



The Coalition Weekly Report

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Volume 4

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Incidents

Grand Canyon NP Family Of Five Stuck Deep In Backcountry Rescued

NPS and BLM rangers joined deputies from the Mohave County Arizona Sheriff's Office in the successful rescue and reunification of a family of five who became stranded in mud and snow in the Arizona strip earlier this month.

On the evening of January 6th, Mohave County dispatch received a 911 call from a Colorado man who said that he and his family were stranded in a remote location south of St. George. The man and his family, attempting to see the Grand Canyon on their way home from a California vacation, became stuck after a smartphone mapping application erroneously routed them onto unpaved backcountry roads on the Arizona Strip. The family had traveled 30 to 40 miles into the backcountry before their SUV became stuck in deep mud, clay and snow at 7,500 feet.

Due to spotty cellular reception in such a remote area the man was unable to provide dispatch with accurate coordinates to their location. After several attempts to extract their SUV from the deeply rutted road, the father and teenage son decided to set out on foot to find help, leaving the wife and two younger children behind to take shelter in the vehicle. With rapidly dwindling power on their phone, father and son covered 20 miles that night searching for a cellular connection while attempting to find their way back to town.

When he next got cellular reception, the man was connected directly with a county deputy, who in turn connected with the NPS and BLM rangers. They were able to speak with the lost man and determine that he and his son were located near Lime Kiln Canyon on the Arizona Strip. The rescuers soon reached them and determined that the man's wife and children were probably on Black Rock Mountain between Cougar Spring and Maple Canyon. One deputy transported father and son to Mesquite; the others followed their tracks back to the car and rescued the other members of the family. The rangers treated the family for dehydration, provided food, and reconnected them with the father and son.

"I could see relief on her face that the rest of her family had made it okay," said one of the rangers. "It's why we all do the job — to be able to help people."

"That I could be the one to put those fears aside and help them get out of there is an awesome feeling," said the other.

Source: Rachel Carnahan, [Southern Utah Independent](#).

Rocky Mountain NP Searchers Find Bodies Of Woman And 17-Month-Old Son

Rangers found two people dead during a search that took place last Friday afternoon.

The search was launched after rangers were notified that a suicidal 24-year-old woman was likely in the park. Her vehicle was found on the Upper Beaver Meadows Road, leading to the discovery of two bodies on the Beaver Meadows Trail – that of the woman and of her 17-month-old child. Both died of gunshot wounds. The deaths have been ruled, respectively, as a suicide and a homicide.

Source: Kieran Nicholson, [Denver Post](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Yellowstone NP* – The Indiana man who illegally rappelled into the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone earlier this month before having to be rescued says he was searching for hidden treasure. Dave Christensen, 55, is convinced the canyon holds the infamous Fenn treasure — a multimillion dollar cache of gold and jewels that Sante Fe art dealer and author Forrest Fenn insists he hid some time ago. Thousands have sought or are seeking the treasure; four have died in the process. In a novel rationalization, Christensen says he made this attempt in order to save others who may be injured or perish looking for the treasure. Source: Mark Davis, [Powell Tribune](#).
- *Indiana Dunes NP* – On January 23rd, the Ogden Dunes Police Department announced that the town's beach access ways have been closed due to hazardous conditions resulting from severe erosion. The mayor of Portage declared an emergency earlier this month, asking for state and federal agencies to act quickly to save the disappearing beach. The county's emergency declaration came less than a week after the park temporarily closed down the western portion of the parking area and all beach access at the Lake View area in Beverly Shores. Source: Bob Kasarda, [Munster Times](#).

National/International Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Assistance To Australia Continues

NIFC is at PL 1. There's no current fire activity in the US.

A total of 216 firefighters and overhead personnel have been committed to the wildfires burning in three Australian states – 33 to New South Wales, 5 to South Australia, 178 to Victoria.

Because emergency management in Australia is a state responsibility, detailed information on operations in the above three states can be found at the following websites:

- New South Wales RFS – <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>
- Victoria – <https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/>
- South Australian Country Fire Service – <https://www.cfs.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp>

You can learn more about the US deployment at https://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_australia.htm.

Wildland Fire News – Stories pertaining to wildland fire and fire-related activities that involved the NPS and its fellow agencies around the globe.

- *Three US Firefighters Killed In Plane Crash In Australia* – Three American firefighters – Ian McBeth of Great Falls, Montana, Paul Clyde Hudson of Buckeye, Arizona, and Rick A. DeMorgan of Navarre, Florida – were killed last Thursday when their firefighting plane crashed in New South Wales in Australia. The C-130 Hercules from Coulson Aviation, a private American company contracted by the Rural Fire Service in NSW, crashed in the Snowy Monaro area. The cause of the accident has not been determined, but Coulson Aviation grounded its large air tankers as a standard precaution following the crash. The company has worked with New South Wales for years and has a long and respected reputation fighting wildfires. Source: Phil Helsel, [NBC News](#); [KTVB News](#).
- *Barriers To Prescribed Fire* – A new article in *Nature Research*, entitled “[Barriers and enablers for prescribed burns for wildfire management in California](#),” looks at the underutilization of prescribed fire in California and the underlying reasons for this situation. The researchers identify three categories of obstacles – risk-related barriers (fear of liability and negative public perceptions), resource-related barriers (limited funding, crew availability and experience), and regulations-related barriers (poor weather conditions for burning and environmental regulations). Their conclusion: “Recent policies have sought to address mainly risk-related challenges, although these and regulations-related challenges remain. Fundamental shifts in prescribed-burn policies, beyond those currently under consideration, are needed to address wildfires in California and worldwide.” Source: Rebecca K. Miller, Christopher B. Field and Katharine J. Mach, [Nature Research](#).

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	January 24	January 31	February 7
Area Command Teams	0	--	--
NIMO Teams	0	--	--
Type 1 Teams	0	--	--
Type 2 Teams	0	--	--
Crews	0	--	--
Engines	3	--	--
Helicopters	0	--	--
Total FF/Overhead	11	--	--

Fires/Acreage

Category	2020 Total	2010-2019 Ave	2020 Variance
United States: YTD Fires	736	947	– 22%
United States: YTD Acres	14,891	16,429	– 8%

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

January 21-25 – The Senate, sitting as a Court of Impeachment, considered the articles of impeachment against Donald John Trump, President of the United States.

House Actions

The House was in recess all week.

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.

- *America's SAR Programs Declared To Be In "State Of Emergency"* – An article in the most recent issue of *Outside* addresses the problems currently facing SAR teams and programs in the NPS and elsewhere around the country. The central premise: "With Americans surging onto public lands like never before, search and rescue operations are becoming overwhelmed—and help is not on the way." Author Marc Peruzzi expands on this in an opening paragraph: "SAR operations in the United States are a patchwork. Depending on where you are when bad luck strikes, you might be saved by a commando squad with a chopper on speed dial, carried out quickly by a talented group like the Volcano Rescue Team, or forced to wait for hours, even days, until well-meaning volunteers with limited resources reach you in the backcountry. Historically, this was a reasonable approach, with the level of rescue services available in a given area generally matching the demand. These days, though, demographic and cultural shifts have led more people into the wild, putting emergency operations in some places under enormous stress. Which is why it's time to reevaluate our approach to SAR before things get worse." The author explores possible solutions, even looking at what's being done in France and Switzerland, but in the end is pessimistic about what it'll take to bring about change in the USA: "Ultimately, America probably won't get a major SAR overhaul until more people die in the outdoors. That's a cynical take, but it's the same gruesome calculus that motivates road crews to add guardrails only after enough drivers plummet to their deaths on dangerous mountain highways." Marc Peruzzi, [Outside](#).
- *Study Issued On NPS Historic Leasing Program* – Three researchers from Perkins Coie, a leading international law firm that proclaims that it is known for "providing high value, strategic solutions and extraordinary client service on matters vital to our clients' success," have completed and released a five-page article on the Service's historic leasing program entitled [Historic Leasing and the Unfulfilled Potential to Use Partnerships to Preserve Historic Properties and National Parks](#). The goal of their paper, say the authors, is "to provide general background related to NPS management responsibilities and the need to make greater use of the agency's historic leasing program to creatively address renovations of historic assets, deferred maintenance, and park management projects through involvement of the private sector." The full article can be read at either the link above or the one that follows. Source: Stephanie M. Regenold, Julie Wilson-McNerney and Cassie Roberts, [Perkins Coie](#).

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* – On January 21st, the Clarke County Board of Supervisors (Virginia) approved an \$8,000 allocation to help establish a parking area on Morgan's Mill Road for Appalachian Trail hikers. The money will be matched with a \$4,000 pledge by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and a \$3,000 pledge by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. The total project cost is estimated at \$15,000. More people are now visiting that section of the trail, but there's no place reserved for them to park their vehicles. Some park along the road while others

park in a utility line right of way. After heavy rains, the steep right of way gets muddy, making it basically inaccessible. More vehicles then park along the road, increasing traffic congestion. The National Park Service eventually will develop a permanent parking lot near the trail crossing, but it will take a few years for the project to go through federal planning and budgeting processes. For now, the county plans to establish a roughly 5,000-square-foot temporary parking area just west of the crossing. Source: Mickey Powell, [Winchester Star](#).

- *Dinosaur NM* – Following 25 years of research, scientists have concluded that dinosaur fossils unearthed in the park back in 1990 are the oldest allosaurus fossils ever found in the state, dating back 155 million years.. The discovery, they say, also shows there were only two Allosaurus species that existed in North America. Their findings of the new species — dubbed *Allosaurus jimmadseni* — were released on January 24th in the science journal [PeerJ](#). The study not only identified a second allosaurus species — the other being *Allosaurus fragilis* — but it found that the upward of 12 allosaurus species named in North America were actually misidentified as anything other than the *Allosaurus fragilis*. The discovery, researchers say, helps understand how the ecosystem changed over the course of millions of years. Source: [Carter Williams, KSL News](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – The National Park Service, in collaboration with The Conservation Fund, recently acquired a 35-acre parcel located within the park’s administrative boundary. The parcel is located near the south boundary of the park on the west side of the Snake River near the park’s Granite Canyon entrance station. The acquired parcel preserves the landscape of the Teton Range, prevents residential development, and protects important habitat for a variety of wildlife. The article includes a map showing the parcel’s location. Source: [Buckrail](#).
- *Lassen Volcanic NP* – A webpage entitled Active NorCal has posted ten black and white photos of Lassen’s 1914 eruption. If you haven’t seen any photos of that eruption (even if you have), they’re worth a look. Source: [Active NorCal](#).
- *Lewis and Clark NHT* – “The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association has partnered with the National Park Service to find and share the stories of Native American tribes that intersect with the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail,” reports National Parks Traveler. “The 4,900-mile national historic trail, which stretches from the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Astoria, Oregon, crosses 16 states, as well as nearly two dozen Indian reservations. Over a three-year period, AIANTA plans to conduct interviews with and make site visits to tribes in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas to develop content and create regional itineraries that include native and tribally owned destinations and experiences along the route. Completed content will be showcased at [LewisAndClark.travel](#) and [NativeAmerica.travel](#).” Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *Martin Luther King, Jr. NHP* – Delta Air Lines, which is based in Atlanta, has committed \$400,000 to the National Park Service to provide for upgrades and renovations at the park. This contribution will significantly improve the lighting and electrical systems at the promenade and visitor center access areas for the guest experience at the park. It will also enhance safety and security. The expected completion date is 2021. Source: Mika Billins, [Delta News Hub](#).
- *Valles Caldera NP* – The National Park Trust has helped preserve the geothermal wonders of Valles Caldera National Preserve in New Mexico by securing the last remaining land parcel (inholding) located inside the park’s boundaries. The preserve is home to one of the oldest super-volcanoes in America and the recently acquired parcel will eventually give visitors access a collection of sulfuric acid fumaroles, mud pots, and hot springs. The NPS has been trying to acquire the 40-acre parcel of land for over a decade. The Trust’s community of supporters provided supplemental funding to assist in its purchase, including philanthropic gifts from the Cornell Douglas Foundation, the Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Charitable Trust, and a gift from Ms. Frances Kennedy made in memory of her late husband, Roger Kennedy, the 14th director of the National Park Service. Source: Dick Ring.

- *Yellowstone NP* – On January 19th, 60 Minutes ran an episode entitled “The Return Of Wolves To Yellowstone Park.” Here’s an excerpt from the transcript: “The National Park Service brought wolves back to Yellowstone Park almost exactly 25 years ago, following a bitter debate between wildlife groups, who wanted them restored, and ranchers, who most definitely didn’t. Even today, the wolves of Yellowstone stir strong emotions, but as we first reported in 2018, they’ve also had an impact that almost no one saw coming...Now, reports of a wolf-sighting can produce a traffic jam along the one 50 mile stretch of road the park service keeps open in the winter. Visitors with spotting scopes gather in absolutely frigid weather for a momentary, long-distance view.” The park estimates that “hundreds of thousands” of people come to the park annually to see wolves, and that they contribute about \$35 million annually to the local economy. You can read the transcript or see the episode at the following 60 Minutes link; you can also read two of many stories that have appeared on this 25th anniversary of the reintroduction – one in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* via a reprint in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the other in *The Guardian* – at the related links. Source: Bill Whitaker, [60 Minutes](#); Michael Wright, [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#); Cassidy Randall, [The Guardian](#).

Commenting On NPS Projects

An alphabetical listing of National Park Service projects – physical, paper and otherwise – which have solicited public comments, plus due dates and URL’s to related sites. Park names for new entries are in **boldface**.

- *Alaskan Parks* – All of the parks in Alaska have opened up their proposed park compendium changes for 2020 for public review and comment. Links to each of the dozen parks can be found at [Alaska Region’s proposed compendium changes webpage](#). Comments are due by February 15th.
- *Arches NP* – EA analyzing the effects of allowing bicycle use on the newly constructed Arches Visitor Center Connector Trail. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes February 11th.
- ***Everglades NP*** – The Corps of Engineers’s Jacksonville District is seeking comments the final EIS for the Everglades Agricultural Area Southern Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area. The relevant documents can be found at [this link](#); look for item #35 titled “Central and Southern Florida, Everglades Agricultural Area” located under the multiple counties section of environmental documents by county. Closes February 24th. Send comments by email to EAAReservoir@usace.army.mil or to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, ATTN: Andrew LoSchiavo, 701 San Marco Boulevard, Jacksonville, Florida 32207-8175,
- The public can download the document from the Corps of Engineers website
- *Flagstaff Area NMs* – Draft backcountry management plan. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes January 31st.
- *Mesa Verde NP* – Upgrades to the mesa top loop roads. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes January 30th.
- ***Ozark NSR*** – Proposed temporary closure on the taking, pursuing or releasing of all feral swine within the park in order to support interagency efforts to eliminate feral swine in Missouri. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes February 11th.
- *Voyageurs NP* – Possible expansion of tour boat operations. [PEPC webpage](#). Closes February 8th.

The Federal Government

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

- *BLM To Revise Grazing Regulations* – BLM issued a press release on January 17th regarding its intent to improve administration of regs governing grazing on public lands. Here’s the text: “The Bureau of Land Management has published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to consider proposed revisions to the agency’s grazing regulations. The BLM currently manages livestock grazing on 155 million of the 245 million acres of public land and administers nearly 18,000 grazing permits and leases.

'Administration of sustainable livestock grazing on public lands is a key part of the Bureau of Land Management's multiple-use mission. We continue to seek ways to improve and streamline the grazing permit process to achieve greater efficiencies and service to permittees,' said Acting Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management Casey B. Hammond. 'This rulemaking effort is designed to strengthen and improve our administration of grazing permits across the West, and we welcome public and stakeholder ideas and perspectives.' The proposed revisions will update, modernize and streamline the grazing regulations and provide greater flexibility for land and resource management. Through this rulemaking, the BLM seeks to improve existing land-use planning and grazing permitting procedures, while simultaneously promoting public lands conservation. The BLM hopes to improve its stewardship of the nation's rangeland resources by strengthening controls to prevent unauthorized grazing, enhancing environmental protections across various non-grazing land-use programs, and improving public input opportunities." They're accepting comments until February 28th [at this webpage](#). Source: [Bureau Of Land Management](#).

- *DOI Official Provided 'Special Favors' To NRA* – The following is from the January 23rd issue of the *Guardian*: "In the fall of 2017, a National Rifle Association lobbyist named Benjamin Cassidy left his job at the influential gun group. His next stop: a top position at the US interior department, which oversees hundreds of millions of acres of federal land across the country. Once in office, it didn't take Cassidy long to use his new government gig to provide his longtime NRA colleagues with special access to the powerful federal agency, as revealed by previously unreleased communications obtained by the *Guardian*. The messages underscore the potent influence that industry lobbyists and conservative organizations enjoy at a government agency where many key leaders are former lobbyists and conservative activists themselves. The NRA has made the most of this dynamic during the Trump presidency, leveraging its connections to shape policy outcomes and personnel decisions at the interior department." The article provides examples of the assistance he provided the NRA. Cassidy is no longer at DOI. In 2019, he took a new job as director of government affairs at Safari Club International, an organization that promotes trophy hunting in the United States and overseas. Source: Jimmy Tobias, [The Guardian](#).

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.

- *Climate Change Kills Thousands Of Birds Along West Coast* – For almost a year, people reported finding thousands dead common murres up and down the Pacific coastline, from California to Alaska. From the summer of 2015 through the spring of 2016, about 62,000 washed ashore, part of a mass species die-off that scientists are attributing to an extreme marine heat wave. In a [study published on January 15th in the journal PLOS ONE](#), a group of scientists from various state and federal agencies, universities and bird rescue organizations document the die-off and conclude from the data that it was caused by a record-breaking ocean heat wave in 2014 through 2016 that triggered systemic changes throughout the ocean ecosystem. The report's authors estimate that a million common murres died during the period, an event they called "unprecedented and astounding." The common murres weren't the only species to experience mass die-offs during this time, though; other affected species included tufted puffins, Cassin's auklets, sea lions and baleen whales. Source: Sabrina Shankman, [Inside Climate News](#).
- *US Winters Losing Their Chill* – A recent report on the Climate Central webpage analyzes how the number of consecutive winter days below normal have changed across the U.S. since 1970. Of the stations analyzed (242), researchers found that 96% (232) experienced shorter cold streaks, with the average trend across stations showing a reduction by almost five days.

“Warmer winters may seem like an inviting prospect,” say the authors, “but they come with consequences that aren’t always immediately obvious. Cold temperatures are important in limiting pest populations—which is why many parts of the country have experienced expansions in mosquito seasons. Periods of consistent cold are important for plant development – for instance, fruit trees (such as apple, peach and cherry trees) rely on this time of dormancy in order to produce fruit the following spring and summer. Source: [Climate Central](#).

National Park System Issues

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

- *Everglades NP* – A hunt for exotic Burmese pythons in the Everglades resulted in the bagging of 80 of the big serpents, as contenders vied for cash prizes in the state’s latest effort to eliminate the invasive species that has long devastated the Everglades’ delicate ecosystem. The competition, which ran from January 9th to January 19th, attracted more than 750 hunters from across 20 states. The snake’s insatiable appetite has resulted in the severe decline in native mammal and bird populations in the Everglades, including endangered species. Wildlife officials estimate the Burmese python population may exceed 100,000. Source: Stephen Sorace, [Fox News](#).
- *Grand Teton NP* – On January 15th, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission passed a resolution urging the NPS to immediately cancel its plans to use helicopter gunners to kill goats in the park. Saying that the practice “flies in the face of all Wyoming values,” the commission condemned the Service’s planned use of aerial gunning to remove about 100 non-native mountain goats from the park. The state prefers that “skilled volunteer hunters” be used instead, but the park intends to continue with its aerial hunting program. Over the course of recent years, the invasive mountain goat population has grown to about the same size as the native Grand Teton Range bighorn sheep herd and the animals are competing for the same food. There are also fears that the non-native goats will transmit diseases to the native bighorn sheep. Source: Shelby Harris, [Idaho State Journal](#).

External Issues – Management issues related to usage or development in culturally or naturally sensitive areas abutting or passing through parks.

- *Chaco Culture NHP* – The fiscal year 2020 federal spending package that was recently signed into law will prevent any oil and gas leasing activities on federal lands within 10 miles of the park. The buffer zone is included in the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill. It states that no federal funds can be used to accept a nomination for oil and gas leasing within the 10-mile buffer zone until a cultural resources investigation is completed. Source: Hannah Grover, [Farmington Daily Times](#).

Systemic Pollution – Issues pertaining to air, light, sound, water and other forms of pollution associated with industrial development, population growth and other sources.

- *Hawaiian Parks* – The chronic problem with the volume of noisy tour flights over Hawaiian parks has gotten worse in recent years, causing one of the state’s members of Congress to introduce legislation to regulate flights ([the Safe and Quiet Skies Act](#)). The legislation would, among other things, create a new decibel limit for flights over residential areas, ban flying over national parks, wilderness areas, cemeteries and military sites, and forbid pilots from acting as tour narrators – measures industry representatives have said would be crippling. Several factors have led to an untenable situation in the Congressman’s view, including the rapid increase in the number of flights and demand for more unique experiences. A Hawaii DOT report shows 8,246 helicopter landings at Hawaii airports in March 2019, a 67% increase over March 2010. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is the most popular place for flight tours in the

entire National Park System, with 8,333 in 2018, while Maui's Haleakala National Park has the fourth-most flights. Source: Tovin Lapan, [Travel Weekly](#).

The Coalition

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

- *Pipelines Through NPS Lands* – The Coalition has joined an amici curiae brief submitted to the Supreme Court regarding their upcoming review of a case regarding pipelines passing through national parks. [Click here to read it](#). We also joined NPCA, former director Jon Jarvis, and former AT superintendent Pam Underhill in issuing a press release on this case. [Click here to read it](#).
- *Oil and Gas Leasing* – CPANP issued a short statement in support of Senator Cortez Masto's legislation to end the leasing of land with low to no oil and gas potential. [Click here for statement](#).
- *Comment Period On NEPA Updates* – The Coalition submitted a letter to the chair and associate director for NEPA for CEQ, requesting an extension of the comment period for NEPA updates. [Click here to read the letter](#).
- *Proposed NEPA Changes* – CPANP member Judy Connery's op-ed piece on the proposed changes to NEPA appeared in *Newsweek*. [Click here to see it](#).

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

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

From The Archives

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

- *Saguaro NP* – Since early last year, there have been numerous auto burglaries at trailheads in the park's Tucson Mountain District. Rangers determined that the burglar was probably a local and working alone. Surveillance operations were begun, and, on January 8th, rangers observed John Pearce, 42, of Tucson, dumping stolen property at a trailhead that he'd taken in an auto burglary in the adjacent county park. Following a short pursuit, he was arrested and booked into federal prison on felony charges of possession of stolen property. Pearce is believed to have committed 28 car clouts in the district and another 50 in the county park. He told rangers that he was hoping that the arresting ranger would shoot him while fleeing the scene. Pearce has a history of auto burglaries, including a felony conviction in Texas. The county attorney's office has also filed felony charges against him. Submitted by Chief Ranger Paula Rooney.
- *Little Bighorn Battlefield NM* – A Virginia man has entered guilty pleas in federal court to Archeological Resource Protection Act and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act violations stemming from thefts from the park. The man sold artifacts and human remains to a BLM undercover agent, including buckles, cartridges, and Native American funerary objects purported to have come from the battlefield. He also offered to sell agents human bones and other sacred objects. Sentencing is pending; the man has also agreed to forfeit many other illegally taken artifacts. BLM agents, who lead the investigation, worked cooperatively with NPS rangers and agents, FBI agents, and Park Police officers in this investigation. Submitted by Special Agent Pat Buccello.

- *Virgin Islands NP* – On the morning of January 23rd, rangers and National Guardsmen discovered two marijuana fields on the south side of Bourdeaux Mountain while conducting an aerial search for such plants. Rangers and Virgin Island police then searched the area by foot, found two more fields, and confiscated 322 marijuana plants with a street value of about \$300,000. Most of the plants were in containers; the plots ranged in size from about 90 square feet to 125 square feet. A system consisting of a large barrel and tarp had been set up to capture rain. The plants were watered by hand. Three species were found, one of them producing buds. More such flights are planned. Submitted by Park Ranger Lucia Roberts.

Acknowledgements

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Dick Ring, Maureen Finnerty, Denny Huffman, Bob Martin, Larry Frederick, Mark Forbes

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to Bill Halainen at the Weekly National Park System Report: BHalainen@gmail.com. Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

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The *Weekly National Park System Report* is a publication of The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. It is prepared by Coalition member Bill Halainen, former editor of the *NPS Morning Report*, and produced and disseminated by Coalition member Steve Pittleman.

The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that "studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service."

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