



The Coalition Weekly Report

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Incidents

Death Valley NP Canyoneer Killed By Rockslide

Last week, a climber stepped on a loose rock and triggered a rockslide that killed him.

Justin Ibershoff, a 38-year-old canyoneer, died on January 30th, as he was going down the Deimos Canyon with six of his friends. The canyon is steep, and is not recommended for people who are uncomfortable with heights or are worried about crumbling rock under their feet.

Ibershoff and his group knew the route and had descended the canyon many times before. They were all “very experienced” canyoneers.

The incident occurred while Ibershoff was descending a steep, rocky slope to the top of the third rappel anchor. He apparently stepped on a rock that moved, triggering a rockslide that swept him past two companions and over the edge of the 95-foot-tall dry fall.”

Ibershoff’s friends were able to use an emergency locator beacon to call officials for help. They sent information by text to emergency responders. After assessing Ibershoff’s condition, the group continued down the canyon due to continuing active rock fall.

Inyo County search-and-rescue and Death Valley rangers were assisted by helicopters from the California Highway Patrol and Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake. Rescue crews reached Ibershoff by helicopter hours after the rockslide and found him dead. His body was recovered the next day.

[Full story](#). Source: Maddie Capron, *The Olympian*.

Grand Canyon NP Man Saved After Fall Over Rim

Rangers were dispatched to an over-the-edge call near the El Tovar hotel on the South Rim around 5:30 pm. A 35-year-old man had fallen over the rock wall at the edge of the canyon, stopping between 15 and 20 feet below the rim.

Rangers sent a rope down to the man so that he could secure himself while rigging for a rescue. A ranger was sent down on rope and secured the man to a second line. The pair were then raised to the rim via a mechanical advantage system.

The man was cited for disorderly conduct after investigation revealed that he was intoxicated at the time of the fall. He was uninjured in the incident.

Source: National Park Service.

Theodore Roosevelt NP

Woman Flees But Surrenders After Truck Theft; Male Partner Still At Large

On January 25th, Clancey Lone Fight, 33, and Gabriella Perez-Goodbird, 19, stole a pickup truck from a local residence. The fled from a traffic stop on the interstate and led pursuers on a chase into the park before abandoning the vehicle and fleeing on foot. A two-day search ensued involving police dogs, a Highway Patrol airplane and more than a dozen agencies.

Following two days hiding in rugged conditions amid life-threatening cold, Perez-Goodbird flagged down passers-by on the park's loop road. She was taken immediately to a Dickinson hospital. Overnight low temperatures in the park during this time were around zero degrees, and the wind chill was in the teens below zero.

Lone Fight might have made it to Interstate 94 late Monday and hitched a ride. The search for him continues. Motor vehicle theft charges are pending against both of them. Lone Fight is also wanted on a federal warrant for a probation violation in an assault case. State court records show Lone Fight has a lengthy criminal history of assault, fleeing and reckless endangerment convictions, along with driving violations

[Full story](#). Source: Blake Nicholson, *Bismarck Tribune*.

National Park System

Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

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

- *Yosemite NP* – The park continues to recover from the major wind event that struck the area on January 19th. While most of Yosemite reopened to visitors on Monday, the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias will remain closed as clean up continues from winds that toppled at least 15 mature giant sequoias. Based on size and conditions, officials estimated that the trees that fell, including at least one monarch, were likely 1,000 to 2,000 years old. Despite the losses, none of Mariposa Grove's 15 named sequoias fell. [Full story](#). Source: Paul Schlesinger, KTXL.

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center

Fire Activity Remains Low Nationwide

The national preparedness level remains at PL 1.

New large fires were reported in Colorado and Texas last week. Wildland firefighters were able to contain six large fires, two in California and one each in Alabama, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	January 15	January 22	January 29
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	0	0	0
Type 1 Teams	0	1	1
Type 2 Teams	0	0	0
Crews	9	5	0
Engines	10	51	1
Helicopters	1	0	0

Total FF/Overhead	65	334	11

Fires/Acreage

Category	2011-2020 Ave	2021 Total	Difference
United States: YTD Fires	1,291	1,600	+ 309
United States: YTD Acres	21,873	27,358	+ 5,485

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.

Summary Of 116th Congress

Now that the final public law numbers have been assigned, a summary is available of the actions of the 116th Congress that affect the National Park Service, its programs, and our national parks. There were 179 individual national park and related legislative matters that were combined in 52 laws passed in the 116th Congress from January 3, 2019 through January 3, 2021. A majority of these legislative matters were combined in the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, P.L. 116-9.

The 116th Congress proved to be one of the most significant for our national parks, and Park Service programs, in several years, with the following highlights:

- Five new park units
- Thirteen park redesignations
- Twenty-one park boundary adjustments
- Six new national heritage areas
- Two national trail extensions
- Nine wild and scenic river designations
- One wilderness area addition
- One new affiliated area
- Eighteen new natural and cultural resource authorities
- Five potential new national memorials in Washington, D.C.
- Eight studies of potential new park units, two studies of potential new national trails, and two studies of potential new national heritage areas.
- Establishment of the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network.
- Establishment of the Every-Kid-Outdoors program in statute, and fee-free programs for disabled veterans and Gold Star families.
- A permanent extension of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and permanent annual funding of \$900 million.
- Establishment of the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund that will provide the National Park Service \$6.5 billion over the next five years to help address its maintenance backlog.

A document detailing these new public laws entitled [Summary of National Park and Related Laws: Enacted in the 116th Congress \(2019 –2021\)](#), has been prepared for your ready reference. You can see it by either clicking on the document above or [this link](#).

New Public Laws

January 1 – *Correction* to [H.R. 6395](#): This bill, which authorized appropriations for military activities of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2021, became Public Law 116–283, without the president’s signature when the Senate voted to override the president’s veto of the bill. The House had previously overridden the president’s veto on December 28, 2020. The coalition report of January 27, 2021, incorrectly noted that the president had signed the bill into law. See House action of December 8th in the coalition’s [weekly report of December 16th](#) for a list of the provisions that affect the NPS.

Senate Actions

January 25 – The Senate received the managers appointed by the House of Representatives who presented and exhibited an Article of Impeachment against Donald John Trump, former President of the United States.

January 26 – The Senate took the following action:

- By 83 yeas to 17 nays, the Senate agreed to [S. Res. 16](#), to provide for related procedures concerning the article of impeachment against Donald John Trump, President of the United States. Pursuant to Rule IV of the Senate Rules on Impeachment and the United States Constitution, Senator Grassley, President pro tempore emeritus administered the oath to Senator Leahy, President pro tempore, who will preside over the impeachment proceedings in lieu of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In conformance with Article I, section 3, clause 6 of the United States Constitution, and the Senate Rules on Impeachment, the President pro tempore administered the oath to the Members of the United States Senate. By 55 yeas to 45 nays, the Senate agreed to the motion to table the Senator Paul point of order against the proceedings as being in violation of the United States Constitution.

House Actions

January 28 – The House agreed to H. Res. 62, electing the Majority Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives as follows:

- Committee On Appropriations – Ms. Kaptur, Mr. Price of North Carolina, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Ms. Lee of California, Ms. McCollum, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Ruppertsberger, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Cuellar, Ms. Pingree, Mr. Quigley, Mr. Kilmer, Mr. Cartwright, Ms. Meng, Mr. Pocan, Ms. Clark of Massachusetts, Mr. Aguilar, Ms. Lois Frankel of Florida, Mrs. Bustos, Mrs. Watson Coleman, Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Torres of California, Mr. Crist, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Mr. Case, Mr. Espaillat, Mr. Harder of California, Ms. Wexton, Mr. Trone, Ms. Underwood, Mrs. Lee of Nevada.
- Committee On Natural Resources – Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. Costa, Mr. Sablan, Mr. Huffman, Mr. Lowenthal, Mr. Gallego, Mr. Neguse, Mr. Levin of California, Ms. Porter, Ms. Leger Fernandez, Ms. Velázquez, Ms. DeGette, Ms. Brownley, Mrs. Dingell, Mr. McEachin, Mr. Soto, Mr. San Nicolas, Mr. García of Illinois, Mr. Case.
- Committee On Oversight And Reform – Ms. Norton, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Connolly, Mr. Krishnamoorthi, Mr. Raskin, Mr. Khanna, Mr. Mfume, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, Ms. Tlaib, Ms. Porter, Ms. Bush, Mr. Danny K. Davis of Illinois, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Welch, Mr. Johnson of Georgia, Mr. Sarbanes, Ms. Speier, Ms. Kelly of Illinois, Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. DeSaulnier, Mr. Gomez, Ms. Pressley.

The chairs of each of the committees, above, had previously been agreed to in [H. Res. 9](#) on January 3 as follows:

- Committee On Appropriations – Ms. DeLauro, Chair.
- Committee On Natural Resources – Mr. Grijalva, Chair.
- Committee On Oversight And Reform – Mrs. Carolyn B. Maloney of New York, Chair.

January 28 – The House agreed to [H. Res. 63](#), electing Minority Members to certain standing committees of the House of Representatives as follows:

- Committee On Appropriations – Mr. Rogers of Kentucky, Mr. Aderholt, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Carter of Texas, Mr. Calvert, Mr. Cole, Mr. Diaz-Balart, Mr. Womack, Mr. Fortenberry, Mr. Fleischmann, Ms. Herrera-Butler, Mr. Joyce of Ohio, Mr. Harris, Mr. Amodei, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Palazzo, Mr. Valadao, Mr. Newhouse, Mr. Moolenaar, Mr. Rutherford, Mr. Cline, Mr. Reschenthaler, Mr. Garcia of California, Mrs. Hinson, Mr. Tony Gonzales of Texas.
- Committee On Natural Resources – Mr. Young, Mr. Gohmert, Mr. Lamborn, Mr. Wittman, Mr. McClintock, Mr. Gosar, Mr. Graves of Louisiana, Mr. Hice of Georgia, Mrs. Radewagen, Mr. Webster of Florida, Miss González-Colón, Mr. Fulcher, Mr. Stauber, Mr. Tiffany, Mr. Carl, Mr. Rosendale, Mr. Moore of Utah, Ms. Herrell, Mrs. Boebert, Mr. Obernolte, Mr. Bentz.
- Committee On Oversight And Reform – Mr. Jordan, Mr. Gosar, Ms. Foxx, Mr. Hice of Georgia, Mr. Grothman, Mr. Cloud, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Higgins of Louisiana, Mr. Norman, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Keller, Mr. Biggs, Mr. Clyde, Ms. Mace, Mr. C. Scott Franklin of Florida, Mr. LaTurner, Mr. Fallon, Ms. Herrell, Mr. Donalds.

The Ranking Minority Member of each of the committees, above, had previously been agreed to in [H. Res. 10](#) on January 3 as follows:

- Committee On Appropriations – Ms. Granger, ranking member.
- Committee On Natural Resources – Mr. Westerman, ranking member.
- Committee On Oversight And Reform – Mr. Comer, ranking member.

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.

- *Colorado River Basin Parks* – Dry conditions are the worst they’ve been in almost 20 years across the Colorado River watershed, which acts as the drinking and irrigation water supply for 40 million people in the American Southwest. As the latest round of federal forecasts for the river’s flow shows, it’s plausible, maybe even likely, that the situation could get much worse this year. The article cites five reasons: 1) 84% of the Upper Basin is in extreme to exceptional drought; 2) the region has suffered through three exceptional routes over the last 20 years; 3) dryness is currently off the charts in parts of the watershed; 4) Colorado River reservoirs are at 46% capacity; and 5) impending water use negotiations in 2026. See the [full story](#) for additional details and a related podcast.. Source: Luke Runyon, KUNC News.
- *Kettle Creek NB* – Kettle Creek battlefield, a Revolutionary War site in Wilkes County, has been designated as an affiliated area of the National Park Service. The American Revolutionary War battle at Kettle Creek on February 14, 1779, was the first major victory for Patriot forces in Georgia and had a critical impact on the course of the war, demonstrating conclusively that the British forces could never pacify the South’s frontier backcountry. With this designation, the NPS recognizes the national significance of the Kettle Creek victory and makes a commitment to preserve this important history for future generations. [Full story](#). Source: Tim Bryant, WGAU.
- *Sitka NHP* – Archaeologists have discovered traces of a 200-year-old wooden fort in southeastern Alaska built by Indigenous people to resist an invasion by Imperial Russia. The discovery confirms the events of the 1804 invasion by Russia, which went on to govern parts of Alaska as a colony for 60 years until 1867, when it was purchased by the United States. It’s also of cultural importance to the indigenous Tlingit people, and especially to those of the Kiks.adi, or Frog clan, whose ancestors defended the fort near the town of Sitka on Baranof

Island in what's known as the Alaskan Panhandle, and who now regard it as a symbol of their resistance to colonialism. "The fort's definitive physical location had eluded investigators for a century," said Cornell University archaeologist Thomas Urban, a co-author of a study published Monday in the journal *Antiquity* that detailed the discovery. Decades of searching had turned up only clues, and archaeologists debated whether the fort was really sited near a forest clearing in the park. A detailed archaeological survey by Urban, however, has revealed electromagnetic anomalies and ground-penetrating radar signals around the clearing show the distinctive shape of the "sapling fort" – "Shiskinoow" in the Tlingit language – but not at proposed alternative sites. [Full story](#). Source: Tom Metcalfe, NBC News.

- *Virgin Islands NP* – Cinnamon Bay Campground in Virgin Islands National Park is expected to reopen in December. The campground has been closed since Hurricane Irma destroyed most of the facilities in 2017. Construction has resumed now that a critical archaeological survey has been completed and pipes with asbestos have been removed. [Full story](#). Source: Amy Roberts, *St. Thomas Source*.

Briefly Noted

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

- *Pilot Approved For New TV Series On NPS Law Enforcement* – ABC has given a pilot order to the drama "National Parks," co-written and executive produced by "Yellowstone" star Kevin Costner. The drama will center on a "small group of elite NPS agents" who solve crimes committed in national parks. [Full story](#). Source: Reid Nakamura, *The Wrap*.
- *Stunning NPS Photos* – Every year, we carry notices about NPS-related lists in these pages. Most of them are pretty standard, run of the mill compilations, but not the listing of the 20 best photos of NPS areas posted by England's *Daily Mail* last week. The photos were culled from 3,000 entries to the paper's first- ever contest for best photos taken in national parks. They're all included with the article. [Full story](#). Source: Sam Baker, *Daily Mail*.

The Federal Government

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

- *BLM Lost 87% Of Staff In Trump Relocation* – After the Trump administration announced its plans to relocate BLM headquarters to Colorado, more than 87 percent of Washington-based employees decided to leave the agency, according to new numbers released by the Biden administration. The figures show that following a July 2019 announcement the Department of the Interior would uproot the majority of BLM employees, just 41 agreed to relocate, while a staggering 287 either retired or left the agency before the end of 2020. The flight of employees came after Trump's BLM rolled out a plan that would leave just 60 of the agency's 10,000 employees in Washington, D.C., establishing a new headquarters in Grand Junction, Colorado, while spreading the majority of Washington-based staff to various offices across the West. Critics saw the move as a way to dismantle an agency that at times stands in the way of development on public lands, particularly for the fossil fuel industry. Previous reporting by *The Hill* found the move would split apart a key public lands team, spreading across seven states those who review the environmental impacts of government decisions. [Full story](#). Source: Rebecca Beitsch, *The Hill*.
- *DOI Temporarily Suspends ROW Permits And Land Exchanges* – Last week, [Secretary's Order 3395](#) was issued, which temporarily suspends Interior bureau authority "to grant rights of way, easements, or any conveyances of property or interests in property, including land sales or exchanges..." This suspension is for 60 days, during which time agencies may continue to work on these transactions, just not approve them. No further details are available. Source: Department of the Interior.

- *Fire Pay Cap Legislation* – For some senior-level fire personnel their pay stops after working a certain number of overtime hours. Senator Diane Feinstein has introduced the Wildland Firefighter Pay Act, a bill that would raise the maximum limit on overtime pay for federal firefighters. The current limit affects higher level employees at the GS-12 and above level, and some GS-11s depending on if they are exempt from the provisions in the Fair Labor Standards Act. Under the existing provisions, if they work hundreds of hours of overtime they may reach the cap after which they earn no more money. In some cases later in the fire season employees who spent a lot of time fighting fires have been told they earned too much and were forced to pay some of it back. The proposed legislation eliminates the existing annual and pay period limits and creates a new one that places the maximum annual pay including overtime at Level II of the Executive Schedule, which in 2020 was \$197,300. [Full story](#). Source: Bill Gabbert, *Wildfire Today*.
- *Restoration Of Roadless Rule In Alaska* – The following advisory was sent along by member Gary Vequist: The state of Alaska in 2018 petitioned USDA to exempt the Tongass NF from the 2001 roadless rule. The record of decision (October of 2020) selected the one alternative that would exempt the Forest Service from that rule (of the 15,000 public responses only, one percent selected the total exemption alternative which removed prohibitions on road construction and logging in designated roadless area). I attempted to download the PDF from the Forest Service site for the 2003 evaluation of wilderness, but this one document was listed as “not available at this time.” A coalition of conservation groups and southeastern Alaska tribes subsequently filed a lawsuit to reinstate the rule. Also, the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2021 was introduced by the new Congress. The restrictions placed on the Tongass land and forest management plan in 2001 need to be restored.

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.

- *Greenhouse Gas Emissions* – The Coalition has joined with our partners, including NPCA, on [filing an amicus brief](#) in opposition to the Rollback Rule. Given the mounting impacts of climate change and air pollution on our national parks, it is important to ensure the establishment of meaningful greenhouse gas standards under the Clean Air Act.
- *New Oil And Gas Drilling* – Over 330 Coalition members [signed on to a letter](#) sent in support of President Biden’s campaign pledge to halt all new oil and gas drilling on public lands and waters. We submitted this letter prior to Biden's executive actions last week. Former NPS Directors and Coalition members Bob Stanton and Jon Jarvis also [signed on to an op-ed](#) for *The Hill* in support of this action.
- *Climate Change Executive Order* – Following the release of the expected EO, the Coalition [issued a statement](#) applauding the president's actions as an important first step in protecting our national parks from of the worsening impacts of climate change and guaranteeing that all Americans will have access to our treasured outdoor spaces for generations to come:
- *Phil Francis Speaks To Magazine About Biden Presidency* – Coalition Chair Phil Francis [spoke with Outside Magazine](#) on what a Biden presidency means for our national parks. "The Biden team needs to focus on two things," he said, “undo what was done over the past four years. Then accomplish the new agenda.”

Source: Emily Thompson, Associate Director of Engagement, Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks

Park People

Passages

A listing of the deaths of retired and active NPS employees over the past few months:

- *John Mattox*, 64, died on January 29th at his home in Bryson City after a lengthy illness. John began his lifelong career with the NPS while a college student, starting out as a seasonal ranger on the Blue Ridge Parkway and later becoming a full-time ranger in the Smokies. John spent the later part of his career as a special agent with the NPS and was instrumental in building their Investigative Services Branch, which he supervised throughout the East coast until his retirement in 2013 after 37 years of service. John was known throughout the NPS as a skilled investigator and handled several high-profile cases. John was also called upon to handle numerous sensitive internal investigations because of his competence and high ethics. In retirement, John taught at SCC as an instructor in the NPS Law Enforcement Training program. John was a member, former deacon and Sunday school teacher at Bryson City First Baptist Church. He is survived by his loving wife, Rita, and his sons Jonathan (Callie) and Elliott, daughter Salina Mattox Trull (Samuel), and Erica Muse. A celebration of John's life will be held at a later date, likely in September at Deep Creek. An announcement will be made when plans are finalized. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to First Baptist Church Benevolence Fund (PO Box 247, Bryson City, N.C) or Broyhill Children's Home (111 Sneed Drive, Clyde, NC 28721). Visit the [Tribute Store](#) to plant a tree in John's memory. Source: [Crisp Funeral Home](#).
- *John Chew*, 76, died suddenly of a heart attack in Harwood, Maryland, on January 10th. John met his wife, Bunny, when they worked for the same Congressman in 1969. John then started his career as a ranger with the NPS. He created and started the concerts on the National Mall, which have continued since they began in 1971, during his first station at Capitol National Park. In 1972, the NPS transferred John to Prince William Forest Park, near Quantico, Virginia, as a mounted ranger, bringing him back to his love of horses. John was instrumental in starting one of the first living farm gardens in a national park. In 1973, John transferred to Lake Mead, where life as a park ranger was all encompassing – law enforcement, desert search and rescue, canyon wall climbing and water rescue, and boating. While here, John dove into attending every class where he could expand his knowledge of emergency medical aid in difficult areas. He not only became a scuba diver, but an instructor as well. John also began rock climbing, conducted a large study of big horn sheep, rescued park patrons from mines, earned his Coast Guard captains license, backpacked through the mountains, and rafted through rivers, all to learn more about saving lives and the environment. With his wife, he even participated with a gathering and documenting new species of desert flowers. In 1976, John and Bunny moved to Sequoia, where he took a position as district ranger for the Kern Canyon area, which included Mount Whitney. Again a mounted ranger, but with pack mules in tow, John started his plans to get the NPS serious about EMS. Here he added mountain rescue, small airplane accidents, winter cross skiing, ice mountain climbing, serious rock climbing, and heli-skiing to his expertise. He also became a National Ski Patrol and an instructor to use his survival skills while making ice houses for protection to manage avalanche areas. John, along with his team, received a Presidential Citation for a mountainous cave rescue and extraction, which took four days. John then moved to Shenandoah, continuing his work on an EMS program. He began mentoring the younger rangers and developing a program to work with local community hospitals and EMS. The director of the NPS and Secretary of the Interior then asked John go to Washington, DC, for six months to draft the first NPS EMS reference manual (RM 51). He also was the second group of rangers to the new ANILCA parks in Alaska to help calm fears that the government was not going to make residents change their way of life. John was assigned to an area in which the locals had burned the NPS plane, so he and another ranger (the size of a linebacker) stayed glued to each other's hip 24/7 and at the end of three months, were having beers with locals. John then took a position with the Department of Transportation, National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA), which included EMS. He saw an opportunity to make a difference in rural EMS services and John developed a program to assess EMS systems from state to county level. For a full listing of his other accomplishments, [see his obituary](#). The family will be having a celebration of John's life in July. In lieu of flowers, the donations may be made to one or more of three organizations – The

John Chew Conservation/Habitat Fund, 1273 Bugeye Court, Annapolis MD 21403; OperationSecondChance.org; or Make a Wish America (<https://secure2.wish.org>) . Source: [Lasting Tributes Funeral Care](#).

From The Archives

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding week (approximately) 25 years ago in 1996. All entries appear in the original verb tense; “submitters” are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Crater Lake NP* – Over the past two weeks, winter storms dropped over 126 inches of snow on the park, bringing snow depths to well over 100 inches at park headquarters. A 30-mile section of Route 62 from the park to the town of Prospect has been closed by the state due to the presence of hundreds of downed trees across the road. The communities of Diamond Lake and Union Creek outside the park are without power or road access. Employees residing on the west side of the park have been assisting the Forest Service with road clearing, since access to the park is cut off and they can't get to work. Several park employees residing in the Forest Service complex at Union Creek have been forced to evacuate and are living in barracks in Prospect or making their own arrangements elsewhere. Park road crews have managed to keep the eastern section of Route 62 and the road to headquarters open despite frequent white-out conditions and snow falling in excess of an inch an hour. The road to Rim Village has been closed to the public for more than a week, although a single lane has been opened periodically in order to permit staff to check on facilities there. More heavy snows were predicted for this past weekend. Submitted by Park Dispatch.
- *Saguaro NP* – On the evening of Saturday, January 27th, ranger Jon Hale attempted to stop a Ford Bronco travelling at a high rate of speed through the park. When Hale activated his emergency lights and siren, the vehicle accelerated and the driver attempted to elude pursuit. Hale broke off the chase when he lost sight of the Bronco while on a dirt road adjacent to the park boundary. Moments later, however, he spotted the Bronco coming back at him at a high rate of speed; before he could react, the Bronco rammed his patrol vehicle almost head-on, then continued on back into the park. Hale was not injured and was able to crawl out of his vehicle and continue coordination of assistance from backup officers heading to the scene. The Bronco was found abandoned in the park a half mile away only minutes later. A search for the suspect(s) was conducted with the assistance of canine units and a state police helicopter, but proved fruitless. Two partially covered bodies were found in the rear of the Bronco during evidence processing several hours later. Investigation revealed that both men had been shot in the head in execution style and had been wrapped in plastic bags. The sheriff's office is leading the investigation for double homicide, aggravated assault, hit and run and criminal damage. Rangers are assisting homicide detectives in this effort and are also coordinating additional assistance from the FBI. Intense media coverage continues. Submitted by Robert E. Stinson.
- *Redwood N&SP* – The 43-foot fishing vessel *Clara III* went aground in Humboldt Lagoons State Park just south of Redwood National and State Parks just before 6 a.m. on February 2nd and soon began breaking up in the surf. Ranger Steve White from the park's Humboldt Unit assisted the Orick volunteer fire department in the successful rescue of the boat's two crew members. Both suffered mild hypothermia, but were uninjured. The vessel had about 400 gallons of diesel fuel on board. A slick measuring 300 feet in width by a quarter mile in length was spotted by a responding Coast Guard helicopter. Salvage operations to recover the engines were underway at the time of the report (Friday), and the vessel was to be burned at low tide. Debris and some fuel from the wreck is expected to come ashore in both the national and state parks. A state oil spill unit is on scene to monitor the spill. Preliminary investigation suggests that the vessel's occupants may have fallen asleep while crab fishing. Submitted by Chief Ranger Bob Martin.

A Closing Observation

"I must say that one of the more rewarding aspects of being President has been visiting our national parks and getting to know the people who get up every day and put on the National Park Service uniform. It is amazing, the level of talent, training and commitment those people bring to this job, and the sacrifices, financial and other, that they're willing to accept to do the work that they love."

President Bill Clinton, November 12, 1996

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- Production: Steve Pittleman
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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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