



The Coalition Weekly Report

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Incidents

Yellowstone NP

NPS Investigators Involved In Search For Missing Children

The park is asking visitors to review their vacation photos to see if they can spot any clues regarding two missing children whose mother was recently brought back to Idaho to face charges.

Lori Vallow was arrested in Hawaii last month and charged with felony child abandonment. Her seven-year-old son, Joshua "JJ" Vallow, was last seen on September 23rd and his sister, 17-year-old Tylee Ryan, was last seen on September 8th -- the same day the family went on a day trip in the park.

Police in the small town of Rexburg, Idaho, where the children were last known to be living, have said they "strongly believe that Joshua and Tylee's lives are in danger." They also say Vallow, 46, and her husband, Chad Daybell, have repeatedly lied about the children's whereabouts.

The bizarre case spans several states, includes investigations into three mysterious deaths and touches on rumors of Vallow's and Daybell's apocalyptic religious beliefs.

Vallow's estranged husband, Charles Vallow, was shot and killed by her brother Alex Cox in Phoenix last July. Cox, who said the shooting was in self-defense, died of unknown causes in December. In August, Vallow moved from Arizona to Idaho, where Daybell lived with his wife, Tammy Daybell. She died in October. Her obituary said the death was from natural causes, but law enforcement became suspicious when Chad Daybell married Vallow just two weeks after Tammy's death. Tammy Daybell's remains have been exhumed, but the autopsy report has not yet been released. Toxicology results on Cox also are not public yet.

Investigators are particularly looking for anything that may show Vallow, her brother, Cox, the children or a silver 2017 Ford F-150 pickup with Arizona license plate CPQUINT, which the group was driving in Yellowstone.

Vallow reportedly believes she is "a god assigned to carry out the work of the 144,000 at Christ's second coming in July 2020," according to divorce documents that Charles Vallow filed before his death. She and Daybell were both involved in an Idaho-based group that promotes preparing for the biblical end times.

The article below contains a number of photos of the children and Vallow.

Source: Rebecca Boone, Associated Press, via [KOMO News](#).

Cape Hatteras NS

Scallop Boat Grounds Off Park; USCG Rescues Crew

The 72-foot scallop boat *Ocean Pursuit* ran aground about 50 yards off the park's beach on March 1st and at last report remained stuck there.

The Coast Guard safely removed all crew members via helicopter the day the vessel grounded off Bodie Island. It's currently located roughly a half mile south of ORV Ramp 4. The boat will likely be towed out to sea.

The ocean off North Carolina is known as "the graveyard of the Atlantic" due to the more than 2,000 shipwrecks recorded in the area. Experts blame treacherous currents off the Outer Banks.

The article below contains images of the *Ocean Pursuit* off the park beach.

Source: Mark Price, [Raleigh News and Observer](#).

Joshua Tree NP

Injured Hiker Rescued In Multi-Agency Operation

Harshad Kalyankar, 28, from Tucson, was hiking alone in the Indian Cove area on the afternoon of March 7th when he fell about ten feet off a large rock and sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

Kalyankar was able to call 911 on his cellphone. Rescue workers from the San Bernardino County fire department, Morongo Basin ambulance and the park soon arrived on scene. They determined that his injuries and the surrounding terrain would necessitate a helicopter rescue.

The pilot hovered about 70 feet above Kalyankar as the crew chief lowered one of the air medics to Kalyankar. The medic assessed his injuries and was able to place him into a rescue harness. He was then hoisted into the helicopter and flown to Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs for treatment.

Source: [Hi-Desert Star](#).

Great Smoky Mountains NP

Teenager Killed In Fall From Jeep's Open Window

A teenage visitor was killed late on March 3rd in a bizarre traffic mishap that started when she sat in the window of a moving vehicle while it was on on the Foothills Parkway between Chilhowee Lake and Look Rock.

The victim was identified as 18-year-old Maiah Reilich-Godino of Eddington, Maine, and she was a passenger in the vehicle. She was sitting in an open window of a 2011 Jeep Patriot and trying to pull up the roof rack. She fell from the vehicle when the roof rack she was pulling up on disconnected from the roof.

Blount County deputies and park rangers performed CPR until an ambulance arrived and the medics onboard pronounced her dead. The driver and front-seat passenger, the only other occupants of the vehicle, were not injured.

Reilich-Godino was a student at Maryville College in Maryville, Tennessee,

Source: Mark Price, [Raleigh News and Observer](#).

National Park System

Park Operating Status Summary

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

- *Rocky Mountain NP* – Potential park visitors are being advised that they should be prepared for major road work and nightly closures for a five-month period. Major road construction is scheduled to take place from May to September on US 36, located inside the park. The work will be on a section of the highway from just west of Bear Lake Road junction to east of Deer Ridge Junction. A three-mile section of the road will close nightly from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on Sunday evenings through Friday mornings, meaning that the road is currently set to remain open on Friday and Saturday evenings. Source: Breanna Sneeringer, [Out There Colorado](#).
- *Acadia NP* – The Islesford Historical Museum on Little Cranberry Island will be closed the rest of the year while the building is rehabilitated. The project, which got underway in November, is expected to last throughout the summer and will prevent the museum from opening in 2020. The project should be completed in time for the seasonal museum to reopen in the summer of 2021. Source: Bill Trotter, [Bangor Daily News](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center US Firefighters Continue Support To Australia

NIFC remains at PL 1.

Fire activity last week was centered on Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Louisiana,

Support for firefighting operations in Australia continues, with 92 firefighters and overhead committed to fires in Victoria and one to New South Wales. Detailed information on operations in the three states where most of the fires are occurring 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.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	February 21	February 28	March 6
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	0	0	0
Type 2 Teams	0	0	0
Crews	0	0	3
Engines	0	7	92
Helicopters	0	0	0
Total FF/Overhead	2	18	403

Fires/Acreage

Category	2020 Total	2010-2019 Ave	2020 Variance
United States: YTD Fires	3,518	5,592	– 37%
United States: YTD Acres	72,638	130,072	– 44%

Source: [NIFC Incident Management Situation Report](#).

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

March 4 – The Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2021 for the Department of the Interior, receiving testimony from David Bernhardt, Secretary of the Interior.

March 4 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on the following bills:

- [S. 1863](#), to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the sites associated with the life and legacy of the noted American philanthropist and business executive Julius Rosenwald, with a special focus on the Rosenwald Schools.
- [S. 1910](#), to rename the Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice, Nebraska, as the Homestead National Historical Park. The department said it does not support enactment of S. 1863 at this time, as resources are needed to reduce the National Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog and address other critical infrastructure needs
- [S. 1969](#), to authorize the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.
- [S. 2206](#), to express the sense of Congress regarding restoration and maintenance of the Mardasson Memorial in Bastogne, Belgium.
- [S. 2340](#), to establish the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park in the States of Illinois and Missouri. The department recommended amending S. 2340 to authorize a special resource study limited to Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, as well as Emerald, and Pulcher mounds, consistent with the National Park Service's recently completed reconnaissance survey of the site, rather than establishing the new park.
- [S. 2827](#), to establish within the National Park Service the U.S. African-American Burial Grounds Network. The department opposed the bill saying, as usual, that it needed to focus on the Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog and addressing other critical infrastructure needs, and that it would be difficult to prioritize a new program without having a better understanding of how it would relate to other National Park Service resources and needs. The department recommended amending the bill to provide for a study rather than establishment of a new program.
- [S. 2924](#), to establish the Bandelier National Park and Preserve in the State of New Mexico.
- [S. 3098](#), to redesignate the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site as the "Jimmy Carter National Historical Park".
- [S. 3119](#), to modify the boundary of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument.
- [S. 3121](#), to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System.,
- [S. 3265](#), to redesignate the Weir Farm National Historic Site in the State of Connecticut as the "Weir Farm National Historical Park".
- [S. 3331](#), to modify the boundary of the Rocky Mountain National Park.
- [H.R. 182](#), to extend the authorization for the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission. The department said it opposed the legislation and saw no compelling need to reauthorize the commission.

- [H.R. 1472](#), to rename the Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice, Nebraska, as the Homestead National Historical Park.

Shawn Bengé, Acting Deputy Director, Operations, National Park Service, was the witnesses for the Department of the Interior.

House Actions

March 3 – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled “Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Advanced Nuclear Technology’s Role in a Decarbonized Future”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witness from federal agencies at the hearing.

March 4 – The Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change held a hearing entitled “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Reform: Addressing America’s Plastic Waste Crisis”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses. There were no witnesses from federal agencies at the hearing.

March 4 – The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled “Examining the Department of the Interior’s Spending Priorities and the President’s Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Proposal”. Testimony was heard from Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management and Budget, Department of the Interior.

March 4 – The Committee on Oversight and Reform approved, among other bills, H.R. 4894, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available.

March 4 – The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Environment approved:

- [H.R. 5519](#), to improve measurement and assessment capabilities for understanding proposed atmospheric interventions in Earth’s climate, including, as a priority, the effects of proposed interventions in the stratosphere and in cloud-aerosol processes.
- [H.R. 4656](#), to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to seek to enter an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to conduct a study on the science of background ozone in the United States and to provide research recommendations to better understand background ozone contributions to ground-level ozone.
- [H.R. 3297](#), to clarify that during a lapse in appropriations certain services relating to the Harmful Algal Bloom Operational Forecasting System are excepted services under the Anti-Deficiency Act.

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.

- *Major NPS Funding Bill Nears Endorsement* – Legislation is in the works to greatly increase funding to LWCF and the maintenance backlog. “Senate leaders and the Trump administration have reached an election-year deal to double spending on a popular conservation program and devote more than a \$1 billion a year to clear a growing maintenance backlog at national parks,” reports the Associated Press. “The deal, announced [on March 4th] by senators from both parties, would spend about \$2.2 billion per year on conservation and outdoor recreation projects and park maintenance across the country. If approved by Congress and signed by President Donald Trump, the bill ‘will be the most significant conservation legislation enacted by Congress in nearly half a century,’ said veteran Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn.” Source: Matthew Daly, Associated Press, via the [PBS News Hour](#).

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.

- *Acadia NP* – The Islesford Historical Museum on Little Cranberry Island is getting a significant physical rehabilitation in a \$1.1 million project funded by the Service. The project, which got underway in November, is expected to last throughout the summer and will prevent the museum from opening in 2020. The project should be completed in time for the seasonal museum to reopen in the summer of 2021. The project will include work to both the building's exterior and interior. The existing slate roof, which dates from the museum's opening in 1928, will be redone with new slate, while the building's brick exterior and shutters, window sashes and lighting also will be replaced or restored. A heating unit will be installed inside the building to stabilize interior temperature and humidity in order to help with the long-term preservation of the building. All ironwork, including handrails, will be fixed and restored. Source: Bill Trotter, [Bangor Daily News](#).
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* – The IRONMAN Group has announced course details for the inaugural Carilion Clinic IRONMAN 70.3 Virginia's Blue Ridge triathlon. The centerpiece for the 70.3-mile route includes a bike course that will run along the parkway. For more details on the race, which will take place on June 7th, click on [this link](#). Source: Ida Domingo, [WSET News](#).
- *Chattahoochee NRA* – The Trust for Public Land last week announced the addition of 31.5 acres to the park. The new addition to the popular Bowman's Island unit will allow for increased riverfront access for kayakers, hikers, and anglers. Source: [PR Newswire](#).
- *Devils Tower NM* – The park is about to begin facility and trail work totaling almost \$4 million. The work will include making an overlook trail more accessible to people who are in wheelchairs or have other physical limitations and improving access to restrooms, a visitor center and a trail to the base of Devils Tower. Parking lots, visitor center exhibits and trail signs also will see improvements. Source: [NBC Montana](#).
- *Gateway NRA* – The park has received a redevelopment proposal from Stillman Development International for 21 historic buildings in the main post area of Fort Hancock in the Sandy Hook Unit. The submission was a response to a rolling RFP issued by the park in search of “qualified, competent, and dedicated partners in the adaptive reuse of historic structures in a National Historic Landmark District.” Stillman Development International proposes residential use of the buildings on Officers Row, a promenade of stately historic officers' quarters overlooking Sandy Hook Bay. Other proposed uses include a sundries store as well as other services in support of events and functions at the chapel at Sandy Hook. The next step will be for the NPS and Stillman Development International to negotiate a letter of intent, which will allow both parties to address the due diligence necessary for the success of the project. Assuming the milestones identified in the LOI have been met, a lease may be executed, and construction could begin soon after. Source: [AHHerald.com](#).
- *Voyageurs NP* – Some time ago, Voyageurs Wolf Project researchers figured out that wolves in northern Minnesota were eating blueberries, a rare phenomenon. Now they have documentation in the form of a just-released video of a wolf eating blueberries, captured by one of 25 remote cameras placed in the park last summer ([click here](#) to see it). They believe that the video is likely the only existing footage of wild wolves eating blueberries, although there are a few videos of wolves eating other kinds of berries and fruits. Coinciding with the release of the video, the Voyageurs Wolf Project also just published their observation of a mother wolf regurgitating blueberries to her five wolf pups. This is the first documented case of wolves feeding their pups with berries or fruits of any kind. Source: Emily Haavik, [KARE News](#).

Commenting On NPS Projects

A listing of National Park Service projects – physical, paper and otherwise – which are currently open to public comment, plus due dates and URL's to related sites. Park/agency names for new entries are in **boldface**.

- *Bureau of Land Management* – Comments are sought on the final programmatic EIS for wildfire fuel breaks in the Great Basin. The preferred alternative analyzes a full suite of manual, chemical and mechanical treatments, including prescribed fire, seeding, and targeted grazing to construct and maintain a system of fuel breaks. These treatments would be implemented along roads and rights-of-way on BLM-administered lands to minimize new disturbance and wildlife habitat fragmentation and to maximize accessibility for wildland firefighters. Comments are due by March 14th and may be submitted to the [BLM Land Use Planning and NEPA register](#).
- *Cabrillo NM* – The park is planning to renovate the Ballast View Rest Area. This project is needed in order to improve visitor access for the mobility impaired, correct unsafe conditions, and provide interpretive programs and demonstrations to more visitors in a safe, accessible environment while maintaining the Mission 66 characteristics of the property. Comments are being taken until March 21st at [the park's PEPC website](#).
- *Everglades NP/Big Cypress NP* – The NPS has prepared an EA to evaluate the impacts of demolishing three hurricane-damaged houses at Everglades National Park and constructing one new four-plex housing unit within Big Cypress National Preserve. Comments can be submitted until April 7th at [the Everglades' PEPC webpage](#).
- *Glacier Bay NP&P* – The park's 1989 wilderness visitor use management plan will be updated this year. Comments will be taken until April 21st at [the park's PEPC webpage](#).
- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The park is evaluating ways to improve visitor safety and experience during vehicle-free days on the Cades Cove Loop Road. Due to growing use and congestion, the park is proposing to implement a pilot study for the 2020 season to evaluate changing this vehicle-free period to a weekly, full day closure on Wednesdays from May through September. The comment period is open until March 27th. See [the park's PEPC webpage](#).
- *Korean War Veterans Memorial* – The Service, in cooperation with the Korean War Veterans Foundation, proposes the addition of a Wall of Remembrance at the memorial, located on the National Mall (Congress authorized a Wall of Remembrance as part of the memorial in Public Law 114-230). The wall must be consistent with the Commemorative Works Act, which ensures that commemorative works in areas administered by the NPS in Washington, D.C. are appropriately designed, constructed, and located. Comments on the project are being taken until March 16th at [the memorial's PEPC webpage](#).
- *Lewis and Clark NHP* – The park is preparing an EA for several interrelated projects – renovating the existing restrooms including a new family restroom area; expanding the enclosed entryway to improve visitor orientation and correct accessibility issues; upgrading the energy efficiency of the building by replacing outdated heating and cooling systems, replacing light fixtures, improving the insulation of the building, and replacing some windows; improving safety with fire sprinkler changes and modernizing exits; increasing the storage capacity of the curatorial storage room; and abandoning the current septic field and installing a new wastewater system and septic field. Comments will be taken until March 12th at [the park's PEPC webpage](#).
- *Mount Rushmore NM* – The park is preparing an EA to evaluate a proposal by the state of South Dakota to host a fireworks display at Mount Rushmore on July 3rd. Under the proposed action, the NPS would permit the state's Independence Day celebration, including a fireworks display and other entertainment. Similar events could be permitted in future years if conditions

remain the same and impacts are as described in the document. The EA is available for public comment through March 30th at [the park's PEPC webpage](#).

- *Yellowstone NP* – The park is seeking public comment on an EA for a proposal to replace the Yellowstone River Bridge, which is located on the Northeast Entrance Road near Tower Junction. This project will maintain safe visitor access from the park's Northeast Entrance, which is part of the only road corridor in the park that is open year-round and plowed in the winter. Built in the early 1960s, the concrete deck, sidewalks, and parapets have deteriorated. Comments will be taken until March 15th at [the park's PEPC webpage](#).

Briefly Noted

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

- *Zimbabwe Now Has All Female Ranger Force Guarding Wildlife* – Although not directly relevant to the NPS, the BBC has posted a story about a great advance for women in ranger operations. Zimbabwe now has an all female ranger unit for protecting wildlife. “Africa’s first armed, all-women anti-poaching unit is changing the way that animals are protected,” reports the BBC, “and arresting poachers without firing a single shot.” The unit operates in Phundundu Wildlife Area in Zimbabwe, a 115 square mile former trophy hunting area that is home to 11,000 elephants. The women rangers – many of whom came from backgrounds of abuse – call themselves the Akashinga, ‘the Brave Ones,’ and are “changing the face of conservation in Zimbabwe.” Click on the following link for the full story. Sources: [Our Daily Planet](#); Rachel Nuwer, [BBC Future](#).
- *Another NPS ‘Best Of’ List* – Petlandia, a “personalized pet gift company,” has issued a ranking of parks for their “dog friendliness.” The ranking is based on a system that allowed ten points each for allowing dogs, for allowing dogs off-leash, for allowing dogs in developed areas (bike paths, sidewalks, paved roads), for allowing dogs on trails, for allowing dogs in campgrounds, for allowing dogs to swim in lakes, and for having kennels. Parks were also awarded points for the length of trails dogs were allowed on – those with 10 to 100 miles of dog-friendly trails received two points; those with 101 to 1,000 miles received eight points; and those with more than 1,000 miles received twelve points. The top ten parks were (in order) North Cascades, Grand Canyon, Mammoth Cave, Shenandoah, Petrified Forest, Zion, Yosemite, Acadia, Rocky Mountain and Badlands. Source: [Ohmydog!.com](#).

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 Pushing Ocean Currents Northward* – “The world's major wind-driven ocean currents are moving toward the poles at a rate of about a mile every two years, potentially depriving important coastal fishing waters of important nutrients and raising the risk of sea level rise, extreme storms and heatwaves for some adjacent land areas,” reports *Inside Climate News*. “The shift was identified in a new study by researchers with the Alfred Wegener Institute at the Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research...The poleward shift is bad news for the East Coast of the U.S., because it makes sea level rise even worse, the researchers said. At about 40 degrees latitude north and south, where the effects of the shifting currents are most evident, sea level rise is already 8 to 12 inches more than in other regions...” The article includes a map showing the Earth’s eight major wind-driven ocean currents, known as “gyres;” it also includes a link to the study ([click here](#)). Source: Bob Berwyn, [Inside Climate News](#).

- *Spring And Fall Bird Migrations Changing* – Bird-banding data in North America shows a spring migration pattern that's become progressively earlier over the last five decades and a fall migration that's lasting longer than 50 years ago. The American Ornithological Society has posted an article on a study of one bird that underscores this change: "A growing body of research shows that birds' spring migration has been getting earlier and earlier in recent decades. [New research](#) from *The Auk: Ornithological Advances* on black-throated blue warblers, a common songbird that migrates from Canada and the eastern U.S. to Central America and back every year, uses fifty years of bird-banding data to add another piece to the puzzle, showing that little-studied fall migration patterns have been shifting over time as well...Analyzing almost 150,000 individual records, [researchers] found that the timing of the birds' spring migration has advanced over the last fifty years, with early migrants passing through banding sites approximately one day earlier each decade. Crucially, their data also covered fall migration, which has been less well-studied, and found that while the timing of the peak of fall migration hasn't changed, fall migration takes longer today than it did fifty years ago...Although the researchers emphasize that their findings can't be explicitly linked to climate change without incorporating climate or environmental data, they believe similar methods could be useful for tracking the effects of climate change on birds." Source: [American Ornithological Society](#).

National Park System Issues

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

- *Big Cypress NP* – According to the Corps of Engineers, oil exploration in the park by Burnett Oil Company has not been conducted in compliance with the Clean Water Act and has adversely affected the preserve's landscape. *National Parks Traveler* has obtained a copy of the COE letter to Burnett; excerpts follow: "[The] Corps concludes that the oil and gas exploration activity that was conducted equates to mechanized land clearing, ditching, and channelization. The Corps concludes that the survey activity caused an impact that resulted in a change in the bottom elevation of the wetland, that the activity caused an identifiable individual and cumulative adverse effect on aquatic function, and that the survey had the adverse effect of degrading a water of the U.S...Therefore, by means of this letter, the Corps is advising you that any future oil and gas survey activity by Burnett Oil Co. in Big Cypress National Preserve should continue to be coordinated with the Corps in accordance with the Clean Water Act...A permit will be required of you unless and until you can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Corps or Environmental Protection Agency, prior to commencing the activity involving the discharge, that the activity would not have the effect of destroying or degrading any area of waters of the United States." The article includes a photo of the type of impacts created by the company's machinery. Source: Kurt Repanshek, [National Parks Traveler](#).

Park Carrying Capacity – Management challenges pertaining to the balance between park protection and use.

- *Great Smoky Mountains NP* – The park is considering implementing special days for bike riders and pedestrians that would ban vehicles from Cades Cove. Currently, the road is closed to vehicles on Wednesday and Saturday mornings until 10:00 a.m. from May through September. Due to growing use and congestion, though, the park is proposing to implement a pilot study for the 2020 season to evaluate changing this vehicle-free period to a weekly, full-day closure on Wednesdays from May through September. "The park began collecting data on visitor use during vehicle-free time periods in 1995," according to a park press release. "Over the last 25 years, use has continued to increase with up to 1,100 people a day cycling or walking along the roadway during the three-hour closure time period. This increased use presents several challenges including congestion, lack of parking, and disruption in campground and picnic area operations. During the current morning closures, access to the campground, picnic area, horse concession operation, campground store, and hiking/equestrian trails is blocked to accommodate parking for the biking/pedestrian opportunity on the Loop Road. As a result, traffic leading to the Cades Cove area is often gridlocked by a line of motorists waiting for the

Loop Road to open at 10:00 a.m." For more on the planning process, [click on this link](#), which will bring you to the park's PEPC page. Source: [WVLT News](#).

- *Bandelier NM* – Bandelier will again be instituting a mandatory shuttle bus system this summer in order to manage overcrowding. Beginning on May 14th and continuing through October 14th, visitors will be required to take a shuttle bus from the White Rock Visitor Center to access Frijoles Canyon, the main visited area of Bandelier National Monument. This helps relieve the shortage of parking in the heavily visited portion of the monument during the busy season. Source: Carol Clark, [Los Alamos Post](#).
- *Grand Canyon NP* – The park launched a new shuttle service to help visitors avoid entrance station lines and reduce vehicular congestion in the park. The shuttles will run daily at 20 minute intervals between 8 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. between Tusayan and the park. Visitors must have a valid park pass, including lifetime or annual passes, to board the shuttle in Tusayan. People can purchase standard entrance passes for vehicles, individuals and motorcycles at the IMAX, Canyon Plaza Resort, Red Feather Lodge, Grand Canyon Chamber and Visitor's Bureau, and Westwind Air Service at the Grand Canyon Airport. Source: [KNAU News](#).
- *Katmai NP* – The park is proposing changes that will affect how visitors navigate the grounds of the Brooks River Corridor, a popular spot for observing bears. The park wants to establish permits to allow folks to use the river corridor. With visitation at an all-time high, park staff want to insure all park goers are safe. If the permitting doesn't improve safety in the park, parts of the corridor could be closed to the public. Source: Tyler Thompson, [KDLG News](#).

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

- *Hawaii Volcanoes NP* – “With thousands of helicopters flying over Hawaii Volcanoes National Park every year,” reports *E&E News*, “Democratic Rep. Ed Case says the situation has clearly gotten out of control. ‘That’s no way to run a national park,’ Case, a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, told a top National Park Service official during a House subcommittee hearing last spring... Case, who is in his fourth term representing Honolulu, wants Congress to intervene by passing his bill, [H.R. 4547](#), the ‘Safe and Quiet Skies Act.’ The legislation would also prohibit tour flights over military installations, national cemeteries, national wilderness areas and national wildlife refuges. His bill would also set noise limits and a minimum height requirement for helicopters conducting aerial tours. ‘How many more wake-up calls do we need, how much more risk and disruption must we tolerate?’ Case said in late December, responding after yet another crash in Hawaii killed seven people, boosting the overall death toll in the state to 21 for 2019.” Rob Hotakainen, [E&E News](#).

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.

- *Padre Island NS* – On February 5th, two tankers collided while transferring heavy crude oil between them, causing an 85,000-gallon spill into the Gulf of Mexico about 40 miles south of Galveston. Heavy crude oil is of the consistency of tar and consequently disappeared below the surface as it migrated through the Gulf. On February 25th, it was spotted as it worked its way up the coast of Padre Island, and started coming ashore the next day as the currents moved it northward. It's estimated that about 500 barrels of crude oil came ashore in the form of tar balls between dime and dinner plate size. Over 90 miles of Texas beaches, including all 60 miles of the park's beaches, have been closed. About 300 environmental response people have been on the beaches for the past week raking, shoveling, grading and front-end loading oil and impregnated sand from the area. Cleanup efforts have been satisfactory, but have been hampered by high winds and unusually high tides. Only 20 oil-covered birds have been found

in the park; half have so far survived. Damage to other wildlife seems to be minimal and diminishing as the oil disperses. The Coast Guard is serving as lead agency and is working closely with eight federal and state agencies and several environmental cleanup companies representing the tankers' owners. Mexican officials have been warned that portions of the spill may also come up on their shores. A second spill from a tanker explosion in the same spot is also being monitored by the Coast Guard and may have the same impacts on the park because of similar tide and current effects. Submitted by Superintendent Butch Farabee.

- *Grand Canyon NP* – The storm that struck northern Arizona over the past weekend dropped just under two and a half inches of rain on the South Rim and five inches of rain (together with snow melt) on the North Rim - both amounts almost double the average total monthly precipitation for their respective areas. Runoff was heavy on the rims and in the canyon. The corridor trails - Bright Angel, North Kaibab and South Kaibab - and the trans-canyon water line were all heavily damaged. Preliminary assessments by park personnel revealed that the water line had been extensively damaged between the Roaring Springs intake and the North Rim on the north side and between the Roaring Springs intake and Phantom Ranch on the south side. Loss of the adjoining North Kaibab trail at several locations has made access to the water line leading to the North Rim impossible until those portions of the trail are reconstructed. There is storage capacity for two to three weeks of water use on the South Rim, but preliminary estimates of trail and water line damage indicate that the time necessary to repair these might exceed three weeks. Park staff will conduct a more detailed assessment and planning sessions today. Forecasters are predicting more storm activity in the area over the coming week. Submitted by Mallory Smith.
- *Saguaro NP* – On February 20th, ranger Jon Hale came upon two suspicious individuals parked illegally near the Red Hills visitor center in the Tucson Mountain District. He called for assistance, and was joined by rangers Robert Stinson and Laura Hiatt. When the rangers approached the vehicle, the driver accelerated away and fled at a high rate of speed. During the pursuit, the vehicle's occupants threw out a one-pound package of marijuana. About three miles into the chase, the vehicle went off the road into a wash and traveled about 200 yards through the desert before coming to a stop. Both occupants were arrested at the scene. The driver was charged with felony flight and booked into federal prison. Because he was using a false identity, rangers began an investigation and developed leads that later proved to be instrumental in keeping him in prison. He was eventually identified as Raul Hector Valenzuela, who was wanted on multiple felony warrants, including six counts of attempted murder, possession of a deadly weapon, and possession of narcotics. Valenzuela, who is a member of a street gang, shot an individual between the eyes with a .45 caliber handgun, then fled the scene. He had been on the run from a multi-agency task force for two months until apprehended by rangers. Valenzuela will be indicted by a federal grand jury on numerous felony charges. Submitted by District Ranger Robert Stinson.

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: 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.

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