on October 23rd; at the family's request, though, they resumed it two days later. They found no sign of him. [Click here for full article](#). Source: Sunita Sohrabji, *India-West*.
- *Yellowstone NP* – Although the famous/infamous Forest Fenn treasure was at last found last June, the repercussions continue for treasure hunters. A Utah man currently faces two federal charges for digging for it in the park. Rodrick Craythorn, 52, was looking for it and dug in the Fort Yellowstone Cemetery inside the national park between October 1st and May 24th last year. He was indicted by a grand jury last month on two federal counts. He pled not guilty; a trial will be held next month. The search for the treasure led to at least five deaths. Thousands were reported to have looked for it at some point. [Click here for full article](#). Source: Phil Helsel, NBC News.

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center National Preparedness Level Drops To PL 2

NIFC is now at Preparedness Level 2, three steps down from PL 5, its highest level.

Large fire activity continues in ten states, where 38 large fires have together burned 3.1 million acres. No new large fires were reported yesterday. Firefighters continue to make progress toward containment goals on several large fires across the West.

Park And Park-Related Fires

- *Rocky Mountain NP* – All of Rocky Mountain National Park remains closed. It is unknown when the park will reopen. Once it does reopen, only some areas of the park will be accessible based upon safety and fire behavior. Almost 29,000 acres have burned inside the park, partly from the East Troublesome Fire and partly from the Cameron Peak Fire. This is the most acreage burned within the park since its establishment 105 years ago. Map of burned areas within the park can be found [at this link](#). For the most up-to-date information on the East Troublesome Fire, [click on this link](#); for the most up-to-date information on the Cameron Peak Fire, [visit this webpage](#).
- *Yosemite NP* – NIFC reports three significant fires in the park – the Blue Jay Fire (6,915 acres, up from 6,640 acres last week – it's 50% contained), the Wolf Fire (2,040 acres, up from 1,935 acres last week – 30% contained), and the Rattlesnake Fire (7,241 acres, up from 6,867 acres last week – 40% contained).
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs* – The Moraine Fire has burned 1,176 acres, up from 988 acres last week. It's now 70% contained. Full containment is forecast for November 30th.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	October 20	October 27	November 3
Area Command Teams	3	2	1
NIMO Teams	2	2	1
Type 1 Teams	9	6	2
Type 2 Teams	9	6	3
Crews	225	137	91
Engines	634	358	358
Helicopters	125	87	49
Total FF/Overhead	11,848	7,333	5,939

Fires/Acreage

Category	2010-2019 Ave	2020 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	51,956	47,506	- 4,450
United States: YTD Acres	6,422,501	8,596,235	+ 2,173,734

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

October 26 –The Senate confirmed the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett, of Indiana, to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, by a vote of 52 yeas to 48 nays.

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.

- *Independence NHP* – The NPS-owned City Tavern, a colonial-themed restaurant on the site of a 1773 tavern in Philadelphia’s Old City, has closed due to decreased business stemming from the coronavirus pandemic. City Tavern’s longtime chef-proprietor, Walter Staib, called the closure “bittersweet” and said it followed months of slow business four nights a week. The restaurant had lost its core clientele of international travelers, he said. The original structure was razed in 1854, but a reconstructed version based on period images, written accounts and insurance surveys opened in 1976 to coincide with the nation's bicentennial. [Click here for full story](#). Source: WCAU News.
- *Mammoth Cave NP* – The fossilized remains of six species of ancient shark previously unknown to science have been unearthed in the park, with researchers hailing the site as "one of the most diverse Mississippian shark faunas in North America." The fossils of at least 40 different species of shark and close relatives have been discovered in remote cave locations within the park since survey efforts started 10 months ago. The six previously undiscovered species include large predators and small bottom-feeders. The fossils could be more than 325 million years old, which is when the limestones of the Mammoth Cave System were formed, during the Mississippian Period of the Late Paleozoic Era. [Click here for full story](#). Source: Aatif Sulleyman, *Newsweek*.
- *Yellowstone NP* – The park’s plan to improve employee housing for the roughly 400 workers who live in the park is now underway. The plan has several phases, including the rehabilitation of historic buildings and renovating non-historic ones; the largest phase is currently underway, the replacing of 64 outdated trailers. Some of these trailers date back to the 1960s and are in very poor condition. They are being replaced by brand new, high-quality modular cabins. These new homes are being constructed off-site and assembled in the park, which saves time and money. “This project is the first of its kind in the National Park Service,” says Kyle Stone, a civil engineer. “Using modular versus on-site construction means we can build more units, in less time, with lower costs, more sustainably.” The park expects all trailers to be replaced by 2021 and all renovations to be completed by 2023. You can learn more about the Housing Improvement Project [at this link](#). Source: National Park Service.

Briefly Noted

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

- *Dying In Parks* – *Newsweek* ran a cheery little article on October 25th entitled “Which National Park Are You Most Likely to Die Visiting?” Consultants Panish Shea & Boyle LLP worked with data visualization agency 1Point21 Interactive to identify parks in the nation where people had met a deadly end. They found that between 2007 and 2018 there were a total of 2,727 deaths

in national parks—this equates to around eight deaths per 10 million visits. Men accounted for 81% of the fatalities, women 19%. Four parks had more than 100 deaths during this period – Lake Mead (201), Yosemite (133), Grand Canyon (131) and Natchez Trace (131). [Click on this link for more details](#). Source: Sophia Waterfield, *Newsweek*.

The Federal Government

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

- *Changing Administrations* – On October 28th, *Atlantic* ran a story entitled “The Transition Is Already Happening (And It’s Going Fine So Far).” It begins with a summary of potential problems that would occur in a changeover, should it occur: “Transitions can be challenging even under the best circumstances. And President Donald Trump, to say the least, may not be psychologically or temperamentally predisposed to a thoughtful, well-planned transition. Even back when he was the incoming president, his on-ramp to the presidency was extraordinarily haphazard, disorganized, and incomplete. Add in his petulance and expected fury at the outcome, and there is surely reason to fear the havoc the president and his team could wreak on their way to the exits.” It admonishes readers to take heart, as much of the transition process is governed by law – specifically, the Presidential Transition Act, signed into law in 1964. “This law—and its many amendments, the most recent of which was enacted just this year—provides millions of dollars in funding for transition operations and requires the government to support potential incoming administrations with information, expertise, and direct assistance. Strikingly, Congress placed almost all the responsibility for managing the transition in the hands of career employees. This means that when it comes to matters of transition, the president and those immediately surrounding him are less important than they seem: The real action lies with career staff in the agencies.” [See the article at this link for further details](#). Source: Kate Shaw and Michael Eric Herz, *Atlantic*.
- *Undoing ‘Environmental Horrors’* – This may be just a bit premature, as it’s being written on election eve and may be entirely overtaken by events by the time you read it. Still, the following contains some interesting information about a potential presidential transition. *Mic*, an online publication that provides “an essential lens to navigating modern life and examines how culture, technology, and politics are redefining the way we live in real-time,” has posted an article synopsizing the difficulties Biden will/would have in undoing various “environmental horrors” brought on by the current administration. It provides a good companion to the entry above. [Click here to read the article](#). Source: Harry Cheadle, *Mic*.

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.

- *Exploitation Of Tongass NF* – CPANP [issued a statement](#) on the president's recent decision to rollback protections on the Tongass National Forest, opening it up to logging and industry. Coalition Chair Phil Francis called the decision devastating and added that it will "destroy resources, harm the climate, and greatly diminish the ability of visitors to experience wild Alaska. This is a particularly appalling action from an administration that has spent years rolling back protections on public lands and the environment."
- *Oil And Gas Leasing In Utah* – The Coalition [signed on to a letter](#) to BLM with extensive comments regarding the supplemental analysis for greenhouse gas emissions related to oil and gas leasing in Utah. The letter reads, in part, that "we believe the BLM's curative attempt with this EA is insufficient for several reasons – including that it is being done post-hoc and was not part of informing BLM's decision-making process, as required – and in particular because it fails to analyze and address cumulative climate change impacts on cultural resources within the lease sales."

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

NPS Alumni

Passing Of Rothwell Broyles

Career ranger and superintendent Rothwell Broyles, 94, on October 9th. The family prepared and posted this remembrance:

“Another of our Greatest Generation has left us. Our beloved father, grandfather, brother, and uncle, Rothwell Paul Broyles, passed away on the beautiful fall morning of October 9, 2020, at the age of 94. Dad was our rock, always, and a more kind, loving, loyal, honest, humble, and hard-working man would be hard to find. The word integrity describes his character to a ‘T,’ as it did that of so many World War II veterans.

“‘Rod,’ as he was known to friends and family, was born in 1926 and brought up by his loving family in Luray, Virginia and Buffalo, Wyoming. He became an Eagle Scout at the unusually young age of 14, and enlisted in the Navy Hospital Corps in 1944. While still in high school, he met the love of his life, Phyllis Freeland, thanks to her brother Dixon introducing his fellow scoutmate Rod to the family. Phyllis and Dixon’s father, Edward Dixon Freeland, had recently become superintendent at Shenandoah National Park. Rod and Phyllis spent many happy days riding horseback in the hills around Luray, a pastime that would remain their favorite for many years and in many parks.

“After his service in the Navy, he attended Colorado State University (Colorado A & M) while working as a seasonal ranger at Shenandoah National Park. That was the beginning of a 36-year career as a ranger in our National Parks with his wife Phyllis at his side, including Yosemite National Park, Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico, Big Bend National Park in Texas (where he also served in the Air Force Reserve), Joshua Tree National Monument, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in Arizona, Perry’s Victory & National Peace Memorial, and Pinnacles National Monument (now a National Park). Their son Paul was born in Yosemite, daughter Bea in Grand Teton National Park where Phyllis’s parents were stationed, and daughter Elizabeth was born in St. Helena in the Napa Valley, where the Freelands retired in 1961. Rod and Phyllis retired to Calistoga, and then moved north to McKinleyville almost 20 years ago.

“Dad was completely devoted to his family and his animals, and loved all creatures, wild or domestic, as well as our wildlands. Always a bit of a loner, in retirement he walked miles each day with his dog, for as long as he was able. He was a history buff, and his long and rich life experience that straddled two centuries provided fodder for many great stories.

“His early days in the Park Service seem idyllic now, in that it was customary for rangers to patrol those beautiful lands on horseback. Those trips were often days long, and mules were used to pack supplies due to their intelligence and surefootedness on the sometimes treacherous trails. Some of his favorite stories featured a clever mule who helped the horses and other mules escape from their corral in the night, or described encounters with bears in the backcountry of Yosemite. Our family likes to say that we have ‘green blood,’ due to the legacy of serving in the National Parks, started by our grandfather, and continued by several members of the following generations.

“His parents and future parents-in-law were good people and made young Rod aware of the racial, gender, and economic inequities of our world. As a result, in his career and as a father he always did his best to champion the disenfranchised and the underprivileged. By example, he taught us to be responsible, think for ourselves, and care for others.

“Rod is dearly missed by his son Paul, wife Gini and their two daughters and granddaughter of Boise, Idaho; daughter Bea Bachenberg of Greeley, Colorado and her two children and grandson; daughter Elizabeth Rivera of McKinleyville, her three daughters and their father, Rafael; Rod’s ‘brother,’ Dixon Freeland and his wife Ann of Luray, Virginia, and their three children Alice, Serra, and Dixon David

and their families. He was preceded in death by his wife, Phyllis and his son-in-law Tom Bachenberg. In lieu of flowers, donations could be made to any park or conservation organization.

“Happy trails, Dad!”

For a copy of the obituary, [click on this link](#). Source: *Lost Coast Outpost*.

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:

- *Yosemite NP* – Cicely Muldoon, a 35-year veteran of the NPS, has been selected as the park's new permanent superintendent. Muldoon has been serving as the acting superintendent since January. Prior to Yosemite, Muldoon served for nearly 10 years as the superintendent at Point Reyes National Seashore. Before her appointment to Point Reyes, she served for five years as a NPS deputy regional director based in San Francisco, where she oversaw partnerships, visitor and resource protection, interpretation and education, wildland and structural fire and safety programs across the region. She also provided direct oversight of ten parks, including Death Valley, Joshua Tree and Lake Mead. Before serving as a regional official, Muldoon was the superintendent at Pinnacles National Park and earlier at San Juan Island National Historical Park. [Click here for link to press release](#). Source: National Park Service.

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.

- *New River Gorge NR* – On Saturday, October 21st, the park hosted the annual Bridge Day event. An estimated 100,000 visitors attended, down from previous years because of forecast rain showers. One lane of the four-lane bridge was closed off and pedestrians were allowed on the bridge to view the fall colors and to watch BASE jumpers and rappellers jump from it. A total of 361 registered parachutists made a total of 609 jumps; a world record was set when nine of them made a successful jump from the bridge at the same time. Another 161 persons rappelled and climbed from heights of between 350 and 650 feet without incident. Threatening heavy rains and high winds held off, which helped bring down the number of injuries and other emergency incidents during the day. There were only 54 water landings, one tree landing, and four injuries requiring treatment - three requiring transport to the hospital but resulting in same-day treatment and release. During the event, rangers conducted a technical rescue of three juveniles who ran away from an adjudicated juvenile group that was hiking in the area. They climbed down a steep drainage and became stranded on a cliff band about 45 feet above the grounds. They were rescued without incident. Edward Trick was arrested on October 20th for illegally parachuting off the bridge. Because of this and in accord with an agreement with the World BASE Association, Trick was prohibited from jumping under the terms of the permit the following day. Trick ignored the prohibition and jumped anyway. He was arrested at the bottom of the bridge; a U.S. magistrate judge fined him \$100 for the first jump and \$300 for the second. Submitted by Acting Chief Ranger Rick Brown.
- *Mojave NP* – Over the past weekend, rangers discovered numerous boxes of goods hidden along the Union Pacific Railway road line near Cedar Canyon Road. The boxes contained a variety of items, including high quality leather brief cases, 10,000 cartons of cigarettes, stereos, speakers, televisions and tennis shoes. Trains on this section of the line were robbed of over \$1,000,000 in goods last year. It's believed that groups out of Los Angeles are responsible for the thefts. Arrests have been made for similar cases in the past. Union Pacific has asked rangers to investigate these and other thefts. Submitted by District Ranger Thane Wiegand.

- *New River Gorge NR* – On October 31st, rangers investigated a report of a timber theft in the Garden Ground area of the park and found three local men stealing timber. Ronnie and Orba Williams and Thomas Hurley were apprehended leaving the area with two highly valuable [Paulownia](#) logs loaded onto a trailer. The trio had employed a four wheel ATV equipped with a trailer, winch, come-along and sheave blocks to haul the timber out of the steep and remote location near the rim of the gorge. Severe damage was done to the terrain when the logs were hauled up the steep slope. Further investigation revealed that a total of eight Paulownia trees up to sixteen inches in diameter had been cut and prepared for removal from the area. The trees were found scattered over a six-mile area near the rim of the gorge. Six maple trees were also cut and bucked up into short lengths for removal, and several smaller trees were cut and destroyed in the process of clearing the area for the removal of the saw logs. The three men were found to have a small bag of marijuana and a loaded .22 caliber rifle in their possession. They have been charged with resource destruction, firearms violations, and possession of marijuana. The investigation is continuing. Additional charges are expected. Submitted by Acting Chief Ranger Rick Brown.

A Closing Observation

"The national parks are charged with the obligation of preserving superlative natural regions, including wilderness areas, for the benefit of posterity. Attentiveness to the pleasure and comfort of the people is essential, but it cannot mean catering to absolutely unlimited numbers unless the second function is to destroy the first. In a theater, when the seats in the house have been sold out and the available standing room also has been pre-empted, the management does not jeopardize the main event by allowing still more onlookers to crowd upon the stage and impede the unfolding of the drama."

Park naturalist and author C. F. Brockman

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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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