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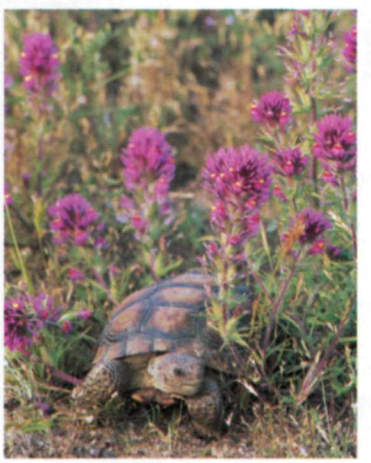
National Parks
Vol. 70, No. 7-8
July/August 1996
The Magazine of the National Parks and Conservation Association

FEATURES

PAGE 50

JEFF FOOTT



COVER: A desert tortoise forages for food near owl clover. Photograph by Barbara Gerlach/ Dembinsky Photo Associates.

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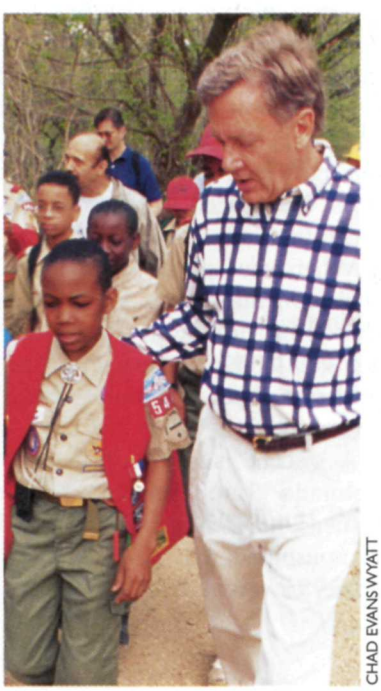


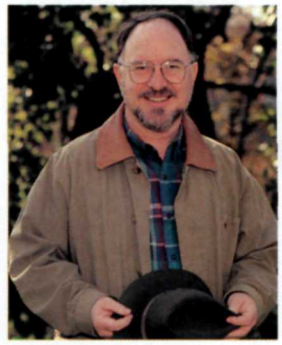
CHAD EVANS WYATT

DEPARTMENTS

Show Me

Americans favor candidates whose actions, not just words, demonstrate commitment to parks.

President Clinton and former Senator Dole, as well as members of Congress, have been criticized because they have used the parks as a backdrop for vote-getting, a "photo opportunity," rather than for a meaningful environmental message.



DUPONT PHOTOGRAPHERS

I am glad to see politicians realize that the environment can get them on the front page of the papers. That means the politicians are responding to pressure from the voters, not special interests. (When politicians do things for special interests, they do not want front-page publicity.)

Having grown up in Missouri, the show me state, I want elected officials to "show me" their true position on the environment. In this election year, many politicians are claiming to support environmental causes even though their actions reveal the opposite. Voters need to look carefully at politicians' environmental track records so they can make well-informed choices at the polls. Voters need to tell politicians to touch the parks, the Earth.

When you and I base our votes on environmental issues, we are making elected officials aware that the health and well-being of our nation and the preservation of our public lands are crucial to us.

A recent survey conducted by Colorado State University's Human Dimensions in Natural Resources Unit demonstrated that national parks do matter to voters. Among the questions asked was, "Is your representative's record on national parks important when you vote?" Seventy-five percent of respondents said yes. And 96 percent said they would be more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who is committed to parks.

The survey revealed that Americans of all political persuasions are committed to the parks. Responses showed very little difference among Republicans, Democrats, and independents on most national park issues. (See page 20 for more information on the survey).

The parks are a metaphor for the environment as a whole, although they themselves may not be seen as a critical issue. To me, the survey results show that people are expressing frustration about the lack of attention politicians are paying to the environment.

As the political parties gather at their respective conventions this summer, they should heed the message of this survey: politicians who act to undermine the integrity of our national parks and the environment could find themselves in trouble with voters in November. Americans value the cultural, historic, and natural resources protected in our National Park System and want to see them preserved and passed on to future generations.

Paul C. Pritchard

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ABOUT NPCA

WHO WE ARE: Established in 1919, the National Parks and Conservation Association is America's only private, nonprofit citizen organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the U.S. National Park System.

WHAT WE DO: NPCA protects national parks by identifying problems and generating support necessary to resolve them. Through its efforts, NPCA has developed a base of grassroots support that has increased effectiveness at local and national levels.

WHAT WE STAND FOR: NPCA's mission is to protect and improve the quality of our National Park System and to promote an understanding of, appreciation for, and sense of personal commitment to parklands.

HOW TO JOIN: NPCA depends almost entirely on contributions from our members for the resources essential for an effective program. You can become a member by calling our Member Services Department. The bimonthly *National Parks* magazine is among the benefits you will receive. Of membership dues, $3 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

EDITORIAL MISSION: The magazine is the only national publication focusing solely on national parks. The most important communication vehicle with our members, the magazine creates an awareness of the need to protect and properly manage the resources found within and adjacent to the national parks. The magazine underscores the uniqueness of the national parks and encourages an appreciation for the scenery and the natural and historic treasures found in them, informing and inspiring individuals who have concerns about the parks and want to know how they can help bring about improvements to these irreplaceable resources.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: A critical component in NPCA's park protection programs are members who take the lead in defense of America's natural and cultural heritage. Park activists alert Congress and the administration to park threats; comment on park planning and adjacent land-use decisions; assist NPCA in developing partnerships; and educate the public and the media about park issues. The Park Activist Network is composed of three groups: Park Watchers, park activists, and park support groups. For more information on the activist network, contact our Grassroots Department, extension 221. NPCA's success also depends on the financial support of our members. For more information on special giving opportunities, such as Partners for the Parks (a monthly giving program), Trustees for the Parks ($1,000 and above), bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 146.

HOW TO REACH US: By mail: National Parks and Conservation Association, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036; by phone: 1-800-NAT-PARK; by e-mail: natparks@aol.com or npca@npca.org; on America Online: keyword PARKS; and http://www.npca.org/ on the World Wide Web.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Successes

Because NPCA's mission is to protect the parks, *National Parks* magazine sometimes tends to dwell on the bad news—imminent threats, potential disasters, and the seemingly insurmountable problems associated with too little money and too much political maneuvering. But in this issue we offer some upbeat news about parks. In "Overcoming the Odds," (page 40), Ebba Hierta describes the difficult but successful struggle to prepare the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site for the throngs of visitors expected this summer as the Olympic Games roll out in Atlanta, Georgia. The site, which was deficient not only in rest rooms and parking spaces but also in interpretive resources, overcame a series of political battles and funding shortfalls. It now offers a fitting tribute to the legacy of the slain civil rights leader and shows what can be done when a site receives the attention it deserves.

In other good news, noted wildlife expert Jim Fowler describes March for Parks, NPCA's seventh annual Earth Day event, which was a huge success in April (page 28).

And in NPCA News (page 13), Kim O'Connell reports on President Clinton's "Parks for Tomorrow" initiative. The plan includes more than 20 different actions that the president says will protect and rebuild America's park system—including concessions and fee reforms and many other measures that NPCA has been strongly advocating for the last few years.

A final note: In this issue we introduce a new department, "Rare & Endangered" (page 50), which will track the progress of various imperiled species. The department will appear intermittently at first, as space allows.

Sue E. Dodge, Editor

Revisiting Voyageurs, Made in America, Backing Buses, The Future for Parks

Revisiting Voyageurs

I am writing in regard to an article that appeared in *National Parks* concerning Voyageurs National Park [January/February 1996], located in my congressional district in northern Minnesota. I would like to set the record straight by correcting some of the inaccuracies in the article.

On January 24, U.S. District Judge James Rosenbaum issued a decision supporting the rights of recreational users of the park by reopening portions of Voyageurs to snowmobiling. This good, solid decision was well-grounded in the law, legislative history, and the science of wildlife habitat.

The 1971 legislation that created Voyageurs clearly stated that it would be a year-round recreation area. In an effort to honor the commitments made to the people of Minnesota, I support initiatives to establish a council comprising local, state, and federal representatives. The Voyageurs council would ensure formalized input into the early stages of the National Park Service's decision-making process and would resolve many recurring management problems.

What I propose for Voyageurs is a moderate, rational, mid-course correction. I ask only that we honor the commitments that were made to the people of Minnesota when the law affecting this area was originally enacted.

James L. Oberstar (D)
U.S. Representative, Minnesota

EDITORIAL REPLY: In April, Oberstar introduced legislation to create the council, which NPCA opposes. The bill contains a provision allowing a "management plan board" to override the secretary of the Interior if he or she fails to adopt the council's recommendations for future management of Voyageurs. The council would be biased against the National Park Service and be dominated by local interests, which in the past have pushed for increased motorized recreation in this pristine national park. In addition, Oberstar is overstating the judge's decision to reopen park areas to snowmobiling. The judge asked the Park Service to submit additional evidence supporting closing some bays to snowmobiling, after which the judge would reconsider his decision. (See the related story in NPCA Park News.)

I was very disappointed to see this phrase in your story on Voyageurs: "...that Voyageurs, Minnesota's only national park, be downgraded to a national recreation area." This phrase is inaccurate in its depiction of the National Park System and offensive to the thousands of National Park Service employees who do not work in a "national park."

As you well know, Minnesota has a number of NPS units. The fact that they are not titled "national park" is irrelevant from a legal and operational standpoint. More than one law requires NPS to manage all units equally, regardless of designation. It is each individual unit's enabling legislation that determines its management. Renaming a site a "national recreation area" is not a downgrade or lessening of the unit's protection unless the new legislation so specifies.

At a time when the National Park System is under attack from numerous sources, it is particularly lamentable to see *National Parks* give credit to the concept of a hierarchy of parks and to imply that a national park is more worthy of protection than a national recreation area, national monument, national historic site, or any other unit title. Nor do the NPS employees who work in these areas feel complimented when it is implied that they are in a lesser unit or that the resources they protect are of a lower value.

The content of the story and the urgency of protecting Voyageurs are indisputable. But you should not pit one park against another when arguing for Voyageurs' protection.

Costa Dillon
Beatrice, NB

Made in America

When I visit an American historical site or national park, I often want to purchase a souvenir to remind me of the experience. At most of the sites, I notice the souvenirs are made predominantly in China, Korea, Taiwan, etc. Very few are made in the United States.

As a former art teacher, I rejoice when I find products made by American artists in places that commemorate the history and beauty of our land. Such places are the perfect outlets for our home-created crafts.

Ethel V. King
Silver Spring, MD

Backing Buses

Would somebody please explain why the bigwigs on Capitol Hill and in NPS are having such a difficult time figuring out how to alleviate the congestion in our national parks? In 1991, I visited Denali National Park. I was asked to choose a day and a time for my bus. During the eight-hour tour, we saw almost every wild animal that is known to that area. The tour was so interesting and enjoyable that I returned to the park desk to sign up again for the next day. The bus I wanted was already full so I signed up for an alternate time. We didn't see nearly as much wildlife the next day, but I thought the bus program at Denali was excellent. The $3 I spent in Denali were the best $3 I ever spent! I would not hesitate to visit again. Why is the Park Service having such a hard

ANSWER TO "YOU ARE HERE"

Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

time solving the traffic dilemma?

Cheryl Kline
Boise, ID

Exploring Mammoth Cave

I agree with the letter printed in the January/February 1996 issue that tours at Mammoth Cave National Park are not of the quality we have come to expect, but I disagree with the suggested solution—privatizing the tour operations. That smacks strongly of a Wise Use proposal. The basic problem at Mammoth Cave, like all national parks, is funding. Because of federal cutbacks, the park has been forced to save money by scaling back on personnel and tours.

Turning the tour operations over to private enterprise could only worsen the situation. The state of Missouri provides plenty of examples of privately run caves with poorly paid guides providing hyperbole rather than facts and emphasizing spectacular light displays rather than natural features. There are some exceptions, but even the best operator could not compete on the budget provided for Mammoth. For the price of entry to Mammoth Cave, could a private entrepreneur offer the variety and quality of tours and the in-depth educational experience we expect at our national parks? Hardly.

Susan R. Hagan
Annapolis, MO

I have just read John Knight's letter and I strongly agree that the knowledge level of national park rangers should be high enough to educate the public effectively about park resources. I can understand Knight's concern for the lack of water and rest rooms on the long Mammoth Cave tours, but I am very concerned that rest rooms and food services have the potential to introduce extraneous organic matter into a sensitive ecosystem. As much of a convenience as they are, rest rooms and food services are harmful to cave environments. Many developed caves are experiencing harmful changes because of the presence of humans: temperature increases from lighting systems, temperature and carbon dioxide increases, pollution of waters by above-cave developments (such as parking lots), climatic variations from artificial entranceways (such as elevator shafts), and lint accumulations from visitors' clothing, skin, and hair.

Finally, I take issue with the suggestion that the Park Service stick to park management while the tour business is given to private industry. The last word in the agency's name is "service" and it should remain so. Effective park management starts with good communication with and resource interpretation for the visiting public. Tours should remain in the hands of the Park Service. Since it works with and cares for the resources on a daily basis, it has a more vested interest in interpreting park resources than a for-profit company could have.

Donald Frankfort
Gillette, WY

The Future for Parks

NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard received the following letters from a teacher and a high school class studying the national parks.

As a member of NPCA, I greatly admire you and the association. How do I spread the message of what our national parks mean to me? I teach a high school environmental science course at Gatewood Schools in Eatonton, Georgia. I required each student in my class to write a letter expressing what he or she had learned last semester from reading *National Parks*. Every week I required the students to read at least one feature story from *National Parks*. The students learn a great deal from the articles and seem to enjoy reading them.

Progress always starts with education, and when I look into the future to a population that is well familiarized with our National Park System, I see a thriving park system and citizens who reap the benefits.

Kevin McCord
Eatonton, GA

I believe that NPCA, through *National Parks*, is doing an excellent job of informing people of the harm inflicted on our resources by corporate America. Several articles show the damage corporations are capable of dishing out on places specifically designed for the protection of nature. It became obvious that money, not environmental welfare, runs our country.

Matthew Henson

"Over a Barrel" [March/April 1995] discussed the plusses and minuses involved with oil and gas developments in our national parks. Two-thirds of the 600 developments are not regulated by the Park Service. The risk of an oil spill is too great to leave so many developments unregulated. The article stated that the Park Service is working to change this; however, I am not convinced that oil companies will be kept out. Congress needs to take action against the destruction of these beautiful parks.

Brian Betzel

"Embattled Ground" [November/December 1994] showed that certain people possess the gumption and drive to stand up for themselves. This was

illustrated by NPCA joining local groups to block the development [of Disney's proposed history theme park]. It annoys me that anyone would want to replace the rural setting near Manassas National Battlefield Park with a theme park. A national battlefield park is just as special as a national park.

Kaci Walton

Although environmental issues are not the first thing on a group of teenagers' minds, we enjoyed reading the articles.

Miranda Gregory

"Rescuing the Reef" [November/December 1994] was one article that caught my eye. Aside from the beauty of the coral reefs, I thought the complexity and different species contained in the reefs were fascinating. I was surprised at the ways coral reefs are destroyed. Some of these include damage by boat anchors and pollution. Even though coral reefs are underwater, when they are destroyed a part of the parks' beauty dies with them.

Brie Ragsdale

Because of this magazine, I have learned to appreciate our national parks, the environment, and the animals and living things in them.

Tony Witchomsky

In the quarter we just finished, I completed a project on Biscayne National Park and its neighbor, Everglades National Park. Because of my project, I learned about them and enjoyed it! That's something you can't say about all your schoolwork!

I believe that NPCA is doing a stupendous job of educating people about the national parks. I understand that protecting our national parks is a never-ending job. Your magazine is very entertaining and informative. The photography is some of the best I've seen in a nature magazine. Keep up the good work!

Brooks Coker

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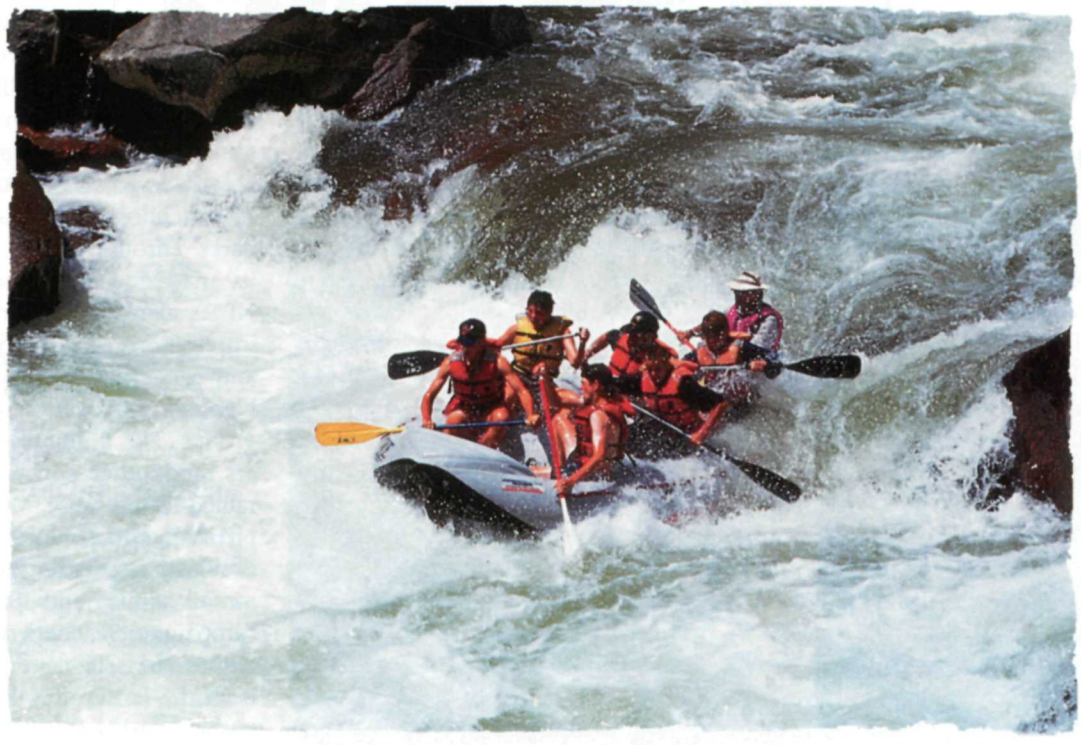

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SAVE OUR NATIONAL PARKS CAMPAIGN:

Grassroots at Work

IN 1920, NPCA FOUNDER Robert Sterling Yard exclaimed that "every senator and representative should receive advice from his people at home to restore the national parks to their former status and to hold them safe." At the time, NPCA was in the midst of a battle to exempt national parks from legislation that would permit large federal water projects on public lands. Yard understood that targeted grassroots action could sway Congress from passing anti-park legislation backed by powerful special-interest lobbyists, and he saw to it that other concerned individuals and groups were informed of the pending bill. Though small in numbers, the first broad-based park constituency was determined to win. After many months of NPCA-initiated grassroots pressure, the bill was amended to preserve water resources in already designated national park units. The organization had learned a valuable lesson in the art of influencing Congress.

Seventy-five years later, NPCA was again on the front lines of the battle to protect the integrity of the National Park System. The vague references to environmental reform found in the "Contract with America" had turned into an all-out attempt by Congress to dismantle the laws that make the U.S. National Park System the envy of the world. Legislation had been introduced that would open up wilderness areas and parks to motorized vehicles, oil and gas drilling, and other extractive uses. More subtle efforts came as a result of decreasing operational budgets for parks. For example, an amendment attached to the fiscal year 1996 appropriations bill would have reduced the operational budget for the newly established Mojave National Preserve to $1, a de facto closing of the park. The most egregious bill, H.R. 260, the so-called "park closure bill," proposed a commission whose sole purpose was to identify which of 315 park units it should put on the list for closure.

NPCA knew that it would take a well-organized campaign to defeat H.R. 260. Once again, the organization called on its allies in the field to put pressure on their representatives. But was the park constituency up for the fight? In the years since Yard had initiated NPCA's first grassroots campaign, Congress had become more beholden to corporate lobbyists and self-serving local interests. The National Park System had also changed, extending its protection beyond national parks and monuments to include nationally significant cultural and historic sites, as well as urban recreation areas. In its role as the repository of our nation's heritage, the Park Service began managing parks that brought important history to life and touched the lives of every American.

NPCA put out a call to action to its traditional allies, asking them to contact their representatives in Congress and hold them accountable in their role as watchdogs and champions of our parks. Through timely action alerts in its magazine and other publications, NPCA alerted its members about the implications of H.R. 260 and the other anti-park bills. NPCA's Park Activist Network, a coalition of park friends groups, NPCA members, park watchers, and other concerned individuals rallied to the cause. More than 40,000 NPCA members elected to join in this effort by responding to phone banks, e-mail alerts, and public education campaigns. Teachers organized their classes to write letters in support of both the crown jewels and the lesser-known parks. Many used March for Parks—NPCA's national Earth Day event—to raise funds for specific park projects and to galvanize the public in the fight to save our national parks.

As a result, on September 19, 1995, H.R. 260 was defeated on the House floor by a vote of 231-180. The new park constituency had triumphed again. But the battle is not over yet.

With the upcoming close of the 104th Congress, NPCA can thank its members for their diligence in holding Congress accountable for its actions on park legislation. Will the 105th Congress finally recognize that the American public deeply cares for its national parks? The National Park System will survive into the 21st century only if members of Congress share the same concerns and convictions as their constituents.

The disconnection between Congress and the American public must not continue into the next legislative session. If that occurs, NPCA members will need to redouble their efforts to save our national parks for succeeding generations.

Is your representative a champion of the parks?

An NPCA poll found that three-quarters of the American public believes their representatives' voting record on national park legislation is an important factor in making decisions at the polls. The League of Conservation Voters (LCV), a 26-year-old bipartisan political arm of the environmental movement, has published its National Environmental Scorecard for the first session of the 104th Congress. In it you will find how your representative voted on two key park issues: H.R. 260 (the "park closure bill") and an amendment offered to preserve the National Park Service's funding for the newly established Mojave National Preserve.

To obtain a copy of the report, write to LCV, 1707 L St., N.W., Suite 750, Washington, DC 20036. If you would like to join NPCA's Park Activist Network, write to NPCA, Grassroots Department, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, or contact us through America Online (keyword: PARKS) or through our World Wide Web site (http://www.npca.org/).

BY KIM A. O'CONNELL

PRESERVATION

Clinton Outlines Park Initiatives

Overflights, congestion top president's far-reaching agenda.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Wearing gloves and work clothes, President Clinton and Vice President Gore marked Earth Day on April 22 by removing debris from flood-damaged Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The president then announced his comprehensive plan to bolster and protect units of the National Park System.

In a package titled "Parks for Tomorrow: A Plan To Restore and Preserve America's National Parks," Clinton outlined more than 20 executive and legislative actions, sending a strong environmental message to Congress. "We have to dedicate ourselves to making sure that as long as there is an America, there will be a National Park System with these treasures there for every citizen of this country," Clinton said.

THE WHITE HOUSE

After working on the C&O Canal, President Clinton outlined his park package.

Two major initiatives of the plan include limiting air tours and automobile congestion at national parks. Citing the significant loss of natural quiet at Grand Canyon National Park, the president directed Transportation Secretary Federico Peña and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to issue regulations that would restrict aircraft flying over the Grand Canyon and other "priority parks," including Rocky Mountain National Park. Clinton's directive spurred almost immediate action from Peña, who on May 11 announced plans to ban all commercial overflights at Rocky Mountain. Regulations regarding the canyon are pending.

"The administration's action is a real milestone in conservation history," said NPCA Rocky Mountain Regional Director Mark Peterson. "We are finally putting protection of natural quiet on equal footing with other resources."

Clinton is also urging Babbitt and Peña to develop a plan to improve public transportation in the parks, which suffer from increasing numbers of vehicles jamming onto park roads. This plan would provide for the development of pilot programs at Grand Canyon, Zion, and Yosemite national parks, which have already begun to study alternative transportation modes.

The administration also paid special attention to Point Reyes National Seashore. Located near San Francisco, the park was targeted for expansion by the Park Service in 1995. Under Clinton's proposal, Babbitt would work with Congress to prepare legislation to expand the seashore by 38,000 acres and protect scenic vistas. In addition, Clinton pushed for the designation of federally protected wilderness areas in

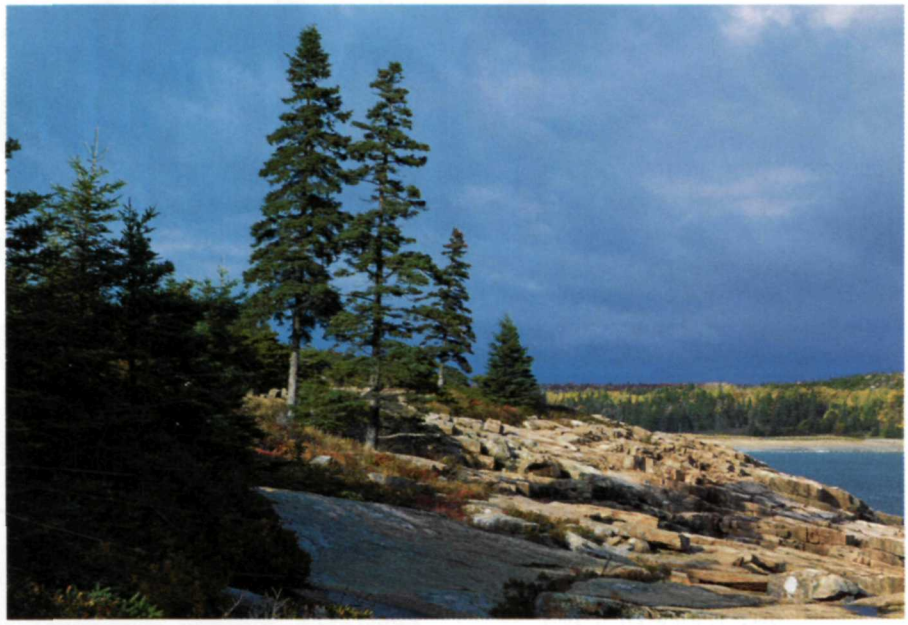
17 national parks, including Yellowstone, Great Smoky Mountains, and Canyonlands.

Several park-related laws that have stagnated before the 104th Congress were also highlighted by the president. He urged quick passage of legislation to reform concessions and park entrance fee policies, to establish a new heritage areas program, to allow NPS to acquire the pristine Sterling Forest along the New York-New Jersey border, to protect Yellowstone's Old Faithful geyser, and to create a public benefit corporation to manage the Presidio in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Babbitt has called the Presidio legislation, which also headlines the omnibus parks bill (see page 16), a "must."

Some congressional leaders have derided "Parks for Tomorrow" as a rehash of old initiatives. On Earth Day, Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) unveiled his own park plan, which includes proposed legislation to raise money for the park system through company sponsorship of parks.

The president's far-reaching proposal has garnered the full support of the Park Service, the Department of the Interior, and NPCA, for which many of these issues have been a top priority for years. "We compliment President Clinton on his vision and on the breadth of his announcement," said NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard. "Now Congress must demonstrate its commitment to the well-being of our country's natural and cultural heritage."

"When it comes to protecting the environment, we can't turn back," Clinton said.



FRED HIRSCHMANN

Conservationists have averted a timber harvest near Acadia National Park.

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Write a letter supporting Peña's proposed ban (mention Alternative 1) on Rocky Mountain overflights and send it in triplicate to Rules Docket (AGC-200), Docket No. 28577, 800 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20591 or electronically to nprm-cmts@mail.hq.faa.gov.

SAVE OUR NATIONAL PARKS

▶ **TALLGRASS PRAIRIE:** "Tallgrass is motion in a world of legato," author Louise Erdrich has written. Preservation of one of the few remaining large tracts of tallgrass prairie is a key aspect of NPCA's Save Our National Parks Campaign.

In 1994, NPCA helped the National Park Trust, an affiliated private land conservancy, to acquire the historic Z Bar/Spring Hill Ranch in the Flint Hills of Kansas, the site of the proposed Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. Today, NPCA is working with Congress to pass legislation (S. 695/H.R. 1449) creating this new park. On April 17, the Senate parks subcommittee held a hearing on S. 695, and NPCA's William J. Chandler, vice president for conservation policy, testified.

"As a new park unit, the preserve will offer an interpretive experience found nowhere else in the world," Chandler said.

The measure was also one of nearly 60 titles in the omnibus parks bill that was unanimously approved by the Senate on May 1 (see page 16). NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard commended Kansas Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R) and other members of the Kansas congressional delegation for their efforts to create the preserve. "The Z Bar Ranch is the best place to preserve a tallgrass prairie ecosystem," Pritchard said.

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** The House of Representatives has yet to consider tallgrass legislation. Urge your representative to support the omnibus bill and H.R. 1449. Write to U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

ADJACENT LANDS

Timber Harvest Put on Hold

Groups protect 1,600 acres abutting Acadia National Park.

BAR HARBOR, MAINE — Thanks to an eleventh-hour agreement drawn up by conservationists, a plan to harvest timber on lands abutting Acadia National Park has been averted.

On April 29, the Dave Warren Company, a forester acting on behalf of an anonymous landowner, planned to begin logging a 2,800-acre tract next to parkland on Schoodic Peninsula, a

wooded, rocky area visible from the main body of the park on Mount Desert Island. The tract is bisected by state route 186, and the 1,600 acres south of the road directly abut Acadia. The extent of the harvest plan fell just short of the state's legal definition of a clear-cut, and conservation groups, including the nonprofit Friends of Acadia and NPCA, were concerned about the effects on the park.

Having learned of the proposed harvest only weeks before it was to begin, Friends of Acadia quickly formed a partnership with Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Frenchman Bay Conservancy. The groups asked to see and comment on the plan but were flatly denied. "Our major concern was the proximity of the cut to the park's boundary, the extent of the cut, and the threat to the park's integrity," said Heidi Beal, Friends of Acadia's director of programs.

Visitors to this seventh-most-visited national park, Beal said, would have seen "a big scar on the landscape." According to the friends group, the 1,600 acres are visually and ecologically indistinguishable from park property. In fact, the area is of such high quality that in 1968 the National Park Service recommended that it be added to the park.

With less than a week remaining before the harvest's start date, the groups finally came to an agreement with Dave Warren. The forester agreed to place a moratorium on all cutting and related construction on the 1,600-acre parcel until September 1, with a possible extension to January 1, 1997. During this time, individuals and groups interested in purchasing the land to set it aside as a conservation easement could evaluate and appraise the property. If no buyer is found, the groups would be able to help craft a harvesting plan that would safeguard park values. The obvious choice for an easement buyer, Beal said, is the National Park Service.

"Groups such as Friends of Acadia do important park preservation work," said NPCA Northeast Regional Director Eileen Woodford. "We welcome this opportunity to work with the Friends to develop a conservation proposal that

will meet the needs of the park and be locally acceptable."

The agreement does effect a compromise: Logging has begun on the 1,200 acres north of route 186. "We didn't put any loggers out of work," Beal said. "But we also spared, for now, 1,600 acres."

LEGISLATION

Senate Approves Omnibus Bill

Tallgrass, Presidio Trust, and other measures passed.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A month after a filibuster ended debate on a controversial omnibus parks bill, the Senate unanimously passed an improved version of the legislation on May 1.

The bill (H.R. 1296) contains nearly 60 measures that make changes and enhancements to the National Park System. Last September, the House approved a version of H.R. 1296 that dealt only with the Presidio Trust, which would manage the historic military base in Golden Gate National Recreation Area. When the Senate received the bill this spring, it decided to address a legislative backlog by attaching other park measures to the bill.

Unfortunately, this first omnibus bill contained a controversial measure that would designate 2.1 million acres of public lands in Utah as wilderness, allow development in these sections, and prohibit other areas from ever being considered for wilderness designation. The measure had been losing support since its introduction last year, and Senate opposition led to a filibuster, followed by removal of the bill from the floor.

Within weeks, a revised omnibus bill—without the Utah wilderness language—emerged. When the Senate unanimously voted for the bill on May 1, it authorized the creation of the long-awaited Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas, as well as the Presidio Trust and a host of other NPCA-supported initiatives. (For more on the tallgrass measure, see "Save Our National Parks" on page 14.)

"We are extremely pleased that the Senate has finally recognized that national parks are an issue on which the American people want to see bipartisan cooperation, not political brinkmanship," said NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard.

The omnibus bill would also expand Walnut Canyon National Monument in Arizona by 1,279 acres. This would add two significant archaeological sites and scenic wild stretches to the park, where cliff dwellings associated with 12th-century Sinagua Indians can still be seen. NPCA has advocated expansion of the monument for years.

The Senate has also now authorized the addition to the National Park System of the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail in Alabama. The trail preserves the route walked by civil rights advocates in March 1965.

In addition, the bill authorizes minor boundary adjustments at several national parks and establishes new visitor centers at certain areas.

On May 23, members of a House-Senate conference committee began to work out their differences over the legislation. NPCA is urging the House not to add any controversial or extraneous items to the bill.

"This bill is good for parks and good for people," Pritchard said. "The message is simple—Americans love national parks."

FUNDING

House, Senate Near Resolution

House allocations inadequately provide for Interior programs.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—At press time, the House and Senate had sent their budget resolutions to a conference committee, which will forge an agreement on federal spending for fiscal year 1997 and outline ways to balance the budget by 2002.

Although the resolutions are not binding, the final outcome will include recommended spending ceilings for the appropriations subcommittees, which have begun to release specific numbers for each federal department. NPCA, along with other members of an environmental coalition known as the Green Group, is concerned that the allocation for the Department of the Interior—which oversees the National Park Service and other public lands agencies—is grossly inadequate.

Initially, the House Appropriations Committee planned to cut $650 million from last year's budget. As press time, partly as a result of NPCA's work, the committee appeared likely to approve Interior allocations at fiscal year 1996 levels. However, Interior is also faced with $300 million in new obligations, which means that other needy programs highlighted by the administration will be neglected.

"Thankfully the leadership responded to our concern that the cuts would have resulted in permanent damage to national parks," said Tom Adams, NPCA Washington representative. "However, the budget is still inadequate, and important park needs will not be met."

In addition, Congress is considering an increase in defense spending that is more than $12 billion in excess of the Defense Department's request. The House is advocating more than $1 billion more for defense than the Senate, and NPCA and other conservation groups have urged House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) to direct his colleagues to conform to the Senate numbers, so that the excess could be directed toward Interior programs.

The negotiations over the budget resolution have the environmental community waiting with bated breath. Both houses have previously proposed reductions that amount to a 20 percent cut for the Park Service over six years. Sens. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), John Kerry (D-Mass.), and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) offered an amendment to restore park funding, but it was tabled.

FRED HIRSCHMANN

A current bill would transfer most of the coastline of Lake Clark National Park.

LEGISLATION

Lake Clark In Danger

Bill to transfer park's coastline moves forward in the House.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A significant portion of one of this country's most extraordinary national parks may soon be lost to the public forever, if a wealthy Native corporation and its allies in Congress get their way.

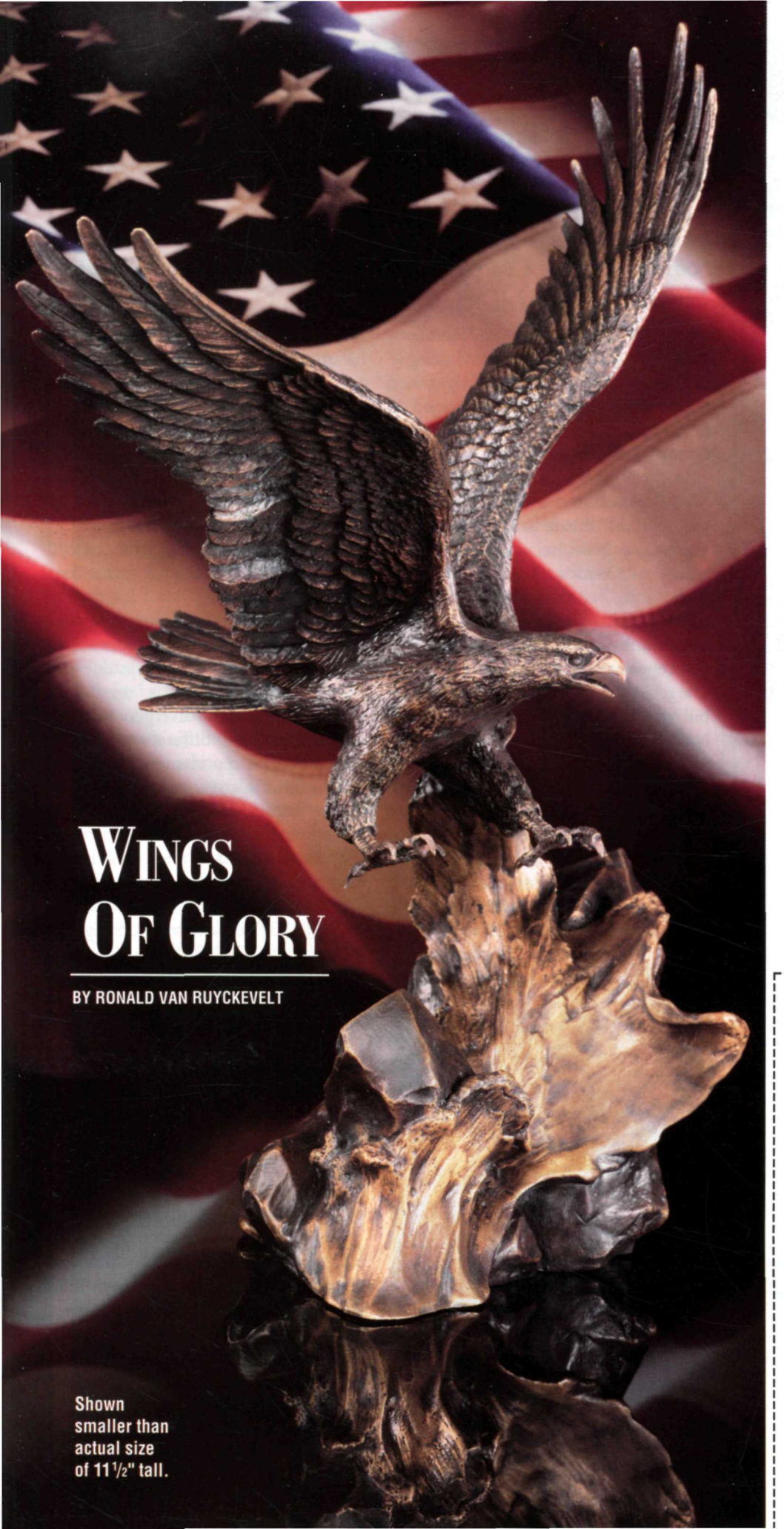
On April 25, the House Resources Committee approved H.R. 2560, a bill that would transfer 29,500 acres, or 90 percent, of the coastline of Lake Clark National Park in Alaska to Native villages. Sponsored by Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) and orchestrated by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), the bill is designed to settle outstanding Native village claims, although the bill also provides for an unnamed beneficiary. CIRI, one of the state's wealthiest Native corporations, would receive subsurface mineral rights to lands in Lake Clark.

NPCA, the National Park Service, and the Department of the Interior all oppose this bill on the ground that it presents serious threats to park wildlife, habitat, and other resources and violates agreements that were negotiated in good faith. In 1976, representatives of CIRI, the federal government, and the state of Alaska agreed to a set of land exchanges to increase the value of lands available for local Native ownership and to settle Native claims. To come to terms, the public ceded several tracts of valuable land, while CIRI acquired major oil and gas properties, coal fields, and other coastal areas. A by-product of this agreement was the opportunity to set aside Lake Clark.

Today, Native villages say their claims were not met. Although the agreement states that these groups would receive certain lands in Lake Clark only if other identified parcels did not contain enough acreage to fulfill entitlements, the government has already conveyed more than enough acreage to fulfill these claims. NPCA contends that Young and CIRI are misreading the original agreement.

"NPCA would not use the existence of a park to unfairly block the conveyance of lands to which Alaska Native corporations are entitled," said Chip Dennerlein, NPCA Alaska regional director. "The Native villages deserve a fair settlement, but the American people deserve their national park."

TAKE ACTION: Write to your representative, urging her or him to oppose H.R. 2560. Address: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.



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http://www.npca.org/

NPCA PARK NEWS

LEGISLATION

Conflict Reigns Over Voyageurs

Some members of Congress push for more local control.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Members of the Minnesota congressional delegation—divided over how Voyageurs National Park should be managed—have introduced legislation that could change the park's character.

In April, Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.) introduced a bill (H.R. 3298) that would create an 11-member Voyageurs National Park Intergovernmental Council to oversee management of the 218,000-acre park, located in Minnesota. The council's composition is unbalanced, with only one person representing the national interest. The rest are local and state officials. The bill would allow a "management plan board" to override the secretary of the Interior if he or she fails to adopt the council's recommendations.

NPCA fears that, armed with this "veto" power, the council could force the adoption of its recommendations even if they are inconsistent with park protection. "The council gives local voices a level of power disproportionate to their legitimate interest in park management," said NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard.

DAVID MUENCH

Voyageurs National Park could be subjected to more local control.

Sen. Rod Grams (R-Minn.) has introduced a similar bill (S. 1805). Like Oberstar, Grams sets up a management council for the park that would consider uses of the park that NPCA says are inappropriate. "Grams and Oberstar apparently do not understand the meaning of a national park," said NPCA Heartland Regional Director Lori Nelson. "It would be a disaster to allow a group of Minnesotans with a selfish agenda to control a national resource."

Another Minnesotan, Rep. Bruce Vento (D), has a different view of Voyageurs than his colleagues. In mid-May, Vento introduced legislation (H.R. 3470) that would designate 78,000 acres of the park's Kabetogama Peninsula as wilderness.

Congressional debate over these bills is likely to heat up by mid-summer. In the meantime, Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) has proposed a mediation process to help these divergent interests to resolve their differences. NPCA, which will be represented, will advocate administrative remedies rather than a "battle of the bills."

TAKE ACTION: Write to your senators and representative, urging them to oppose S. 1805 and H.R. 3298 and to support H.R. 3470. Addresses: U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

SURVEY

Voters Favor Park Advocates

Survey shows that park protection will count at the polls.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—When voters go to the polls to choose a president and congressional representatives this November, they will be looking for more than a candidate who promises tax cuts and welfare reform.

Americans, no matter their party af-

NEWS UPDATE

▶ **R.S. 2477 THREATS LESSENED:** As a direct result of NPCA's efforts, the potential threats posed to national parks by S. 1425, the Revised Statute 2477 Rights-of-Way Settlement Act, are significantly diminished. The original bill allowed highway rights-of-way to be claimed on virtually any tract of land, which means that national parks and other public areas could be crisscrossed by major roads. On May 1, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved S. 1425 but agreed to substitute language that would instead require the Department of the Interior to develop regulations governing R.S. 2477 claims. The regulations would then have to be approved by Congress. Although NPCA would prefer that regulations be developed independent of Congress, the association is pleased that the bill takes a more reasoned approach to validating rights-of-way across national parks and public lands.

▶ **DEVILS TOWER DILEMMA:** The rock climbing community and the National Park Service are engaged in a heated debate over the agency's decision to impose a voluntary ban on climbing at Devils Tower National Monument during the month of June. NPS made the decision out of respect for local American Indian tribes that consider the Wyoming monolith a sacred site. In March, the Mountain States Legal Foundation, representing a coalition of climbing interests, filed a lawsuit against NPS. The plaintiffs charge that the Park Service's actions violate the separation of church and state.

filiation, favor candidates who make protecting the parks a priority, according to a survey released by NPCA. A resounding 96 percent said they would be more likely to vote for a presidential candidate who is committed to protecting national parks.

The telephone survey, conducted this spring by Colorado State University (CSU), also demonstrated that despite well-documented concerns about the budget deficit, Americans are more likely to vote for congressional candidates who support increases for the national parks. In keeping with the protection theme, they are disinclined to vote for candidates who favor closing parks or turning them over to private enterprises.

"With this survey, the American public has once again sent a clear message to its leaders: the national parks must not be used as pawns of a partisan political agenda," said Paul C. Pritchard, president of NPCA.

During the past year, Congress has considered dozens of bills that could dismantle protections in place for decades. For instance, Congress considered a bill that threatened to close some of the 369 units of the National Park System. The bill was defeated twice in the House.

Besides looking for candidates who make park protection a priority, those surveyed said they would put up with personal inconveniences, such as making reservations, if these measures meant smaller crowds in the parks.

Respondents also said they believed companies should pay to clean up the air pollution they cause, even if it means higher utility fees. They also would be willing to pay extra for sugar to help restore the Everglades. The sugar industry is a large polluter of the Everglades. Among other items, the survey found that a majority supports limits on overflights and the return of wolves to Yellowstone National Park.

CSU researchers surveyed 809 people, who were evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, although most (35 percent) described themselves as independents. Forty percent also described themselves as moderate. More than 79 percent of those participating in the survey had visited National Park System units.

—*Linda M. Rancourt*

REGIONAL REPORT

News Briefs from NPCA's Regional Offices

ALASKA Chip Dennerlein, Regional Director

▶ NPCA is pleased that a new development concept plan and environmental impact statement for the south side of Denali National Park is on the right track. Based on the recommendations of the Denali Task Force, the plan focuses on cooperative development and management with adjacent Denali State Park. NPCA is also working to ensure that a plan for Denali's frontcountry and road corridor is consistent with the park's values and purposes.

▶ An improved plan to increase the number of large vessels in Glacier Bay National Park was officially published by the National Park Service on May 30. The plan is notable for the creation of nonmotorized "wilderness waters," the first such designation in Alaska.

HEARTLAND Lori Nelson, Regional Director

▶ NPS has released a draft management plan that proposes the creation of a local management council for Niobrara National Scenic Riverway in Nebraska. The council would be composed of ranchers and other locals, who would create and implement the park's management standards. NPCA has questioned the legality and viability of establishing such a council and does not support the Park Service's abdication of its role as primary steward of the park. NPCA is urging the Park Service to retain its lead role while providing for public input through the park's citizen advisory commission.

NORTHEAST Eileen Woodford, Regional Director

▶ At Jamestown Island, now part of Colonial National Historical Park, archaeologists have been uncovering artifacts from the first permanent English settlement in the New World. In part to address storage needs for this growing pool of artifacts, NPS and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities have jointly issued an environmental assessment (EA) outlining alternatives for storage space and a new visitor center. The current visitor center inadequately tells the story of Jamestown, and artifacts are stored in the building's flood-prone basement. NPCA supports the EA's preferred alternative, which calls for a new visitor center that would better orient people to the park. The old center would be reconstructed to store and exhibit artifacts.

PACIFIC Brian Huse, Regional Director

▶ A dam on Manzanita Lake in Lassen Volcanic National Park in California will not be reconstructed to prevent downstream flooding, as NPS had planned. NPCA opposed the project, saying that the plan did not consider the natural ecosystem of the lake or previous plans to return the lake to pre-dam levels. After NPCA generated a petition and 50 letters to NPS, the agency postponed construction to do further research. On May 8, Superintendent Gilbert Blinn announced

continued

WILDERNESS

Cumberland Island Plan Considered

NPCA pushes for wilderness management principles.

ST. MARYS, GA.—A 1995 proposal to create an arts center on Cumberland Island National Seashore continues to imperil park wilderness. This spring, however, NPCA succeeded in convincing National Park Service officials to postpone action on the proposal, recommending that wilderness management principles be developed and public input considered first.

Located midway along the 16-mile-long Cumberland Island is century-old Plum Orchard mansion. The mansion is surrounded by wilderness and would seem an ideal place for the Plum Orchard Center for the Arts on Cumberland Island to create an artists' retreat. Although the center would provide some renovations on the mansion, it would also allow inappropriate vehicle use in certain situations and house 30 artists and staff without adequately considering impacts on the wilderness.

NPCA blamed the inclusion of these provisions on the park's lack of a wilderness management plan. After subsequent discussions with NPCA, NPS suggested addressing the Plum Orchard issue through its historic leasing program while concurrently developing a wilderness management plan. The program would involve issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for leasing the mansion.

Although NPCA believes an RFP is the appropriate process for considering this kind of potential use, NPCA says wilderness management principles must be developed first so that proposals can be weighed against them.

NPCA is working with the Park Service to delineate the process by which a wilderness management plan and RFP can be initiated. The association is urging NPS to remember that Cumberland Island is a "developing" wilderness, which means that incom-

DEGOLYER LIBRARY

NPCA is participating in events honoring the U.S.-Mexican War of 150 years ago.

patible activities that took place at the time of wilderness designation will eventually be phased out. While valid existing rights should be recognized, NPCA says, the Park Service should be careful not to consider proposals—such as the current one by the Plum Orchard Center—that create new incompatible uses in the wilderness.

HERITAGE

U.S.-Mexican War Remembered

150th anniversary focuses on battlefield protection.

BROWNSVILLE, TEX.—Located on the time line of history between the American Revolution and the War Between the States, the U.S.-Mexican War is often forgotten. Yet this brutal conflict had enormous consequences for two young nations struggling to define themselves.

On May 3–5, Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site helped to kick off events commemorating the 150th anniversary of the war, which lasted from 1846 to 1848. The only national park unit devoted to the conflict, the park preserves the landscape of the battle of Palo Alto—the war's first major battle, which took place on May 8, 1846. The sister cities of Brownsville and Matamoros, Mexico, also took part in the activities, which involved Mexican and U.S. historians and included reenactments and a cultural festival.

NPCA called for increased protection of U.S.-Mexican War battlefields. "As we mark this solemn anniversary and recognize the outstanding citizen and government efforts to preserve Palo Alto Battlefield, we must remember that the work is never finished," said David Simon, NPCA Southwest regional director. "This weekend's events are an opportunity to honor the fallen on both sides, while also promoting protection of historic sites in the United States and Mexico."

Congress established Palo Alto in 1992, but has yet appropriated only $1 million of the estimated $6 million needed to acquire all the land within the authorized boundary. Allocation of these monies is at the top of an NPCA agenda for Palo Alto and other sites.

NPCA also urged the protection and addition to Palo Alto of undeveloped land at the nearby Resaca de la Palma battlefield, site of a U.S. victory on May 9, 1846; completion of a study of protection needs for related sites in Texas, New Mexico, and California; and

REGIONAL REPORT *continued*

that instead of reconstruction, the park will address the threat of flooding through a warning system and annual dam maintenance.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST **Phil Pearl, Regional Director**

▶ NPS is phasing out certain special uses at Coulee Dam National Recreation Area in Washington. Over the years, special-use permit holders have illegally built cabins, roads, driveways, private docks, and other developments on public land, giving visitors the false impression that these lands are privately owned. The plan to phase out these uses was approved in 1990 but is being challenged by local county commissioners, one of whom is a special-use permittee. NPCA has discussed the issue with Rep. George Nethercutt (R-Wash.), who supports the Park Service's efforts.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN **Mark Peterson, Regional Director**

▶ The wolf reintroduction program at Yellowstone National Park is being hailed as a success. However, the wolves sometimes present challenges for park biologists. Recently, one radio-collared wolf wandered far away from its offspring, eventually traveling 40 miles north of the park to Reedpoint, a Montana ranching town. Wolves that travel outside of park boundaries run a risk of reprisal from ranchers fearing attacks on livestock. Just when biologists had decided to trap and return the animal to the park, the wolf came back on its own. In other news, a pack released near Old Faithful split in two, and, sadly, a pregnant wolf fell into a hot spring and perished.

SOUTHEAST **Don Barger, Regional Director**

▶ Although recreational hunting is allowed in Big Cypress National Preserve, commercial hunting is not. But because of a legal loophole, commercial froggers have been hauling two tons of frogs a month out of the park. In addition to depleting part of the ecosystem, froggers use airboats to traverse the park, damaging grasses on which two endangered species depend. NPCA is considering working with the Florida Biodiversity Project to petition NPS for rules that would restrict the number of frogs that can be taken each day, establish quiet times, and limit habitat destruction. The park has placed a temporary ban on frogging until these rules are in place.

SOUTHWEST **David Simon, Regional Director**

▶ In May, a blaze called the Dome Fire burned 16,500 acres in New Mexico, including 4,780 acres in Bandelier National Monument. The fire had beneficial effects, including clearing undergrowth and recycling nutrients. "Fire is an essential component of forest ecosystems," Simon said. However, sediments released as a result of the fire could damage archaeological sites in the monument's Capulin and Alamo canyons, and NPCA is concerned that salvage logging on U.S. Forest Service land upstream could exacerbate this threat. In addition, NPCA recommends an increase in prescribed fire programs to counteract the conditions that favored such an intense fire.

stronger cross-border cooperation on education and heritage protection.

NPCA has already contributed to this last effort with the publication of *Visiting Battlefields & Sites: The U.S.-Mexican War*, the first guide to these areas. It discusses the conflict's causes and outcomes and provides travel information.

"[The guide is] a good comprehensive view of the war, with input from both nations," said Palo Alto Superintendent Tom Carroll.

MANAGEMENT

FAA May Imperil Hawaiian Species

Fragile resources of Haleakala National Park are at stake.

MAKAWAO, HAWAII—A proposed expansion of Kahului Airport on the island of Maui could threaten Haleakala National Park and its many native and endangered species.

This spring, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Hawaii Department of Transportation released a joint draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on several improvements for Kahului Airport. The proposal—which includes extending the airport's runway from 7,400 feet to 9,600 feet—would allow regular international traffic to begin at the airport. Citing the probable impacts to native species, NPCA, the National Park Service, and Maui Malama Pono, a local group, are challenging the proposal.

Each year, dozens of alien species are brought through Honolulu International Airport to the island of Hawaii, where they threaten to overwhelm native species and upset the island's biotic balance. The groups contend that the moister climate, diversity of habitats, and fertile landscape of Maui would make it even more susceptible than the "big island" to invasive species.

"This is a special environment where we have a chance to hold on to these species that are disappearing," said Haleakala Superintendent Don Reeser.

"Because of the uniqueness of Maui and the resources, we think they need to address the alien species problem."

Located about 15 miles from Kahului Airport, Haleakala is home to more endangered and threatened species than any other national park. At a public hearing in May, Reeser urged FAA and the state to consider an inspection and quarantine process for alien species—which NPCA fully supports—if the expansion goes forward.

Public comment at the hearing was overwhelmingly against the plan. One of the strongest voices was that of Maui Malama Pono, a consortium of groups concerned about the environment of Maui. "This project will have direct and indirect effects on Maui," said Dana Naone Hall, spokesperson for the groups. "Are we willing to sacrifice species for the sake of a third international airport in Hawaii?"

FAA agreed to meet on June 6 with representatives of the Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Biological Service, and others. A final EIS is expected this fall, followed by another opportunity for comment.

"The Park Service's vigilance and leadership have been and continue to be critical," said NPCA Pacific Regional Director Brian Huse. "Working with NPS and Maui Malama Pono, we will protect the exquisite native species of Haleakala National Park."

RECREATION

Use of Personal Watercraft Banned

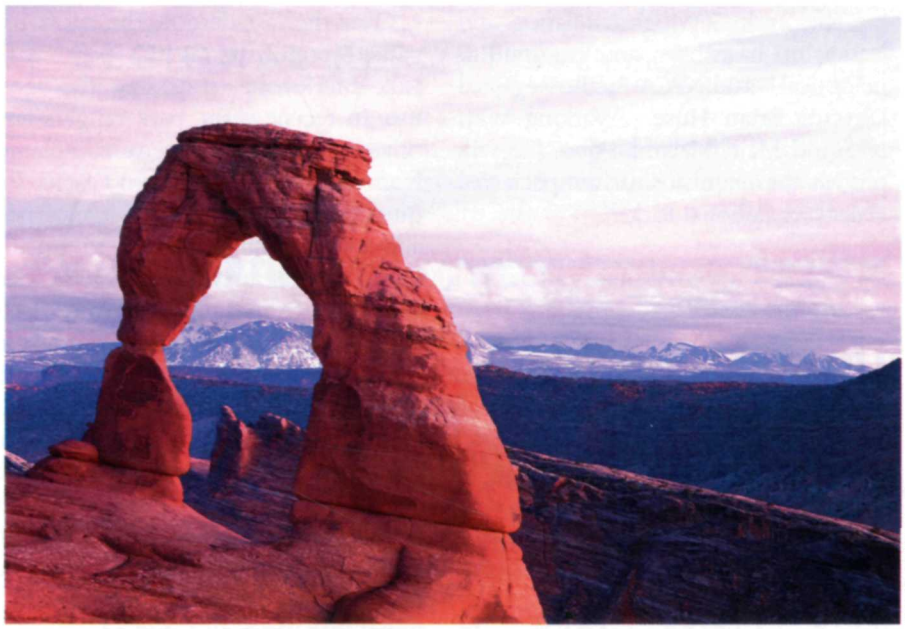
Glacier's natural quiet and park waters at odds with sport.

WEST GLACIER, MONT.—In the high country of Glacier National Park, jagged mountains are often mirrored in the park's many lakes. However, the smooth surfaces of these lakes have been increasingly disrupted by personal watercraft (PWC). Responding to a growing number of complaints, the park decided in May to place a temporary ban on PWC use.

Over the last decade, the sport has gained popularity at the park, with Lake McDonald witnessing the most use. In recent years, park rangers and other staff began to receive complaints from visitors who came to Glacier for quiet and solitude. Also concerned about the possible impacts to aquatic and other resources, the park decided to do an informal analysis of the effects of personal watercraft, which are sold under brand names such as Jet-Ski and Wave Runner. Park staff reviewed National Park Service policies, potential environmental and social impacts, and the park's enabling legislation. Other areas that have banned PWC use, such as the adjacent Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada and Yellowstone National Park, were also studied.

"After doing this analysis, we felt that there was enough evidence that there could be impacts both from a resource standpoint and a visitor experience standpoint," said Assistant Chief Ranger Fred Van Horn. "This is a new use. We want to assess its impacts before it turns into a traditional activity."

The ban is in effect for all park wa-



DAVID MUENCH

A tailings pile is leaching into the Colorado River near Arches National Park.

ters, pending the completion of the park's general management plan, expected next year. If the ban proves to be in error, "we can change it at the conclusion of the planning effort, but we err on the side of park resources," Superintendent David Mihalic said.

"We're really pleased that the park has decided to ban the use of personal watercraft until the impacts to the park are fully evaluated," said NPCA Pacific Northwest Regional Director Phil Pearl.

TAKE ACTION: For information on upcoming hearings on the general management plan, write to Glacier National Park, West Glacier, MT 59936.

RECLAMATION

Mine Tailings Threaten Parks

Effort afoot to remove toxic waste from Colorado River.

MOAB, UTAH — An unlined pile of mine tailings is leaching toxic substances into the Colorado River within a quarter mile of Arches National Park and upstream from other park areas.

The tailings pile is all that remains from an old uranium mill that was abandoned by the Atlas Corporation in 1984. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)—the entity governing Atlas' reclamation of the pile—has released a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) that assesses the effects of capping the 11 million tons of tailings and leaving them alongside the Colorado. Not only is the pile adjacent to Arches, but it is upstream from Canyonlands and Grand Canyon national parks.

According to Richard Lance Christie, chair of the Atlas Tailings Reclamation Task Force, "the Atlas tailings pile is located in the shakiest geophysical site you could find on the Colorado Plateau." Yet the DEIS does not consider the possibility that the tailings pile could fail because of floods, erosion, or seismic activity.

"Since national parks would likely be adversely affected should the tailings pile fail," said NPCA Rocky Mountain Regional Director Mark Peterson, "we would like to see a more elaborate analysis of the potential impacts to natural resources and local economies."

The National Park Service believes that the DEIS inadequately addresses the impacts of capping the pile in place. Furthermore, the DEIS does not give equal analysis to the option of moving the pile to an alternative site, which is

WISE USE WATCH

GROUPS FOSTER ALARM ABOUT U.N. PARK TAKEOVER

When the World Heritage Committee declared Yellowstone National Park "in danger" last December, the Wise Use Movement—a campaign against environmental protections—charged that the designation was evidence of the United Nations' plans to take over the National Park System.

In addition to the dozens of calls and letters NPCA has received, the National Park Service has fielded hundreds of calls about the alleged takeover. The truth is that the World Heritage Committee is autonomous from the U.N., which cannot and is not asserting control over the park system.

The upsurge in U.N. rhetoric can be traced to a few individuals. One is Michael Coffman, who gives talks nationwide condemning the purported U.N. conspiracy. Coffman recently attended a Wise Use forum in Kansas City that was organized by Henry Lamb, founder of the Environmental Conservation Organization, and supported by the Sustainable Freedom Coalition, a group *The New American* (the John Birch Society's publication) says is working against the "U.N.-aligned eco-juggernaut."

Others include Tom DeWeese, whose newsletter *Insider's Report* falsely stated that "the U.N. OWNS Yellowstone," and Floyd G. Brown, whose newsletter *Citizens Agenda* implied that the president's plan to restore the Everglades—a World Heritage Site—is evidence of the takeover.

Other nations proudly promote their World Heritage Sites; in our country, these designations fuel conspiracy theories, not national pride.

supported by NPCA, the Park Service, and the task force.

"We don't feel that there's been sufficiently reliable information to make a determination that leaving [the pile in place] will not impact the resources," said Noel Poe, Arches superintendent until January 1996, when he became superintendent of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. "Ideally, we should just move it off the river."

CONSTRUCTION

Airport Growth Affects Parks

Several plans nationwide could mean more noise over parks.

Several plans are in the works that could have bigger, noisier airplanes flying over national parks.

▶ An environmental impact statement on improvements to the Provincetown Municipal Airport, located entirely within Cape Cod National Seashore, is becoming a hot issue in Massachusetts. NPCA and the National Park Service are concerned about plans for a new terminal and a runway extension. The proposal addresses neither the size or increasing numbers of aircraft flying into the park nor how noise impacts would be monitored.

▶ Although NPS says that Devils Tower National Monument already receives enough air traffic to impair visitor experiences, the Wyoming Department of Transportation is planning to construct a new airport in the town of Hulett, less than ten miles away. Both the Park Service and NPCA are concerned that the project fails to comply with relevant laws and does not assess potential noise impacts properly.

▶ Plans to expand Hanscom Field could mean more flights and larger planes over adjacent Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts. The plan does not consider park resources, which NPCA and local groups are working together to protect.

MARKUP

Key Park Legislation

BILL	PURPOSE	STATUS
Omnibus Parks H.R. 1296	Includes nearly 60 park-related measures; establishes Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and the Presidio Trust. NPCA supports.	The Senate approved H.R. 1296 on May 1. A previous version that contained a controversial Utah wilderness measure was filibustered and pulled from the floor.
Lake Clark H.R. 2560	Transfers 90 percent of the coastline of Lake Clark National Park to Native villages and the area's subsurface mineral rights to a Native corporation. NPCA opposes.	The House Resources Committee approved H.R. 2560 on April 25.
R.S. 2477 S. 1425 / H.R. 2081	Allows virtually every traveled route to qualify as R.S. 2477 highway rights-of-way across parks, public lands, and private property. NPCA opposes.	The Senate resources committee passed S. 1425 on May 1 with language directing Interior to prepare R.S. 2477 regulations, which NPCA says is an improvement.
Voyageurs H.R. 3298 / S. 1805	Creates a locally driven management council for Voyageurs National Park that does not represent the national interest. NPCA opposes.	H.R. 3298 and S. 1805 are awaiting action by the respective House and Senate committees on parks and public lands.

NPCA is working on more than 30 bills.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

NPCA's March for Parks is a positive program that empowers people to protect parks and wildlife—an endeavor that must have roots in the community to be successful.

BY JIM FOWLER

THIS YEAR, I TOOK great pride in serving as the National Parks and Conservation Association's official spokesman for March for Parks. Now in its seventh year, March for Parks is America's only national walk event for parks. Held annually during Earth Day weekend, March for Parks enables people to raise awareness and funds for their local park projects.

Twelve hundred marches took place from April 19 to 22 in all 50 states as well as Argentina, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. More than 1 million people participated, raising money for park projects at national, state, and local levels. For example, one group raised funds for a biodiversity study at Congaree Swamp National Monument in South Carolina. Another raised money to buy wheelchair lifts at Walnut Canyon National Monument in Arizona. People marched for Haleakala National Park in Hawaii, for Caesar Creek State Park in Ohio, for the Headwaters Wilderness area in California, and for many other worthy places.

I began my career as a naturalist first on Mutual of Omaha's *Wild Kingdom*, then on the *Tonight Show* Starring Johnny Carson, and more recently on NBC's *Today* show and as executive director of Mutual of Omaha's Wildlife Heritage Center. I have traveled the globe and seen and worked with all kinds of wildlife and habitat. Unfortunately, habitat around the world is rapidly disappearing, and wildlife is suffering.

For example, two exotic jewels of Siberia—the tiger and Lake Baikal—are in serious danger. The Siberian tiger has about only 20 more years before it becomes extinct in the wild, and Lake Baikal—the oldest and deepest lake in the world and the home of more than 1,200 species of plants and animals—is facing increasing threats from industry. Another of the world's wild areas, the Amazon, is in danger of being overharvested, and countless species such as the harpy—the world's largest eagle—could lose their wilderness homes.

Our own country is not immune to this kind of loss. Because of pollution, the expansion of urban areas, and other pressures, our nation's open spaces are rapidly dwindling. As a result, the 369 units of our National Park System increasingly serve as safe havens for rare, endangered, and threatened species.

I have worked with many animals for which America's parks provide critical habitat. For example, my *Wild Kingdom* cohost Peter Gros and I worked with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and local industries to develop land management guidelines to ensure the survival of the state's estimated 40,000 grizzly bears—many of which can be found in Katmai, Denali, and other national parks in Alaska. Recovery programs for endangered species often depend on national parks. Everglades National Park is host to an interbreeding program for the endangered Florida panther and is a good example. In addition, I have worked with biologists near the Everglades to study the nesting habits of the endangered North American crocodile.

JEFF & ALEXA HENRY

This year volunteers organized the first March for Parks event held at Yellowstone National Park. Marchers saw bison, antelope, and sandhill cranes along their five-mile trek.

Other examples abound. The national seashores of the Northeast—Cape Cod, Fire Island, Assateague Island—provide habitat for endangered piping plovers. Three other endangered species recently have been reintroduced to national parks: the black-footed ferret to Badlands, the gray wolf to Yellowstone, and the California condor to the Grand Canyon.

Despite the critical role national parks play, they face increasing threats. Cars clog Yosemite Valley, the Grand Canyon's South Rim, and other popular parks. Pollution reduces visibility at Big Bend and Great Smoky Mountains. In Congress, certain legislators want to close national parks or limit the National Park Service's ability to manage these treasures for future generations.

I believe that people can make a difference if we work together to save these special places. NPCA's March for Parks is an excellent way to achieve this goal. In 1990, NPCA created March for Parks to allow people to protect parks and open spaces by taking action at the local level. It is because of this community-based approach that I have been involved with March for Parks since its inception.

On April 20, I joined Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and 1,500 concerned individuals in a special March for Parks benefiting the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal National Historical Park in the Washington, D.C., area. Running along the Potomac River for 184.5 miles, the C&O contains a variety of

historical, recreational, and natural features that draw millions of hikers and cyclists each year. The C&O also attracts birdwatchers, who have spotted green herons, wood ducks, pileated woodpeckers, and many other species. Following the Blizzard of '96 that ravaged the East Coast in January, raging floodwaters destroyed much of the C&O Canal towpath, closing some areas of the park. C&O marchers raised $25,000 to help restore this distinctive park.

CHAD EVANS WYATT

Jim Fowler speaks at a March for Parks event.

Mutual of Omaha understands that corporate America has a responsibility to the environment, and I commend the other corporations that made March for Parks possible this year: Clairol Herbal Essences, Easy Spirit, First USA Bank, Benadryl, and Walking magazine. Their generous sponsorships allow NPCA to provide March for Parks materials to march organizers free of charge, which ensures that 100 percent of funds raised for park projects stayed at the local level.

It is important to talk about how the existence of parks and wilderness areas helps to save animals and trees, but convincing the public that the existence of the natural world is critical to our health, happiness, and economic well-being is the challenge of the future. If we are to be successful in saving open space and wilderness, we must answer the question, "What's in it for us?" We need to link the preservation of our parks with the survival of our quality of life and the health of our society. We all need to become spokespeople for the natural world to make a difference.

JIM FOWLER, *a wildlife expert, is host of Mutual of Omaha's* Wild Kingdom.

CHAD EVANS WYATT

To draw attention to the flood-damaged C&O Canal, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt walked for 60 miles along the waterway.

NOT JUST A WALK IN THE PARK

THIS YEAR, March for Parks events raised about $2 million for projects at national, state, and local parks. Some marches had thousands of participants; others had a handful. Some marches featured a long hike or even a run; others focused on activities for children and families. Yet all the marches had a common thread: enthusiastic people gathering to celebrate Earth Day and herald the significance of parks. Here is a sampling of March for Parks events:

ALLEGANY STATE PARK

Western New York may be best known for Niagara Falls or the Buffalo Bills, but Allegany State Park has held its own for 75 years as an outstanding natural area. All different kinds of visitors appreciate and use the park's many features, including a gorgeous lake, a distinctive covered bridge, and trails for hikers, cyclists, and cross-country skiers. The park's rich cultural history includes use by Quakers and Seneca Indians.

To raise money for Allegany's upcoming 75th-anniversary event, which will include rehabilitation of an old Quaker store, two-time march organizer Janet Pfohl planned a four-mile march through the park. The march brought together generations of marchers and various park user groups and raised $2,300. "The people who marched will only reap the benefits since the money will be put back into the functions they enjoy," Pfohl says.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Public service, not material wealth, is the only true measure of success, George Washington Carver once said. In the spirit of these words, 73 marchers raised nearly $1,700 for George Washington Carver National Monument, which preserves the birthplace and boyhood home of the famed educator, botanist, and agronomist. Located in the southwestern corner of Missouri, the park contains historic structures amid lush woodlands, streams, and tallgrass prairie. It is, according to park ranger and march liaison Lisa Curtis, "the kind of place Winnie-the-Pooh would live."

The money raised would help the park to create two public outreach videos. One video would introduce the man and the park to churches, schools, and other community organizations; the other would be shown at the visitor center for physically challenged, elderly, or other individuals who do not wish to maneuver the park trail.

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Many structures serve as symbols of America, and among the most striking is the Golden Gate Bridge, which spans San Francisco Bay and connects portions of Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). This year, 1,622 people participated in the five-mile GGNRA march, which wound through the historic Presidio military base and across the Golden Gate Bridge. At the finish line at East Fort Baker, the well-known Blue & Gold Fleet ferried marchers back across the bay, which march organizer Nancy LaMott says was a special treat.

In addition, this march had immense financial rewards: Marchers raised an incredible $23,000 for plant habitat restoration in the park, which includes landscapes as varied as Marin Headlands, Muir Woods, and China Beach. "We have a lot of citizens who participate in habitat restoration projects," LaMott says. "It's very important to park resource management."

LEESYLVANIA STATE PARK

The rolling countryside of Virginia is well steeped in this nation's history, the birthplace of presidents and other leaders. Notable among the state's progeny are the generations of Lees who owned what is now Leesylvania State Park. To protect the land of his Revolutionary War forebears Henry Lee and "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, Gen. Robert E. Lee established a Confederate fort on this ground during the Civil War. Today, it protects deer, beavers, bald eagles, and other wildlife.

Larry Morris, the trailmaster of an American Volkssport Association (AVA) group known as the Wood and Dale Wanderers, organized a march to raise awareness of this noteworthy park while bringing in funds for trail maintenance. One of 138 AVA-sponsored marches nationwide, the event drew 160 people. "A lot of people didn't realize what was in their backyard," Morris says, "and they were pleasantly surprised."

SCOTT SUCHMAN

More than 1 million people participated in 1,200 marches this year, including one at Frederick Douglass.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

When visitors pass beneath the Roosevelt Arch to enter Yellowstone National Park from the north, they read the following inscription: "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people." It is a fitting epigraph for the world's first and arguably most beloved national park, located in northwestern Wyoming. To raise money for a wayside exhibit describing the history and significance of the Roosevelt Arch, park naturalist Sandra Snell-Dobert and coordinator Matt Graves organized Yellowstone's first March for Parks. "It was a nice way to get some local involvement and give folks a chance to enjoy Yellowstone in the spring," Snell-Dobert says.

The 135 marchers spotted bison, elk, pronghorn antelope, coyote, and sandhill cranes along the five-mile trek from Mammoth Hot Springs to the Roosevelt Arch. Participants raised more than $4,000 and were greeted at march's end by a Teddy Roosevelt impersonator.

—Kim A. O'Connell

A TROUBLED TIME FOR TORTOISES

The desert tortoise, which depends on habitat found in California desert parks, is in serious decline—an indication that the ecosystem is in danger.

BY TODD WILKINSON

Between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Interstate 15 carves a rattlesnake pathway across the heart of the Mojave Desert. In the springtime, as far as the eye can see, the impression is one of interminable virgin wilderness covered with Joshua trees, scrub, wildflowers, yucca, and cacti—paradise to a desert tortoise.

But Kirk Waln, a herpetologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, says this perception could be a mirage. "People assume the Mojave and the national parks inside of it are untouched by human intrusion. I believe most folks would be surprised by the reality."

Waln's observations are readily confirmed when Mojave is viewed from the air. Lacerated by roads and mines, denuded over large stretches by a century of cattle and sheep grazing, dessicated by water diversion and subsurface pumping, bombed by the military, and trampled every weekend by thousands of off-road vehicles, portions of the Mo-

BEVERLY F. STEVESON

A tortoise makes its way through a field of coreopsis at Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area in California's Mojave Desert.

jave resemble a battle zone. Indeed, embedded in the sand are the 50-year-old tank tracks from World War II training exercises staged under the command of Gen. George S. Patton.

"The desert isn't like the backcountry in other regions where habitat can bounce back," Waln says. "The effects here are cumulative and long-term. Day in and day out, I see a steady stream of proposals to develop another part of the Mojave, and...it all leads to one conclusion—habitat loss for the tortoise."

Desert tortoises are currently in a biological free-fall over much of their northern geographical range. Aside from the assault to its habitat, the tortoise has suffered a recent increase in poaching, an outbreak of fatal upper respiratory tract infections, wanton shooting, predation by ravens, and controversial proposals to build dumps for nuclear waste and garbage in the desert.

Critics blame part of the tortoise's decline on political meddling and the government's reluctance to initiate action. "The tortoise is an indicator species that we can use to assess the overall health of the California Desert," says Brian Huse, Pacific regional director for the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA). "The precarious status of the tortoise warrants our attention now. If we allow the tortoise to be added to the list of extinct species, that indicates our willingness to accept the extinction of the rich ecology of the desert itself. Is this what we want? I think most people would say no."

TORTOISES are the old salts of desert ecosystems. Their evolutionary roots go back perhaps 280 million years to the beginning of the dinosaur age. The species once thrived from the northern end of the Mojave southward into the Colorado Desert of southern California, and eastward into Nevada, northern Arizona, and southwestern Utah. They are also found in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona and in north-central Mexico. Earlier in this century, settlers in southern California remarked in their journals how abundant the shelled reptiles were.

DAN SUZIO

Burrows shelter tortoises from the hot sun and predators. Here, a tortoise emerges to feed on grasses.

With elephantine limbs and claws for digging, tortoises are primitive in appearance. Capable of reaching more than 80 years of age, they hibernate between November and March. They exist on a vegetarian diet of native desert grasses, herbaceous perennials, and forbs. To shelter themselves from the sun and predators, they rely upon burrows and a variety of scrub—typically creosote bush, Mojave yucca, burrobush, and blackbrush.

Because they are slow to reach sexual maturity, tortoises are not prolific breeders, and the offspring that do hatch from clutches of eggs suffer a mortality rate as high as 99 percent. In some years, predators such as badgers, kit foxes, coyotes, Gila monsters, and ravens take most of the eggs before they hatch. Few youngsters make it to adulthood, elevating the importance of breeding adults.

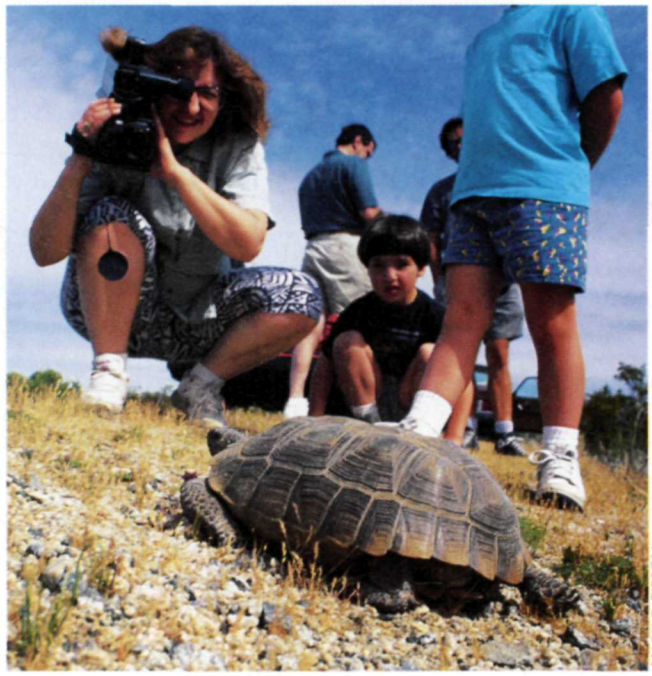
Tortoises are not large, fleet of foot, or especially colorful, but they have an undeniable appeal to humans. For the

DAVID MUENCH

Joshua Tree National Park in the western Mojave, where desert tortoises were once plentiful.

first nine decades of this century, it was a well-known practice for local city dwellers to find tortoises in the wild and take them home as pets.

Federal wildlife officials now suspect that as many desert tortoises exist in the backyards of southern California as in the western Mojave. Hundreds of thousands are thought to be in captivity, but biologists say that many of these are actually "ticking time bombs" because they carry parasites or diseases they acquired in civilization—afflictions such as upper respiratory disease, which could decimate a wild tortoise population, should an infected captive tortoise be returned to its natural habitat.



MARK E. GIBSON

DURING THE 1920s, field researchers estimated that 1,000 tortoises inhabited each square mile in parts of the western Mojave, where today just 20 to 50 tortoises exist per square mile. In other areas of the western Mojave, populations have either vanished or been significantly reduced by urban and agricultural development.

In 1990, desert tortoises in the Mojave were formally listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a threatened species. (A similar listing sought for tortoises in Arizona was deemed unwarranted.) Announcement of the listing sparked fiery debate over how the desert—and the national parks that lie squarely in tortoise habitat—should best be managed.

Four years after the tortoise was listed and a few months before the California Desert Protection Act was signed into law, the Fish and Wildlife Service published the Desert Tortoise (Mojave and Colorado Desert Populations) Recovery Plan to serve as a blueprint for protecting tortoises on more than 6 million acres of critical habitat. The vast majority of acreage falls under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the Department of Defense, and private property owners.

Together the newly created Mojave National Preserve, at 1.4 million acres, and Joshua Tree, at 800,000 acres, are supposed to represent an archipelago of refuges within the Mojave's sea of sand and development. In any discussion of California desert tortoise populations, biologists always distinguish between the urbanized west Mojave, which abuts Joshua Tree, and the east Mojave, which begins roughly at Barstow, spills out through a mosaic of mostly public lands past the state line into Nevada, and includes Mojave National Preserve.

> **The keys to maintaining a stable population of tortoises are restricting vehicular and human access and limiting other habitat disturbances.**

The differences between these two parts of the same desert are striking, and some believe the tragic collapse of tortoise numbers in the west Mojave forbodes trouble for other populations if sound management is not initiated and the causes of the decline are not addressed. Just as urban sprawl and its associated impacts have crept out from southern California coastal areas, development is pressing in on the east Mojave from the booming cities of Las Vegas, Laughlin, Nevada, and St. George, Utah.

According to the recovery plan, the keys to maintaining a stable population of tortoises are restricting vehicular and human access and limiting other habitat disturbances. "We gained considerable ground on those fronts with the passage of the California Desert Protection Act, but...Congress spent ten years undermining true protection by grandfathering in the very things that caused the tortoise declines," NPCA's Huse says.

NPCA has joined forces with the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, and other grassroots groups in pushing for full implementation of the recovery plan. But Frank Buono, assistant superintendent at Joshua Tree, claims this effort has generated no interest among his colleagues. "I thought that during the Reagan and Bush years, park managers were hungering to do the right thing and that once the political masters changed with a new administration, they would come out from under their rocks and show their true colors. But I was mistaken," he said. "Instead we have a culture of park managers who tend to avoid difficult decisions. The ironic thing is that the people within the federal agencies who are sitting on their hands are doing this precisely to please those who are the most vocal critics of government."

JACK DYKINGA

Buono's outspoken advocacy of desert protection recently earned him NPCA's Stephen Mather Award, given annually to a civil servant whose courage under fire demonstrates a commitment to park protection.

Buono says the tortoise recovery plan is stuck in a "catch 22" holding pattern. The cornerstone of the plan is the des-

OPPOSITE: Visitors to Joshua Tree photograph a desert tortoise. ABOVE: A labyrinth of tire tracks beyond this closure sign in BLM's Algodones Dunes Natural Area shows off-roaders' disregard for restrictions.

ignation of "desert wildlife management areas," where the protection of tortoises and other native species is given primacy. However, the plan cannot be implemented until park managers establish the boundaries of those areas, and they are reluctant to do so because cattle grazing and off-road-vehicle use might be prohibited or restricted.

Another reason that provisions of the recovery plan have not moved forward, according to Buono, is that "certain elements within these agencies [NPS and BLM] refuse to accept that tortoises are threatened, and even if it were true, these agencies say they do not want to adopt terms of the recovery plan because it will force their hand and make them manage these parks and public lands for wildlife, not ORVs and cows."

Park managers are easily intimidated by the Wise Use groups, he suggests. "If Congress hadn't created wilderness in these desert parks, our managers would still be allowing vehicles to drive in many areas that are now closed by law," Buono said.

THE GURU of desert tortoise research is Kristin Berry, now a senior scientist assigned to the National Biological Service in Riverside, California. Her work formed the basis for listing the Mojave population. "In the next ten years, we will continue to observe populations going downward, but what we do over that time will determine the fate of the tortoise," Berry said. "The recovery plan outlines the slow, steady progress we have to make. However, to get to a point where we can confidently say the tortoise is out of danger could take 200 or 300 years—a period of time that most people cannot relate to."

Budget cuts orchestrated by Congress have gutted Berry's monitoring programs. The result is loss of the ability to track emerging threats to tortoises such as upper respiratory disease, which appeared during the Reagan era when similar budget cuts prevented scientists from identifying it.

"What good is it to have...a recovery plan if our minimal funding is cut off, making our management objectives impossible to carry out?" Berry asks. "Swift implementation of the recovery

plan for the Mojave is the best chance we have to stop...piecemealing away tortoise habitat."

One might think that parks would be the safest places for tortoises to live. Not necessarily, says Berry: "The national parks have only small fragments of populations left—they are not...viable populations in and of themselves. Furthermore, the parks are vulnerable because they reflect what is happening on the lands around them."

A prime example is Eagle Mountain, which sits on BLM land next to Joshua Tree and critical tortoise habitat. BLM is entertaining a plan to turn a portion of Eagle Mountain into a huge landfill that would accept 20,000 tons of garbage a day for up to 115 years. "Joshua Tree represents one of the last, best chances for the tortoise in the west Mojave. For BLM to throw in a landfill of this caliber could be another nail in the coffin," Huse says.

Ed Lorentzen, threatened and endangered species cooordinator in BLM's California office, claims the magnitude of threats to the tortoise has been somewhat exaggerated. He cites a scientific paper written by R. Bruce Bury and Paul Stephen Corn of the National Biological Service that attempted to cast doubt on the data used by Berry to reach her conclusions. "We don't have universal agreement on the methodology that was used to estimate densities and distribution of the species," Lorentzen says. "The paper written by Bury and Corn raises questions about the actual number of tortoises. There might be more than previously thought."

Berry says the best gauge of tortoise health is the tortoise itself. Go to some remote corners of the desert where they once thrived, and today the animals are gone. Scientists estimate that 200,000 to 2 million tortoises exist across their entire range—a fraction of that number in the Mojave—but, as Waln says, numbers reflect nothing but a snapshot in time.

Waln adds that taking a Pollyanna approach to tortoise conservation is dangerous. "Some people said the same thing about the passenger pigeon before its numbers crashed," he says. "The track record of agencies in managing for species viability over the long term has been poor to mixed. Bureaucracies...operate on short-term funding and management cycles, when conserving species requires a much broader view."

Partisan politics, however, has undermined those objectives. To ensure that Mojave National Preserve managers were stripped of their funding to carry out wildlife conservation initiatives, Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.) drafted an amendment to the Interior Department's appropriations bill.

Lewis's measure allocated $1 for park management and would have turned management over to BLM, whose "multiple use" mandate accommodates grazing, ORV use, and mining. In addition, Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) drafted a bill earlier this year that elevates livestock grazing on all BLM lands to the status of predominant use and forbids the agency from eliminating

GEORGE WUERTHNER

Near Kelso Dunes in the Mojave, cattle compete with tortoises for the sparse desert vegetation.

cattle or sheep even if they pose a recognizable threat to imperiled species.

"When it comes down to actual implementation of the recovery plan, science is not leading the way," says Roger Dale of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, a nonprofit organization that led the fight for 20 years to create a 40-square-mile reserve for tortoises and other wildlife near Edwards Air Force Base. "Because of politics and economic arguments, we are negotiating things that should not be negotiable," he said. "Science has already determined the minimum size of acceptable preserve areas. We as a conservation community need to make sure the welfare of the tortoise is put first on public lands, where it hasn't been in the past"

When Elden Hughes, chairman of the Sierra Club's California Desert Committee, journeyed to Washington, D.C., in 1994 to watch President Clinton sign the California Desert Protection Act, he brought with him a goodwill ambassador that crawled across the president's desk—a young desert tortoise named Scotty. Hughes wanted Clinton to realize what was at stake.

"It took us 120 years to get into this mess of tortoise declines. It might take us a decade or two or much longer to get out, if we get out," Hughes said. "Do the agencies have the power to get the job done? Sure. But do they have the will? I'm not so sure. Maybe it will require a lawsuit, but we'd like to give the government the benefit of the doubt to do what it said it would do."

THE SUITABILITY of desert habitat for livestock grazing at bargain-basement prices has long been a point of contention for environmentalists who believe the practice should be banned from national parks. Currently, political deals cut by BLM before passage of the California Desert Protection Act allow for six livestock permittees to graze cattle on 90 percent of Mojave National Preserve, which is outstanding tortoise habitat.

In the eastern Mojave, an average of 600 acres is needed to sustain one beef cow. "When you have cows and burros consuming the forage, they don't leave much for anything else," says Hughes.

Overgrazing and soil disturbance caused by development are precursors to invasions by exotic plant species. In a landmark 1995 report on the status of endangered species, the National Biological Service concluded that "populations [of tortoises] in areas with high levels of exotic annual plants are declining at substantially higher rates than those in less disturbed areas."

Waln says the economics does not add up. "When you consider the amount of money generated by cattle grazing and the number of people affected, you realize that they have a pronounced political clout way beyond their numbers and economic importance to the region," he says. "We're not fighting this battle for the tortoise based on economic realities. We're fighting a 'way-of-life mentality' and a harkening back to the Old West."

Some meaningful progress in stemming the tortoise's decline has been made, inching along at a tortoise's speed and hardly keeping up with development. Fences have been installed along highways to decrease the number of road-killed tortoises; some garbage dumps have been cleaned up to reduce the number of ravens; and land-management agencies are posting signs around designated wilderness to keep rogue ORV riders from entering sensitive tortoise areas.

More good news recently emerged from Clark County, Nevada, which includes Las Vegas, the fastest-growing metropolitan area in America. A 30-year habitat conservation plan—one of the more innovative applications of the Endangered Species Act—is attempting to bridge common ground between developers and tortoise defenders.

For every acre targeted for development in Clark County, a set of mitigation objectives must be met, including acquisition of alternative habitat on private lands; public education; placement of barriers to separate tortoises from new dangers; and transfer of tortoises to safe areas. One benefactor of the agreement is Lake Mead National Recreation Area, where mitigation funds have been used to buy out existing grazing allotments. "Sitting at the table and seeking compromise proved that different constituencies were able to solve serious problems and that protecting species need not be adversarial," says Berry.

Can the tortoise survive? Berry is philosophical. "Europeans take care of their cathedrals and art treasures from one generation to the next because stewardship is a tradition. When we think about our own treasures, we too have to consider that we are making decisions for posterity. We need to remind ourselves periodically that we are passing on something special that cannot be replaced."

TODD WILKINSON *lives in Bozeman, Montana, and writes regularly for* National Parks *magazine. His last article was on California condors.*

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** *National Parks* readers can help by writing to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt (18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, DC 20240) and sending a copy to their local member of Congress. Tell Babbitt that you support full protection of the desert tortoise on Park Service and BLM lands as well as reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act with proper funding for monitoring and law enforcement. Voice your opposition to the proposed landfill on BLM land at Eagle Mountain.

Also, please write to the chairmen of the Senate and House Interior Appropriations subcommittees, asking them to make federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies available for tortoise habitat acquisition during the next fiscal year.

Hon. Slade Gordon, Chairman
Senate Interior Appropriations Committee
Senate Hart Building 730
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Ralph Regula, Chairman
House Interior Appropriations Committee
2309 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

JOHN ELK III

Each year, more than 3 million people tour Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, making it one of the most popular historic sites in the park system. King's birth home in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood of Atlanta is part of the site but still owned by the family

Overcoming the Odds

As the Centennial Olympic Games approached, Park Service officials in Atlanta cleared hurdle after hurdle to ready the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr.

BY EBBA HIERTA

ALONG WITH MOST of Atlanta, Georgia, the National Park Service was engaged this spring in a frenzied dash to prepare for the millions of U.S. and international visitors expected for the Centennial Olympic Games—the first ever to be held in the American South.

With three months to go, the situation at Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site was not a pretty one. The site still lacked basic comforts—no bathrooms, no drinking fountains, and no parking for the 100,000 visitors expected each day during the July 19 to August 6 games. The new visitor center had an extensive list of "post-construction" problems to be addressed; a two-acre plaza was still a sea of red mud; unusually wet weather was delaying landscape work; and an environmental cleanup crew was still removing toxic waste from an abandoned industrial site that will eventually be a parking lot.

Although it will be close, Superintendent Troy Lissimore was certain that most of the improvements to the King site will be finished in time for the Olympics. A 21,000-square-foot visitor center and administration building, with museum-quality interpretive displays, rest rooms, and a gift shop will be open for tours. The two-acre plaza, which overlooks the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s crypt, will have landscaping in place and water cascading in its fountain. A historic fire station and 30 homes in the Sweet Auburn neighborhood where King grew up either have been or will be renovated to the way they looked in the 1930s when King was a boy. "One of the things that is unique about the King national historic site is that it is a neighborhood," says Don Barger, NPCA's Southeast regional director. "The Park Service is renovating the buildings and leasing them back to people to live in. NPS is keeping the neighborhood alive, while preserving it."

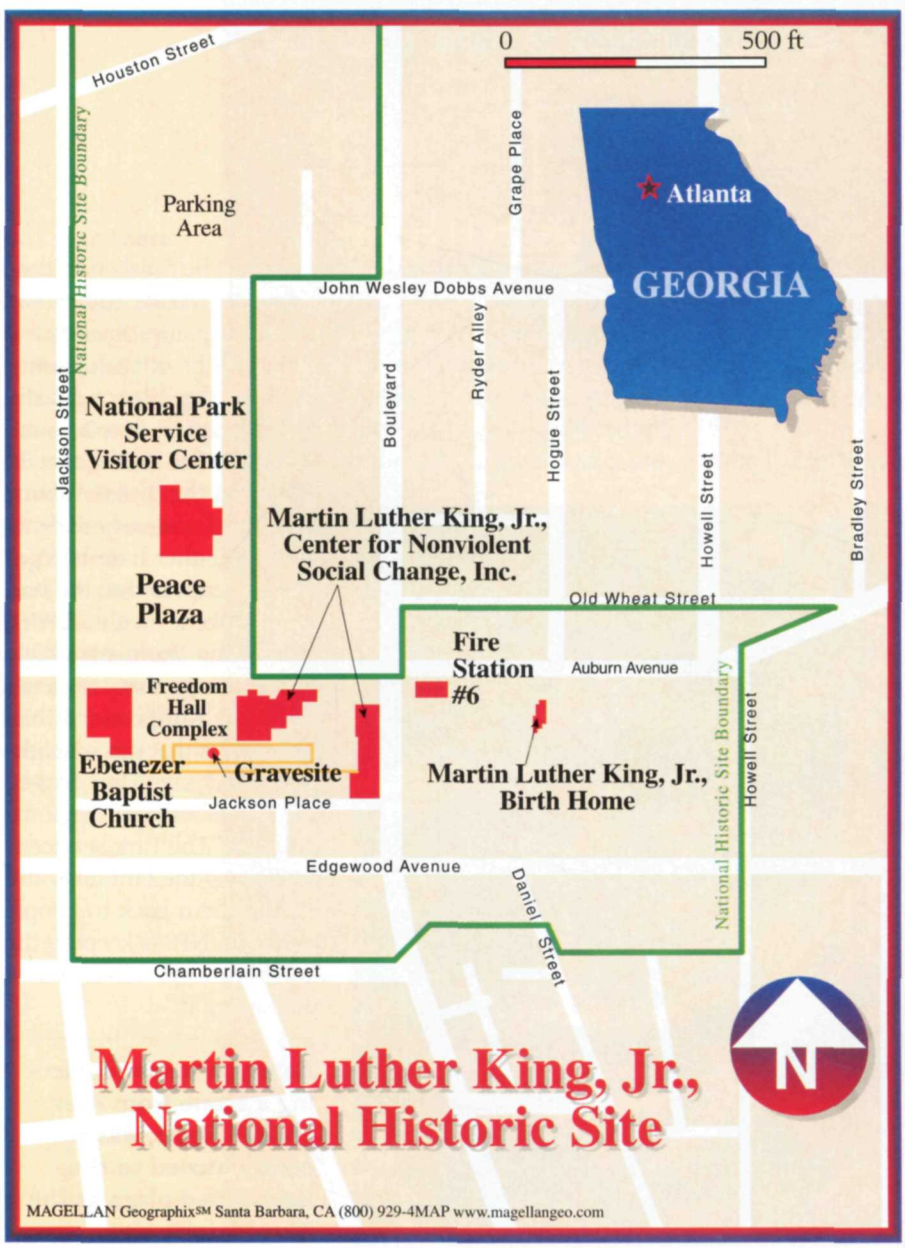
MICHAEL WORTHY

***Behold*, a statue depicting a scene from Alex Haley's *Roots*, was recently moved to the landscaped plaza at the King historic site.**

As the deadline neared, one of the most significant items in doubt was the 3.75-acre parking lot with space for 300 cars and 18 buses. The budget deadlock that furloughed federal employees for nearly four weeks last winter delayed work on the construction project, making completion by mid-July unlikely.

For more than four years, park officials have worked to overcome what must have seemed like insurmountable obstacles in an effort to make the King site worthy of the man it honors. "This site was a disgrace," says Barger. "Even without the Olympics coming, the situation there was untenable. The Olympics just made the problem more immediate."

Before work began, the historic site had no comprehensive interpretive displays describing one of the world's most important civil rights leaders. The nearby Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change, founded by Coretta Scott King to carry on her husband's work after his assassination in 1968, maintained small displays and allowed park rangers to conduct tours of King's birth home. In 1990, the roof of a building two doors down from King's birth home fell in, and the whole structure eventually had to be demolished. Visitors had to vie with commercial and residential interests in the neighborhood for the few on-street parking spots, and tour buses would sit idling their loud, noxious diesel engines in front of nearby homes for hours at a time.



Despite the drawbacks, an average of 1.5 million visitors toured the site each year. In 1992, annual numbers reached 3.2 million, making it one of the most popular historic sites in the system, exceeded only by the Statue of Liberty and Independence National Historic Park in annual visitation. In part because of the park's popularity, park officials had been concerned for some time about the quality of the visitors' experience and the sluggish pace of improvements at the site, designated in 1980.

The idea that the neglect of the park would receive international exposure during the games presented an opportunity to make a case for long overdue restoration. "The Olympics were not the reason these improvements were needed," says Lissimore. "But the Olympics were the reason it had to be done now."

When Lissimore and Rick McCollough, in charge of planning, design, and facility development for the historic site, took control of the project in 1992, they knew it would be a tough sell, but they had no idea of the mine fields and pitfalls that awaited. In addition to a price tag of nearly $12 million, the site development required cooperation in myriad complicated land swaps and decisions from a host of private parties, nonprofit groups, and city, state, and federal agencies, as well as community organizations.

The project was repeatedly questioned and faced constant setbacks. The odds of succeeding seemed low. But with help from local congressional representatives and NPCA's local and national staff, Lissimore and McCollough persevered. As the Olympics deadline neared, the staff's determination only increased.

"The roadblocks made us more creative," says McCollough. "It's been like putting together a 5,000-piece jigsaw puzzle without the picture on the box to guide us. We've had to improvise."

One of the first pieces the Park Service knew it needed for the historic site was Ebenezer Baptist Church. Three

generations of King's family preached in the church, where he also began his civil rights crusade. Eager to build a larger sanctuary for their growing congregation, church leaders responded favorably to turn over the old sanctuary to NPS for interpretive tours in exchange for a suitable new location in the neighborhood. Although the Park Service began negotiating right away for the property, the deal was not completed until May of this year.

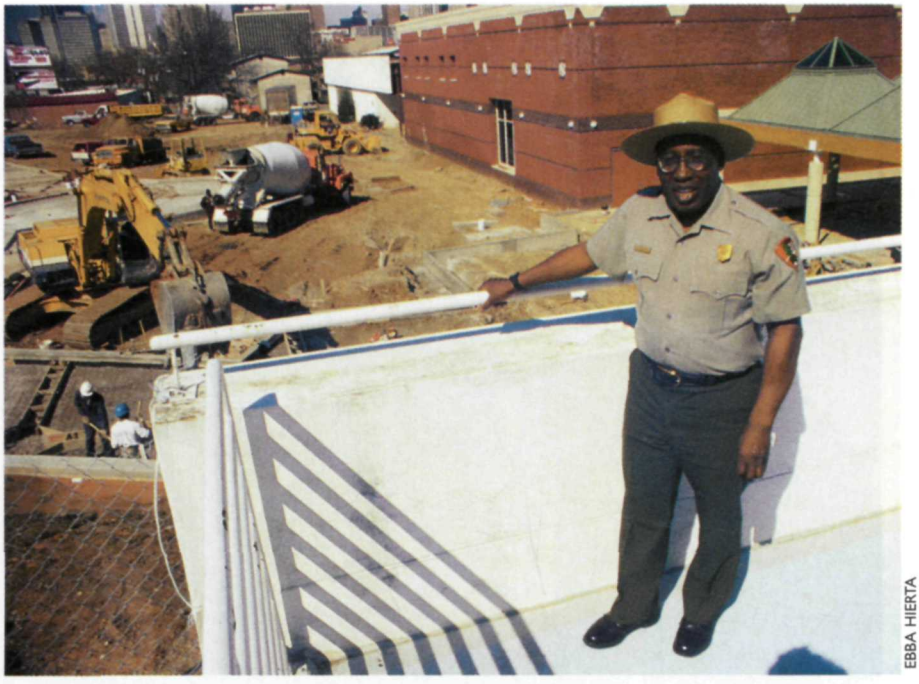
The agreement reached stipulated that the church's new location would be a city-owned community center across Auburn Avenue from the privately owned King Center for Nonviolent Social Change. The lot was big enough to encompass both the new NPS facility and the new church, and from it, King's crypt is visible across the street. City officials agreed to donate the community center if the Park Service would find a way to pay for another without disrupting the services it provided. A long-abandoned pen and ink factory behind the community center was pegged for the parking lot that would serve the historic site, the church, and the new community center, to be built adjacent to the city's indoor swimming pool. The regional office of the Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit group, agreed to act as an intermediary in purchasing the land.

Sweet Auburn business and community leaders approved the proposal, which also was publicly endorsed by Mrs. King and other family members involved with the King Center.

Next came the hard part: paying for it. The project's tab was approaching $12 million. All of this money would have to be appropriated in a single year's budget if the Olympics deadline was to be met. Nonetheless, the staff remained optimistic. The Bush Administration had shown interest in the site in mid-1992 with a stipulation of $2.2 million to restore historic homes on Auburn Avenue.

But the staff was in for a shock. While the NPS Southeast Field Office was behind the project, the response from the Park Service's Washington, D.C., administrators "ranged from cool to tepid," says Lissimore.

The project did not initially appear on the priority list of the proposed NPS budget. Without the support of their own department, the project appeared doomed. But Lissimore and others in the Southeast Field Office looked instead for a way around the roadblock.



EBBA HIERTA

Superintendent Troy Lissimore and planner Rick McCollough (not shown) scrambled to have the King site ready in time for the Summer Olympics.

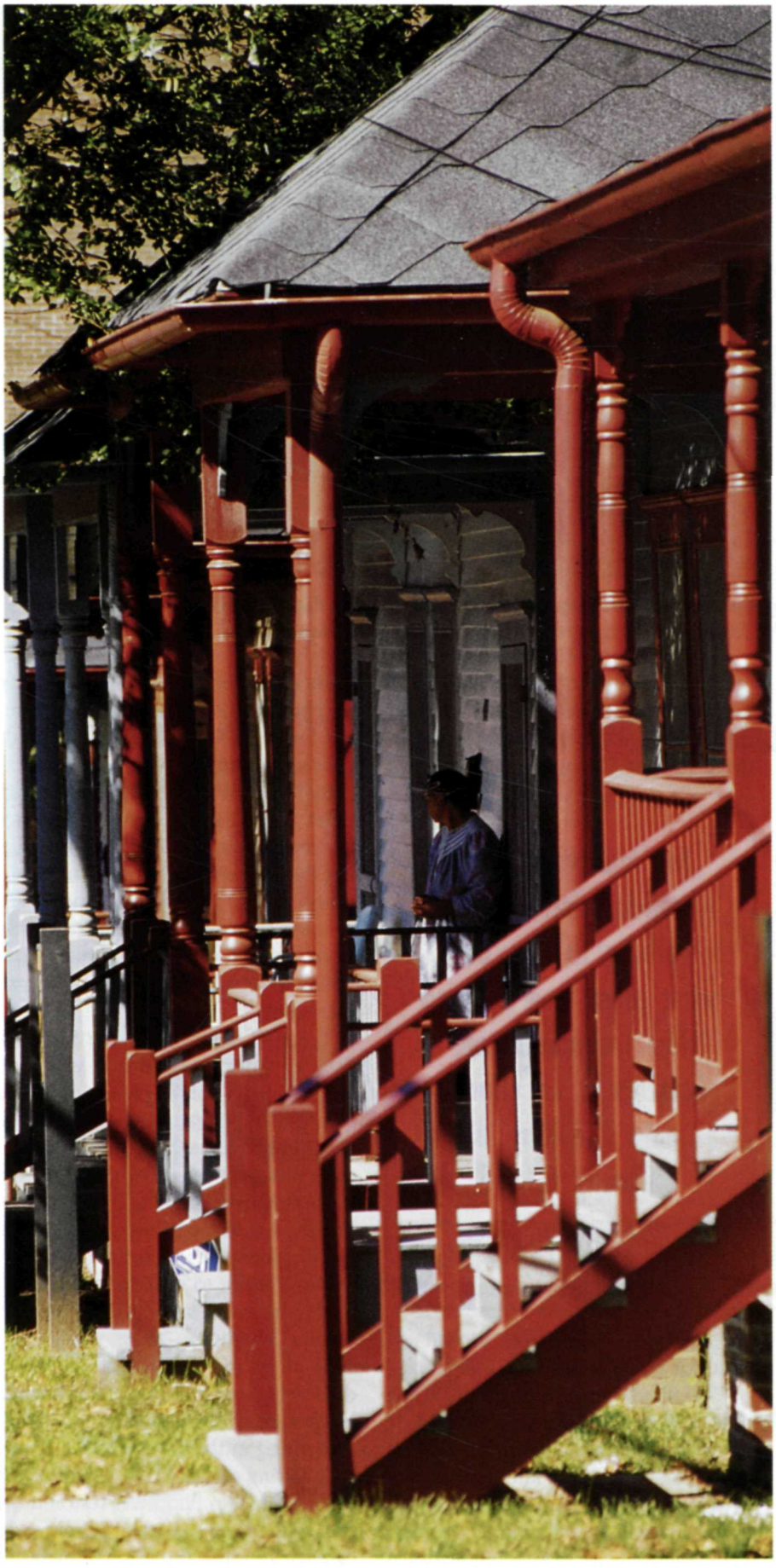
> For four years, park officials have been working to overcome what must have seemed like insurmountable obstacles in an effort to make the King site worthy of the man it honors.

"We knew that if we allowed these concerns to consume us, we would never get another chance," Lissimore says. "We've reached the end of the road at least 50 times so far, and always found a way to keep the project going." They found help from congressional representatives, including Georgia Democrats Rep. John Lewis and Sen. Sam Nunn, NPCA, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, and the Clinton Administration.

In 1993, $11.8 million for development at the King site was included in the president's proposed 1994 budget. But the historic site staff was in for another shock. "We don't fund visitor centers anymore," was the message from the House of Representatives, which stripped the appropriation from the budget.

The staff at Martin Luther King was back to square one, and the clock was ticking. NPCA put the project on its priority list and began a massive lobbying effort to convince Congress of the serious consequences of inaction. Among those consequences was the suggestion that the world media would be looking for lingering racial strife in this first Olympic event to be held in the South. And if the media saw the King site in its former condition, they would find their story in the neglect of the site dedicated to one of the most influential black men of the century.

Stymied in the House, NPCA turned its lobbying efforts to the Senate, where the full $11.8 million was restored. The staff at the King site tried to bolster the case for funding the improvements by presenting some comparisons between



E. SHIRLEY MURPHY

Many historic homes on Auburn Avenue have been restored.

the King site and ten other historic sites in the system. McCollough found that over a ten-year period, the King site had received less than 20 percent of the average amount that had been spent developing the other park areas.

In a congressional conference committee, House leaders acquiesced, although it was clear that Atlanta would not get funding for its new community center—a cornerstone of the complicated swap. "We had to go back to our partners in the city of Atlanta and say, 'Trust us, we'll figure something out,'" McCollough remembers. "It was a real leap of faith for them, but they went along with it."

NationsBank, one of the region's largest lending institutions and an Olympic sponsor, agreed to lend the $4.5 million to pay for the construction of a new community center. The Park Service will let the city collect fees for use of the new parking lot until the loan is paid off. Admission to the visitor center will remain free.

NPCA's Barger pointed out that the way the park staff dealt with this problem was typical of their creative approach. "This was typical of the process that has made this plan work. Both Lissimore and McCollough are creative thinkers, and if there is an obstacle there, they figure out a way to overcome it or circumvent it. They would not be stopped by the kinds of things that have stopped other plans."

Then Lissimore and his staff turned to matters of design, and the project began to take shape. Problems surfaced around this time with the development of the parking lot. Toxic waste was found in the land surrounding the abandoned pen factory, and a full-scale environmental cleanup was required. Scripto Pen Co., the former property owner, began the operation and believed it had completed it, when more waste was discovered. The pen company already had undertaken more than was legally required and balked at doing any more. To ensure that the project was completed in time for the Olympics, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources took over and finished the job.

Late in 1994, just weeks after ground was broken for the visitor center, the project was rocked by what became a national controversy. Coretta Scott King and her family withdrew support, denouncing the Park Service in the media. They alleged that the Park Service's plans conflicted with those of the King family for a multimedia museum and theme park devoted to King, and Mrs. King accused the Park Service of harboring "dark ambitions." (Repeated attempts to reach the King family for comment were unsuccessful.) Community leaders for the most part, though, supported the Park Service.

The conflict came to a head on December 29, 1994, when the King family halted NPS tours of the King birth home at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change. The center, which owns the birth home, is contained within the boundaries of the national historic site. Visitors were literally out on the street. The Park Service had nothing to offer but a brief walking tour of the neighborhood. While the squabble gained steam in the national media, work continued at the site. "It was too late to change anything at that point," says Lissimore. "The train had already left the station."

In the face of mounting criticism and accusations of greed, the King family struck an uneasy truce in spring of 1995. Tours of their properties could resume in return for NPS support of the future development of the Kings' theme park, which the family still wants to build.

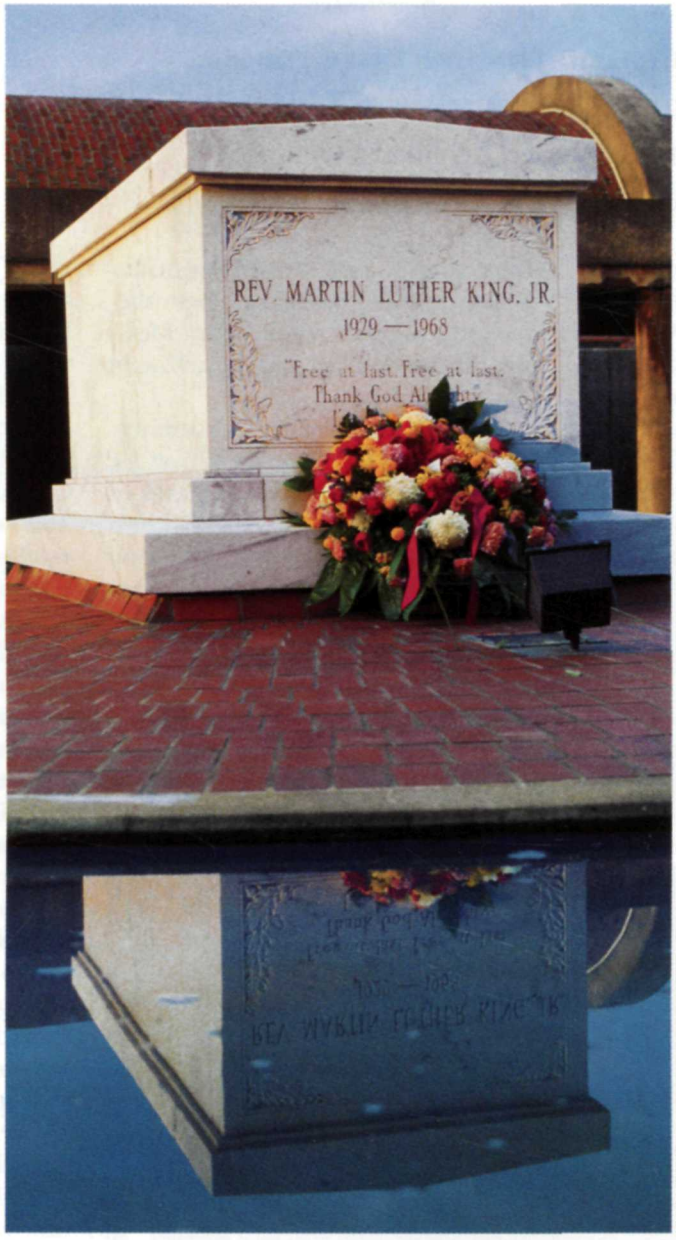
As the project moved into high gear, Lissimore and McCollough had to dodge yet another bullet. Olympic construction projects proliferated throughout Atlanta, and contractors had the upper hand. Bids were coming in about a third higher than expected. By this time, though, Park Service administrators in Washington, D.C., were solidly behind the project and assisted with additional funds. The local staff looked for ways to cut costs without compromising the project and sought donations from local companies. About $4 million in donations was secured—from landscaping to equipment loans—an indication of the community's enthusiasm and support.

As the project neared completion this spring, Lissimore and his staff felt deep satisfaction. This site will finally pay respect to King and his role in history, and most important, visitors will understand the factors that shaped this remarkable man.

The block of Auburn Avenue where King was born will once again reflect the neighborhood's former status as the wealthiest black community in the nation. Extensive interpretive displays will tell the story of King's role in the civil rights movement. Neighborhood tours will again include the birth home, the historic fire station, the King Center, and for the first time, Ebenezer Baptist Church.

And the rejuvenation does not stop at the National Park Service boundaries. Along Auburn Avenue, the city of Atlanta is upgrading the street with paving stones and lighting, reminiscent of the community's heyday during the 1930s. Together with a regional redevelopment authority, NationsBank is funding the restoration of some of the Victorian homes. The new visitor center will be connected by a recreational "green belt" to the nearby Carter Center and Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

"Nowhere else is interpretation more integral to the understanding of the history of a site than it is here," says NPCA's Barger. "Most of the people who visit this site were not born when King was alive. When you have lived through something, it automatically has more meaning for you. That's why interpretation here is so important. That's why the visitor center and Ebenezer Baptist Church are so important. We had preserved the place, but we had not preserved the meaning, and now we have."



JOHN ELK III

A line from one of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, speeches adorns his crypt, displayed at the national historic site.

EBBA HIERTA, *a writer who lives in Atlanta, Georgia, last wrote for* National Parks *about maritime parks.*

Trail of Destiny

From ancient American Indian trade route to thoroughfare for Manifest Destiny, the Santa Fe Trail traces the history of the Southwest.

BY M. KATHERINE HEINRICH

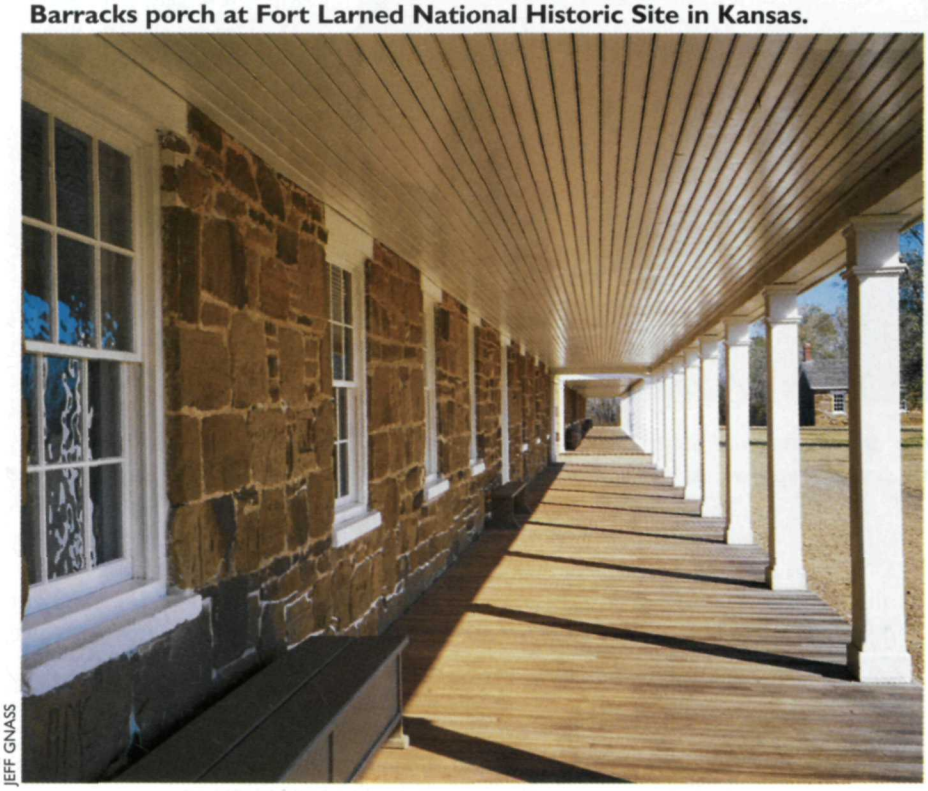
In September 1821, William Becknell, a swashbuckling, debt-ridden American, led a pack train west from the frontier town of Franklin, Missouri. Across 900 miles of prairie and plain lay Santa Fe, the cloistered capital of Spanish New Mexico since 1610. The Spanish crown prohibited international trade in its New World colonies, and traders risked imprisonment and confiscation of their wares.

Even though the risks were great, the potential for reward was an irresistible lure to many traders. As Becknell's party crossed the plains, revolutionary news reached Santa Fe; Mexico had won its independence from Spain. The colonists, long deprived of manufactured goods, celebrated their allegiance to the new nation when Mexican officials led Becknell's pack train into the capital.

This year marks the 175th anniversary of free trade east and west over the Santa Fe Trail, witness to centuries of travelers, American Indians, Spanish conquistadors, French, Mexican, and American traders, forty-niners, stagecoaches, settlers, and soldiers. Our story begins long before Becknell. The origins of the Santa Fe Trail lie in American Indian trade and travel routes linking the tribes of the plains with the pueblos along the Rio Grande Valley. But rather than tracing a strict time line, our journey through the history of the Santa Fe Trail follows the dusty ruts of wagon trains west from the Missouri River. The crack of the bullwhip and the cries of teamsters and Mexican *arrieros* punctuate the eight-week crossing. Caravans stretch for miles, as many as 100 wagons creak and groan under 6,000-pound loads, each pulled by five or six teams of mules or oxen, advancing 15 miles a day.

Today's Santa Fe National Historic Trail covers 1,203 miles, including spur routes, and passes through four national park units, each of which tells a chapter of the trail's history. The Santa Fe Trail era came to an end when the railroad steamed into Santa Fe in 1880.

Barracks porch at Fort Larned National Historic Site in Kansas.



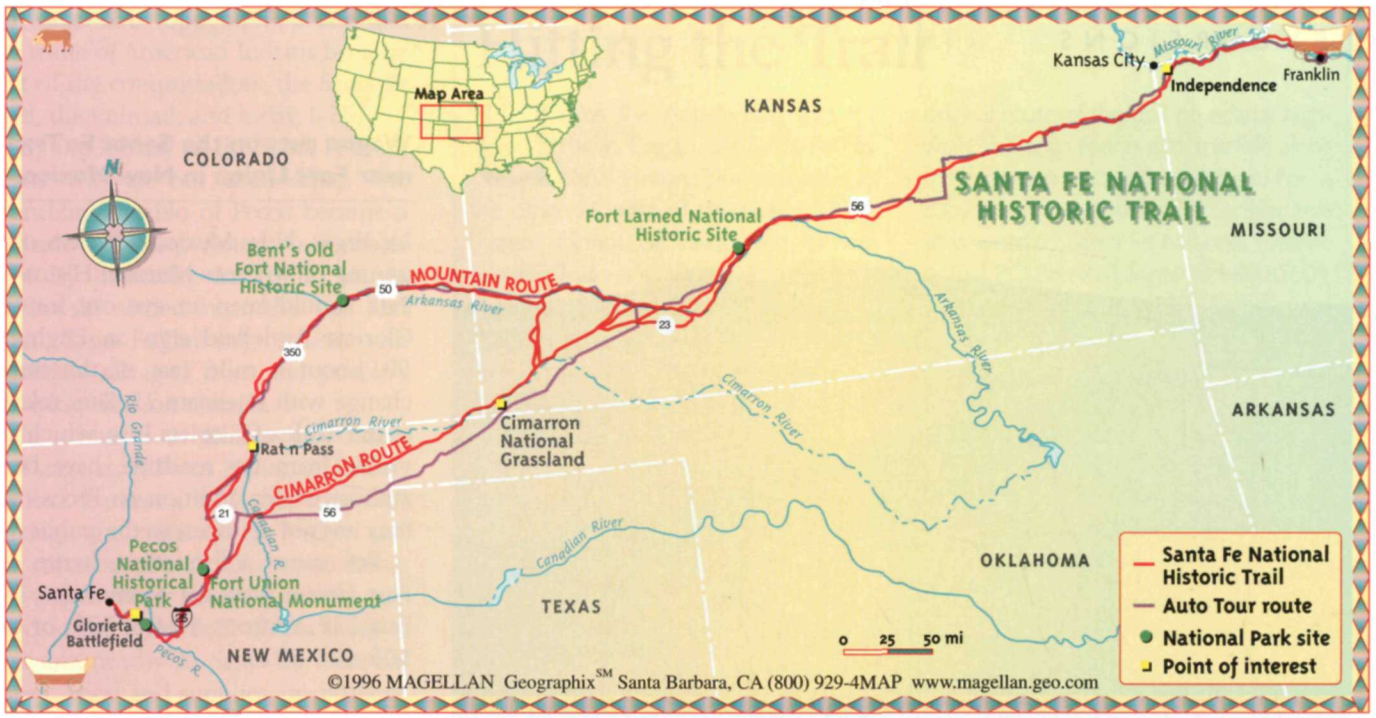
JEFF GNASS

Fort Larned

In the wake of the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848), the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo awarded the New Mexico Territory, a massive tract including all of present-day New Mexico and parts of eight other states, to the United States. The army erected a chain of forts to secure the territory and its lifeline, the Santa Fe Trail. Fort Larned was established as a U.S. Army outpost in 1859.

Two gold rushes and expanding trade (by 1860, trade totaled $3.5 million) had increased traffic, and hostilities between Indians and travelers escalated as treaties were violated by both sides. Troops from Fort Larned—a key outpost in the Indian wars—provided escorts for wagon trains and guarded the central section of the trail.

M. KATHERINE HEINRICH *is editorial assistant for* National Parks.



Fort Larned National Historic Site preserves a quadrangle of nine restored sandstone buildings dating from 1866-1868. The visitor center, located in a barracks building, features exhibits related to the Santa Fe Trail. The park also includes a 44-acre detached area where trail ruts can be seen from an elevated viewing stand. Inquire at the visitor center for directions. Food, supplies, and lodging are available in Larned. For more information, write to Fort Larned National Historic Site, Route 3, Larned, KS 67550; or call 316-285-6911.

Bent's Old Fort

The Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail, which follows the Arkansas River, was established by the 1840s. Although it was longer than the Cimarron Route, water supplies were more reliable, and travelers considered themselves farther from the danger of Indian raids. But steep and rocky Ratón Pass, which is a remarkable drive today, sometimes posed an insurmountable obstacle to heavily laden wagons until a toll road was built in 1865.

Bent's Old Fort was named for brothers Charles and William Bent, who made a handsome profit in their first trade expedition on the Santa Fe Trail in 1829. By 1833 they had established the fort as a trading post at a ford

JEFF GNASS

Conestoga wagon at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, Colorado.

GEORGE H. H. HUEY

Wagon ruts on the Santa Fe Trail near Fort Union in New Mexico.

on the Arkansas River. They sited the fort at the confluence of three significant sources of trade: beaver pelts from trappers in the Rocky Mountains, buffalo hides supplied by Plains Indians, and later the Santa Fe Trail.

To stock stores in Santa Fe and Taos, the trading enterprise Bent, St. Vrain & Company continued hauling goods, including hardware, cloth, and tobacco, overland on the trail, and in addition to furs and hides, traded Indian blankets, horses, and firearms. After intertribal peace councils were held at Bent's Fort, it became a neutral gathering place for Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Comanches, and later, like Fort Larned, an Indian agency headquarters.

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, a way station on the Santa Fe Trail, features a reconstructed adobe fort. Visitors can browse through 19th-century trade goods in the well-stocked trade room. Lodging, food, and supplies are available in La Junta.

For additional information, write to: Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, 35110 Highway 194 East, La Junta, CO 81050-9523; or call 719-384-2596.

Fort Union

Once the largest U.S. military post in the Southwest, Fort Union today is a quiet stone and adobe ruin. The fort was established in 1851 near the juncture of the Mountain and Cimarron branches of the Santa Fe Trail. Protecting wagon trains was one of the chief military objectives of the chain of forts along the trail, but the army's expanding presence also boosted demand for supplies, increasing traffic on the trail. Fort Union became the principal quartermaster depot in the region, and by 1858, when 1,800 wagons rolled across the trail, many of them carried goods for the army.

In addition to the stone and adobe ruins, Fort Union National Monument preserves traces of the earthworks associated with the earlier Star Fort, a massive Civil War-era fortification that was the objective of Confederate troops who were turned back at the 1862 Battle of Glorieta Pass. Fort Union is encircled by Santa Fe Trail ruts that remain visible today.

Food, supplies, and lodging are available in nearby Las Vegas, New Mexico. Travelers continuing on to Pecos National Historical Park should keep an eye out for the Glorieta Battlefield sign on Highway 50, about a mile east of the interchange with Interstate 25. Sites related to the Battle of Glorieta Pass, which are visible from the roadside, have been authorized for addition to Pecos, but they are not yet open to the public.

For more information, write to: Fort Union National Monument, P.O. Box 127, Watrous, NM 87753; or call 505-425-8025.

Pecos

The Pecos culture reached its peak in the 15th century. The most powerful of the pueblos, Pecos sprawled across a high rock, towering four and five stories. Its 2,000 inhabitants stocked granaries with an abundant supply of corn and hosted annual fall trading fairs with the nomadic tribes of the plains. Today, as then, Pecos stands at a geographical and cultural gateway.

Ages ago, the Pecos River scoured out a valley, and the Pecos pueblo overlooks a natural passage through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and Glori-

Visitors climb into a kiva at Pecos historic park in New Mexico.

AUDREY GIBSON

eta Mesa. It is topographical fate that the route of American Indians became that of the conquistadors, the Santa Fe Trail, the railroad, and today, I-25.

By the heyday of the Santa Fe Trail, Pecos was all but abandoned. The crumbling pueblo of Pecos became a trailside curiosity, noted in journals kept by passersby. In 1858, Martin Kozlowski settled near the site and built a Santa Fe Trail stage station with materials salvaged from the pueblo's decaying mission church.

In addition to Kozlowski's ranch and stage stop, Pecos National Historical Park features a 1.25-mile loop trail through the ruins of the pueblo and the mission church. The museum in the visitor center includes exhibits related to the Santa Fe Trail. Camping is available nearby in Santa Fe National Forest. Food and supplies are available in Pecos. Lodging and cultural delights await visitors at the end of the trail, 25 miles west in Santa Fe.

For more information, write to: Pecos National Historical Park, P.O. Drawer 418, Pecos, NM 87522; or call 505-757-6414.

Hitting the Trail

Unlike the Appalachian and the Pacific Crest trails, Santa Fe National Historic Trail and most of the other 16 units of the National Trails System cannot be hiked end to end. Santa Fe Trail—a string of landmarks and historic sites—is administered by the National Park Service in partnership with private landowners and nonprofit organizations, along with federal, state, and local agencies. The Park Service has established a voluntary certification process for sites related to the Santa Fe Trail. In addition to the four National Park System units on the trail, visitors can get to a growing number of certified sites, currently about 50, all of which are marked with the official trail logo.

The Park Service has developed a fold-out map and interpretive brochure that identifies landmarks, historic sites, and visible ruts, and helps visitors trace the original route of the trail on nearby highways. The auto tour is also marked along the highways with the trail logo. For a copy of the map and a list of certified trail sites, write to: Santa Fe National Historic Trail, P.O. Box 728, Santa Fe, NM 87504; or call 505-988-6888. Some of the best hiking available along the trail is in Cimarron National Grassland in Kansas. A U.S. Forest Service site, Cimarron features 23 miles of trail ruts paralleled by a hiking trail.

To help celebrate the 175th anniversary of the trail, NPCA teamed up with Hi-Tec Sports, Inc., to fund a traveling exhibit on the Santa Fe Trail. The donation enabled the Park Service to complete two versions of the exhibit, both of which are scheduled for stops along the trail throughout the anniversary year. For dates and locations, contact the trail office at the address or phone above. —*M.K.H.*

COMING UP

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National Parks

Incredible Journey

For the last 50 years, the endangered whooping crane has been on a path toward recovery. During that time, its numbers have increased tenfold.

BY LINDA M. RANCOURT

SHORTLY AFTER MARK Catesby arrived in the Carolinas in 1722, an Indian brought the skin of a large bird to the English naturalist and artist. Catesby noted that the bird was "completely unknown to science."

Today, the five-foot-tall whooping crane, the tallest bird in North America, is well known. Much of the information about the bird has been gathered because it was once among the country's most endangered creatures.

Estimates put the cranes' peak population at 1,400 in the late 1800s. Never plentiful, the species began to decline in the late 19th century as land was cleared for farming, and hunting and egg collecting took a toll. The entire population barely reached 100 as the 20th century began.

How this rare bird climbed back from near extinction to more than 300 individuals is a tribute to those who have made saving endangered species their life's work.

Habitat protection, public education, and captive breeding have all helped the whooping crane. It will be some time before the crane's numbers are high enough to take it off the list of threatened and endangered species, but conservationists hope the bird reaches that goal—perhaps by 2020.

Well before the crane was listed, actions were taken to help the birds. The United States and Canada signed the Migratory Bird Treaty of 1918, making shooting cranes illegal. In 1937, the United States set aside Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas to protect the cranes' wintering grounds. Even so, the birds reached a low of 21 individuals in 1944.

In 1954, conservationists had a breakthrough when they discovered cranes nesting in a remote section of Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park. Shortly after, they began removing eggs to begin breeding birds in captivity. Captive cranes have helped to rebuild the migratory flock and establish a second population in Florida.

Forty birds were released in 1993 at Florida's Kissimmee Prairie Sanctuary, adding to the 26 there. The next step, says James Lewis, whooping crane coordinator for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is to establish another flock that travels between Canada and the United States.

Among the reasons for the birds' rarity is that they do not mature sexually until four years of age. Cranes mate for life. Each year a pair produces two eggs, but usually only one chick survives. This year, the 157-bird flock that winters in Texas broke a record when it produced 28 chicks.

Courtship dances, involving leaps and head bobs, begin in January. Mated pairs also sing duets, and the remarkable trumpet-like calls that give the whooping crane its name can be heard up to a mile away.

The birds begin the 2,500-mile journey from Aransas to Wood Buffalo in mid-April. Their seven-foot wing span carries them an average of 200 miles a day. The fall trip begins in September, when the young are about five months old. Wild birds may live for 24 years. (Captive birds can live to be 40.)

In the spring, the birds stop at Niobrara National Scenic Riverway in Nebraska and may eat waste grains, frogs, larval insects, or minnows. Two national parks, Theodore Roosevelt in North Dakota and Badlands in South Dakota, are on the migration route.

Illegal shooting, collisions with power lines, disease, and loss of habitat are threats facing the cranes today.

"Something everyone should consider is that once a species has become endangered, it takes a long-term effort to help it out," Lewis says. "It's better to ensure that they don't become endangered in the first place."

JEFF FOOTT

Whooping cranes feed at Aransas in Texas.

LINDA M. RANCOURT *is associate editor of* National Parks.

MARCH FOR PARKS: CELEBRATE EARTH DAY—SAVE A PARK!

Volunteers needed to organize Earth Day events in national, state, and city parks—FREE materials available!

NPCA's eighth annual March for Parks will be the nation's largest walking event for national, state, and city parks. Held each year in conjunction with Earth Day, March for Parks raises awareness of park problems and funds for park projects across the country. More than 1,000 events will be organized to help celebrate Earth Day on April 22, 1997.

NPCA encourages people with an interest in preserving or restoring a park in their community to organize a march on or near Earth Day weekend, from April 18 to 22, 1997.

One hundred percent of the proceeds from each march will stay in the local community to be donated to a national, state, or local park.

To support each march, NPCA will provide, *free of charge:*

- A comprehensive guidebook on how to organize a local march, including time lines and job descriptions
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For free materials to organize your own march, fax a signed copy of this form to: 202-659-0650, or mail to NPCA, March for Parks, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For more information, call 1-800-NAT-PARK, ext. 225. E-mail: mrchparks@aol.com • World Wide Web site: http://www.npca.org/• AOL: keyword: PARKS.

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City/State/Zip: _____

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I'm a member of: ❑ NPCA ❑ NRPA ❑ American Volkssport Assoc. ❑ National Tree Trust

Name of park: _____ Type (nat'l, state, city): _____ $Goal: _____

Number of participants (goals): #overall_____ #kids_____ #adults_____

Funds will be used to: _____

Date of march: ❑ April 18 ❑ April 19 ❑ April 20 ❑ April 21 ❑ April 22 (Earth Day)

"I agree to hold a March for Parks to celebrate Earth Day, using the official March for Parks logo and all national sponsor logos (to be provided) on all printed materials. I will accept local sponsorship only from companies that do not compete/conflict with national sponsors. If I change or cancel my event, I will notify NPCA immediately. I will donate all net proceeds from my event to the public park of my choice. I will send results, news clippings, and other information to NPCA after my event is completed."

Signature _____ Date_____

NPCA reserves the right to refuse or revoke any March for Parks registration.

Dispelling the Myth

Many believe the Park Service must balance two incompatible missions: to protect resources and to provide public access.

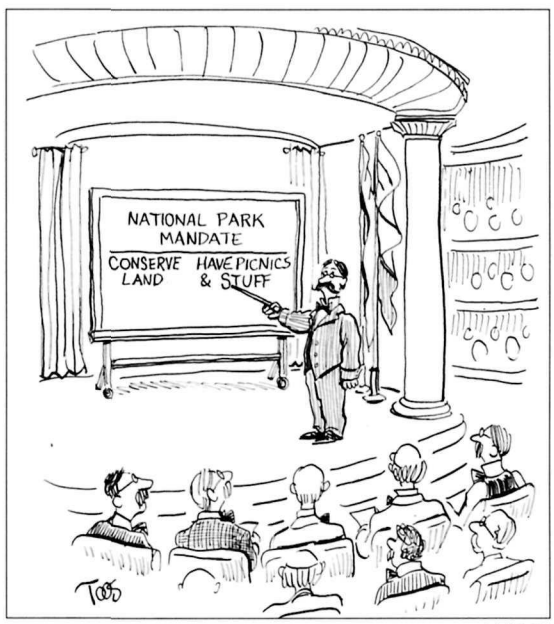
BY ROBIN WINKS

FOR YEARS, advocates for and employees of the National Park Service have complained that Congress, and through Congress the American people, created a contradictory mandate for the national parks. The contradiction comes, they claim, from requiring the Park Service to balance two incompatible missions: to preserve the resources placed in its charge and to provide public access—and by extension, opportunities for outdoor recreation—throughout the National Park System.

Almost always, friends and critics of the Park Service point to the Organic Act of 1916 as the source of the contradictory mandate. This argument is false on three grounds. The act of 1916 did not provide for two opposing goals; it is not the only legislation by which the goals of the Park Service were defined; and it did not refer to public outdoor recreation as a goal of the National Park System.

The Organic Act established the nation's first professional park service to promote and regulate the use of federal areas known as "national parks, monuments, and reservations." The service was to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife within these units and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Though the mandate contains no reference to recreation, those who favor large-scale access to the national parks and who wish to promote outdoor recreational agendas invariably argue that the second charge in some manner overrides the first. To test whether this was the intent of Congress, in the act of 1916 or in subsequent generic acts, requires a legislative history. Such a history attempts to understand the intent of Congress by examining the act in question, all previous bills (including drafts where obtainable), all House and Senate debate, all committee hearings, and any other printed records of the U.S. Congress by which the act became law. One must also understand the intent of the legislators who served on the committees, and thus one must obtain access to and examine the private papers of those committee members.



A.J. TOOS

The act refers to enjoyment by future generations, which arguably introduces an expectation of changing definitions of enjoyment by reference to the future. At no point is enjoyment equated with recreation, and it is clearly circumscribed by "unimpaired." The private papers of the members of the Committee on Public Lands and of other relevant committees make it clear that the two goals to which the act of 1916 refers were listed in order of importance. Further, the prevailing rules of rhetorical style, at which several members of the committees were past masters, called for listing desirable goals in a descending order of significance unless there were many goals, in which case the most important would be placed first and the second most important might be used in conclusion.

The first substantive discussion of the purposes of a National Park Service took place in the House of Representatives during hearings in April 1912. Representatives discussed how national parks would differ from national forests, whether all 12 existing national parks were truly of national significance, and whether duplication of "scientific exhibits" was permissible or desirable in a genuinely systemic park system. Throughout testimony, members of Congress demonstrated a desire to see lands administered by a park service as unique, nationally significant, and forming a coherent whole

ROBIN W. WINKS, *a member of NPCA's board, is professor of history and chairman of studies in the environment at Yale University. He is completing a book,* The Rise of the National Ethic, *that traces the distinctive nature of the park system.*

rather than a mere accumulation of more-or-less desirable land forms. Representatives also discussed the "automobile question," and the park point of view was to manage so as "not to destroy the scenic effect."

Although the bill introduced in 1912 never made it out of committee, Congress would consider legislation to establish a park service in each of the next four years.

During the 1914 discussion, representatives suggested the purpose of the parks was to protect scenery. They discussed what constitues "scenery," drawing clearly on the accepted definitions of the word as used in the *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*, the favored reference of Congress at the time. This discussion put considerable distance between the goals of the U.S. Forest Service and the proposed Park Service. Even Chief Forester Henry S. Graves testified that national parks should be held to higher standards of protection and scenic values than any other public lands. He also testified that they must be of clear national significance and that areas of "a special scenic character" might begin as national monuments within the Department of Agriculture and then, upon further study, become parks. The intent quite clearly was to provide a far more stringent form of protection to any area that would be administered by a park service.

During the 1916 hearings, the phrase "national park system" was used for the first time, evoking the image of a systematic inventory of the nation's grandest scenic landscapes and natural and scientific curiosities. For the first time, the notion of the parks as great educational enterprises, places to which the public could come to learn about nature, geology, fossils, and sedimentation, was also discussed. In the end, this bill prevailed. It contained a preamble framed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Olmsted's draft language was unequivocal: "The *fundamental* object of these aforesaid parks, monuments, and reservations is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects therein and to provide for the enjoyment of said scenery and objects by the public in any manner and *by any means that will leave them unimpaired* (italics added) for the enjoyment of future generations." During hearings on this bill, many references were made to access, good roads, "national playgrounds," and recreation, but none of these references is in the bill, and all are contradicted by the actual language of the act.

Congressman William Kent of California had introduced the Organic Act, and his understanding of the purposes of national parks is quite clear from his private papers, his diaries, his manuscript autobiography, and his many public statements. In 1915, in speaking in the House in favor of Rocky Mountain National Park, and in 1913, when proposing a Redwood National Park, he declared the preservation of scenery to be a "most valuable purpose," drawing a distinction among national forests, national monuments, and national parks, asserting that the last must be held "in a state of nature" where animal life must be "forever free from molestation." Had Kent intended recreational purposes for the parks, he surely would have said so, for he was a vice president of the Playground and Recreation Association of America.

> *The act refers to enjoyment by future generations. At no point is enjoyment equated with recreation, and it is clearly circumscribed by "unimpaired."*

In 1922 Kent commended the statement that national parks must be maintained in a natural state "and not be marred by artificiality of any avoidable kind." The act of 1916 was debated fully in the House, only briefly in the Senate, and an abundance of evidence exists that Congress understood, in its endorsement of the "governing sentence," that it was listing priorities for management in the order of their importance, with no contradictory intent.

To be sure, the act of 1916 does list two duties. The Park Service has allowed them to become contradictory practice, Congress has confused itself and the public as to the purpose of the national parks, and both Congress and the service appear to have forgotten the original intent, so that units that do not attain genuine national significance have been created to help with tourist development or to offer recreational opportunities. But these are mistaken management decisions not in keeping with the intent of the act. Directors of the Park Service have interpreted the act from time to time, and Congress has amended its intent, as expressed in 1916, in other omnibus bills involving the park system, most especially in 1970, 1976, and 1980. The act of 1970 remarked upon the "increased national dignity" both "individually and collectively" that the national parks enjoyed, so that an infringement upon one was an infringement upon all. Congress may have muddied the waters somewhat, but the intent of the original act remains quite clear.

Recently the National Parks and Conservation Association has undertaken the compilation of all the acts by which each of the 369 units of the National Park System was created. Park superintendents who profess to be confused as to their mandate, who find it difficult to make management decisions (whether to pave a road, to build a new visitor center, to approve the use in a national park of some shiny new toy, whether snowmobile or powered boat), have two documents to which they should turn and on which they should base their decision. The bill by which an individual unit is created invariably states the primary resource that the Park Service has been charged with protecting. The act of 1916 makes it clear that protection overrides all else. Where access may be provided, where an enriched interpretation may be offered, without damage to the resource, it may—indeed, perhaps should—be provided: but never at the cost of risk to the resource for which the unit was created.

NPCA Notes

BY M. KATHERINE HEINRICH

Southwest Forum Roundup

▶ Park advocates and officials from Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Mexico's border states gathered at the Southwest Regional Forum, held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in May. The forum was the third in a series of NPCA-sponsored regional conferences designed to involve citizen activists in park issues and develop effective partnerships for the parks. The diversity of conference participants, including representatives of several American Indian nations, academics from Mexican universities, and resource managers and park activists from both sides of the border, reflected the forum's theme: "Citizens Protecting America's Parks: Creating Unity in Challenging Times."

Iantha Gantt, NPCA's cultural diversity manager, noted that a workshop on cultural diversity established the tone of the forum. "It was an engaging and enlightening session," Gantt said. "Participants from many cultural and ethnic groups shared their values and experiences and established common ground."

The forum focused on four themes: broadening and diversifying the park constituency, increasing technical assistance for park support groups, strengthening interaction and information sharing among local park groups, and strengthening partnerships between the Park Service and these groups. Sessions addressed specific issues including aircraft overflights, the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection program, and transportation management. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-N.Mex.) and Jim Baca, former director of the Bureau of Land Management, were featured speakers.

A highlight of the forum was presentation of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Citizen Conservationist of the Year Award to Maxine Johnston, president of the Big Thicket Association. Johnston, a founding member of the association, was instrumental in the creation of Big Thicket National Preserve in Texas in 1974, and since then has served as a tireless advocate for the park. Among her victories are an 11,000-acre addition to the preserve, won in 1993, and the defeat of flood-control projects that threatened the hydrological balance of the park. Big Thicket, known as the "biological crossroads of North America," preserves meadows, swamps, and pine, cypress, and hardwood forests.

The Citizen Conservationist of the Year Award is named in honor of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, lifelong Everglades advocate and author of *The Everglades: River of Grass*.

NPCA Backs Resource Course

▶ Thanks in part to support from NPCA, 23 National Park Service resource managers have completed Fundamentals for Natural Resources Managers, a six-week intensive training course held at NPS's Albright Training Center in Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona. The course, developed in response to the Park Service's five-year strategic plan for improved natural resource management, was offered for the first time May 21–June 27.

"We recognize the role sophisticated and well-trained managers play in the future of the National Park System," said Carol Aten, NPCA's senior vice president. "NPCA is pleased to assist the Park Service with this investment in park resources and the people who manage them."

The Fundamentals course emphasizes three themes: an ecosystem approach to natural resource management; development and implementation of a resource management program that takes natural resources, cultural resources, and social science into consideration; and training today's natural resource managers for future positions in park management. Course graduates will return to individual park units and field offices across the country to put the skills and knowledge acquired at the training into practice for the parks.

Tribal Artifacts Stay in Place

▶ A momentous agreement and a creative fund-raising campaign have ensured that a rare collection of Nez Perce artifacts will remain at the headquarters of Nez Perce National Historical Park in Idaho. The collection, long owned by the Ohio Historical Society, has been on loan to the park since 1979, forming the heart of the displays at the park's visitor center.

After the historical society requested that the arti-

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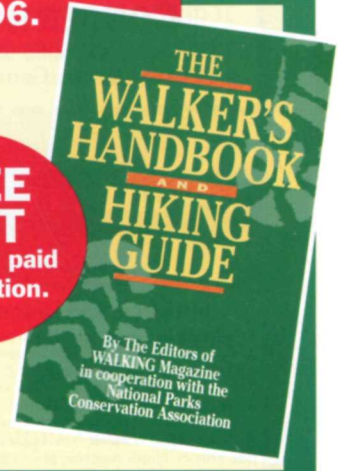

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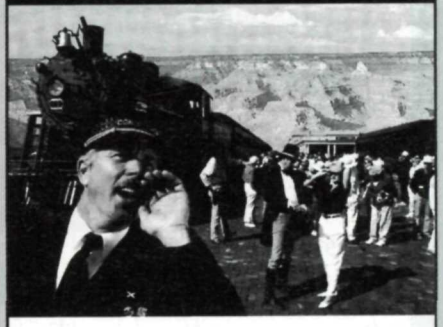

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facts be returned by the end of 1995, Nez Perce leaders considered options to keep the objects—which include fine examples of Nez Perce beadwork and carving: dresses, moccasins, shirts, a saddle, and a cradle—in their homeland. Tribal elders met with society directors in December and averted a lawsuit by reaching an agreement that gave the tribe until June 1, 1996, to raise $608,100 to purchase the collection.

Corporations and foundations made major gifts, but just as significant are the many donations collected by schoolchildren in the amount of $57.90—the price paid by the missionary who originally acquired the artifacts in the 1840s.

A Constructive Partnership

▶ NPCA and Georgia-Pacific Corp. are pleased to announce a pilot project designed to promote citizen involvement in partnerships for the national parks. Four national park friends groups were selected to receive cash and construction supplies based on project proposals designed to meet the following goals: restoring park infrastructure and natural resources, preserving the historic and cultural values of parks and their communities, building cooperation between the National Park Service and local park support groups, and strengthening citizen involvement in park maintenance through volunteerism, fund raising, and public education.

◆ Friends of Ocmulgee Old Fields will use resources provided by NPCA and Georgia-Pacific to replace and expand storage facilities at Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia.

◆ The history of Appalachian culture in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia will be preserved with the help of Shenandoah Friends, which will use its award to record firsthand accounts of Appalachian life and upgrade interpretive facilities in the park.

◆ Camping and picnic sites at Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee and North Carolina will receive much-needed repairs with supplies furnished by Georgia-Pacific and NPCA and volunteer labor provided by Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

◆ The Friends of Virgin Islands National Park will use its grant to replace the roof of the hurricane-damaged Maho Bay Pavilion and construct additional picnic and barbecue facilities.

The total value of the program is $184,500.

Credit Card Update

▶ This spring, NPCA began offering members the new NPCA Visa card through First USA Bank. Every time you use the card, a contribution is made to NPCA. The NPCA Visa features no annual fee, a low 15.9 percent fixed interest rate, and other benefits including travel insurance and convenience checks. Members interested in carrying the *only* card that helps NPCA protect the national parks should call 1-800-347-7887 for further information and an application.

Members who formerly held an NPCA credit card issued through the Bank of Baltimore, First Fidelity, or National City Bank should be aware that use of these cards no longer benefits NPCA. Further questions should be directed to NPCA's member services department at 1-800-NAT-PARK.

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▶ Using the keyword **PARKS**, America Online (AOL) subscribers can access a wealth of park-related information. Follow links through NPCA's World Wide Web site to background information on topics covered in this and other issues of *National Parks*—the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site, the Santa Fe Trail, March for Parks, ongoing efforts to protect the desert tortoise and other endangered species, and more.

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Lake Country

This northern park's beauty comes from its expanses of water and wooded coastline.

J. ARNOLD BOLZ

THIS NATIONAL PARK is relatively new. It has more than 30 lakes, four of which form the boundaries; another is the main access point. This site is one of the few water-dominated parks in the system. Travel in the park has been dependent on water for nearly three centuries. The park's beauty comes from its mixture of wide expanses of water, hundreds of islands, and rugged, irregular coastline. Besides its lakes, the park has many rock outcroppings, coves, and bays, and in some sections, the elevation can extend to 1,400 feet. Have you seen this vista before? Which national park is this? [ANSWER ON PAGE 8.]

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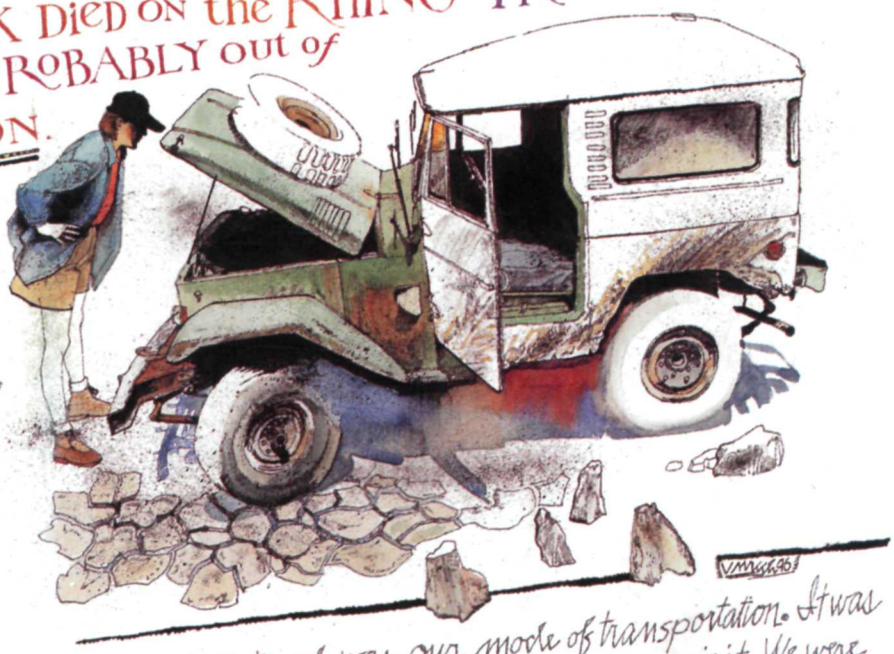
TOOL TALES

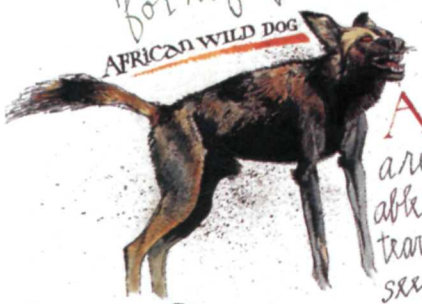
[REAL STORIES OF *LEATHERMAN® TOOLS* AND THE PEOPLE WHO USE THEM.]

No. 3

THE TRUCK DIED ON the RHINO TRAIL. AAA was PROBABLY out of The QUESTION.

There were no tools available except the Leatherman Tool I'd brought with me to Rwanda, Africa. I was there to help provide health care for refugees.





AFRICAN WILD DOG

A cantankerous '68 truck was our mode of transportation. It was a real workhorse. As was the Leatherman Tool I used to repair it. We were able to do everything from replacing batteries and their cables to tearing apart a brake assembly. A Zambian U.N. officer had never seen anything quite like that Leatherman Tool! I wasn't sure if your sales force extended to Lake Kivu, Africa. So I gave him mine.

Sincerely,
Rene Ann Pizzo,
Oregon City, Oregon

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