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National Parks

The Magazine of
The National Parks
And Conservation
Association

MAY/JUNE 1996

Bears at Katmai

Guarding the Legacy

Condors Come Home

Sandy Points

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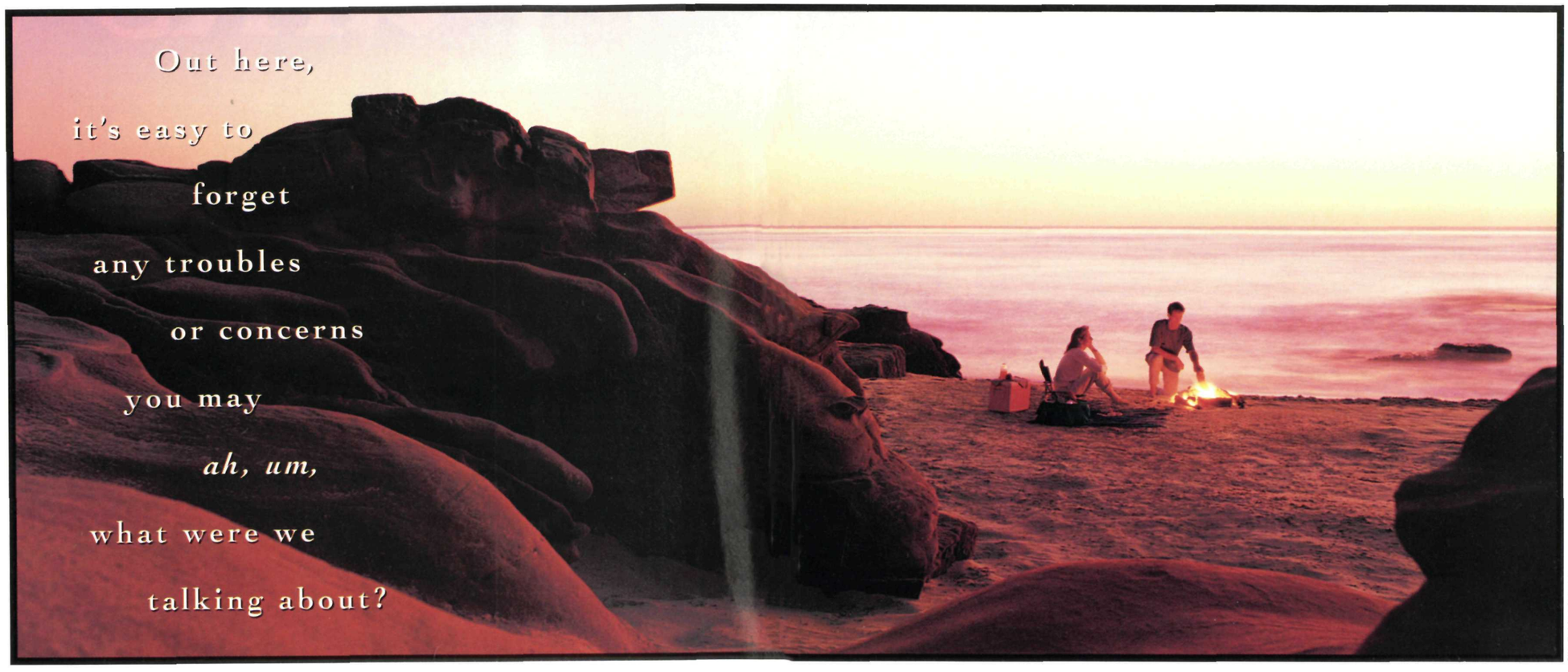

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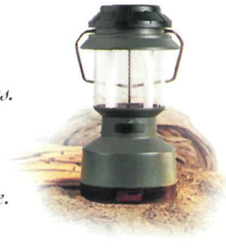

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National Parks
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May/June 1996
The Magazine of the National Parks and Conservation Association

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MIKE WALLACE

FEATURES

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SCOTT T. SMITH

COVER: A mother bear and her three cubs fish at Brooks Falls in Katmai National Park, Alaska. Photograph by Jeff Foott.

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COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DEPARTMENTS

Embattled Frontier

Congress is considering legislation that could forever change the wilderness character of Alaska.

DUPONT PHOTOGRAPHERS

AT NPCA'S ANNUAL DINNER on March 6, Lowell Thomas, Jr., spoke eloquently, expressing his lifelong devotion to the national parks of Alaska. NPCA was honoring Lowell with the William Penn Mott, Jr., Conservationist of the Year Award. Lowell was honoring us by sharing with us his life and accomplishments and his beloved Alaska. The event, which featured video presentations on Lowell's life and Alaska, will be long remembered because of his compelling story and the breathtaking images of Alaska.

Lowell's principles and expectations for what Alaska should be contrast sharply with those of people who would remake our "last frontier" with the same blueprint of development that has degraded much of the American landscape—more roads, more mining, more timbering. Lowell, however, reminded us that Alaska is still "our last chance to do it right."

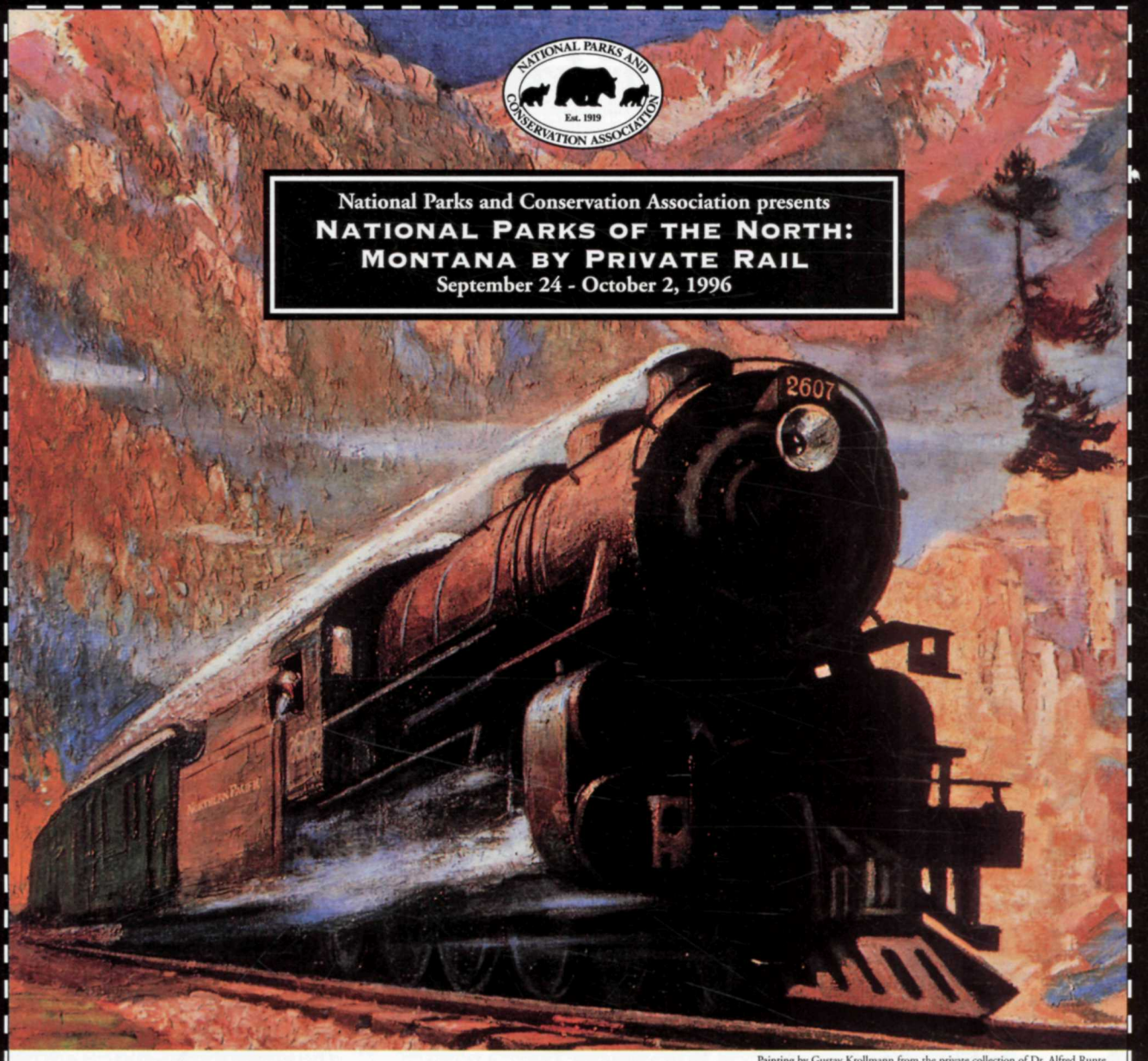
NPCA is currently fighting several battles on behalf of parks in Alaska, including Lake Clark National Park. Possibly the only issue on which Interior secretaries James Watt and Bruce Babbitt have agreed is that Native corporation land selections in and around Lake Clark were fair and those agreements should be honored. Some coastal lands were to remain in the park, according to a 1976 agreement, while many more were to be conveyed to corporations. Unhappy with the current status, the wealthy Native corporation has enlisted the support of Rep. Don Young (chair of the House Resources Committee) to "solve a legal dispute." His solution, now working its way through the committee, would transfer most of the remaining coastline out of the park, precluding future access to this still pristine and mostly undiscovered gem.

Also pending before the House and Senate natural resource committees is a proposal that would create a new, open-ended land grant for roads across national parks and other public lands in Alaska. This proposal, known as Revised Statute 2477, would devastate Alaska's wildlands, as it would parklands throughout the West.

Under pressure from the Alaska congressional delegation, the Park Service is considering a new proposal to dramatically increase cruise ship use in Glacier Bay without adequately addressing critical air quality and safety concerns.

And on and on the story goes. Lowell asked that our annual dinner not be focused on him but rather on Alaska—not just to celebrate Alaska but also to remind those who fought for it in the '70s and early '80s that the battle burns on into the '90s. Lowell reminded us that the preservation of Alaska's precious wilderness is not a concern of Alaskans alone but requires vigilance—and action—from all of us.

Paul C. Pritchard
President, NPCA



Painting by Gustav Krollmann from the private collection of Dr. Alfred Runte.

This fall join NPCA for a journey to Glacier and Yellowstone national parks and Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Between visits to the parks, we spend four days on our vintage private train, the *Northern Parks Limited*, crossing the Continental Divide between Livingston and Paradise. NPCA representatives and park officials will discuss issues affecting the national parks along the way.

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National parks

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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 th eparks 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; and on-line: http://www.npca.org/-npca/.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Stewardship

THE STAFF OF *National Parks* magazine takes particular pleasure in publishing articles about wildlife, and surveys show that "creature features" are a favorite among our readers as well. In this issue, we present two stories about denizens of the parks—Alaskan brown bears in Katmai National Park and Preserve, by Bill Sherwonit (page 28), and California condors in Grand Canyon National Park, by Todd Wilkinson (page 40).

The condor, which Wilkinson calls "the poster child for managing endangered species," has hovered near extinction for the last several decades. Thanks to an extensive captive breeding and recovery program, the bird is returning to the skies over northern Arizona and southern Utah. Originally scheduled for last November, the release of the condors has been postponed several times, largely because of opposition by the Wise Use Movement. We expected that the release would have happened by the time the article was published, but instead we're ahead of the game—an uncommon "scoop" for *National Parks* magazine. At press time, the release was scheduled for June, and we are pleased to call attention to this attempt to bring condors back from the brink.

The other feature story in this issue, by News Editor Kim O'Connell (page 34), deals with a different kind of irreplaceable resource—the millions of documents, artifacts, photographs, and other historic treasures under the Park Service's care. Many parks—especially historic sites in the northeastern part of the country—hold vast collections of these objects and often lack the funding and storage space to properly preserve and protect them. "Guardians of Our Legacy" is the story of how the Park Service is strengthening its stewardship of these museum collections.

Sue E. Dodge, Editor

Brave hearts. Kindred spirits.

Beautifully presented with a handsome decorative border

A stirring picture-within-a-picture presented on flawless porcelain portrays the mystical bond between man and nature

Use this guide to discover the Wolf Warrior

Running Wolf races through the forest, his sure-footed pony flying over the hard brown earth turned white by an early snowfall. He knows no fear. Nothing can harm him. His brother the wolf is his companion. Pathfinder. Wise one. Brother wolf's daring spirit fills the young warrior with the courage of a thousand winters.

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Sen. Murkowski Responds

Alaska hosts some of America's most spectacular parks. In fact, the state's 15 National Park Service units amount to 54 million acres or 68 percent of park territory nationwide. As an Alaskan and an outdoorsman, I am proud of that heritage and consider myself fortunate to have experienced it firsthand. As chairman of the Senate committee overseeing the nation's parks, I want to help others do the same.

We must preserve these marvelous examples of nature's handiwork while providing access to them for generations of Americans. The Park Service must be pro-people *and* pro-park. This dual approach is consistent with its founding principles.

Because I love our parks and consider their maintenance vital, I take exception to *National Parks*' inaccurate and hyperbolic portrayal of my attitude on the matter ["Assault on the Last Frontier," January/February 1996]. Our parks are not "under serious attack" by Alaskans in Congress, nor have we "launched a legislative salvo to develop, log, mine, and give away national parks." And the claim that we meet to "plot strategy" to "attack" parks is absurd.

My agenda addresses billions of dollars in infrastructure repair and deferred maintenance. It addresses fiscal and personnel requirements. It recognizes that our parks are underfunded and, in some cases, falling apart. It tries to do more with less. But it does not address the deauthorization of park units, despite Park Service claims that some do not belong in the system.

I do not advocate mining in parks where such activity is prohibited. Nor have I fostered logging or drilling within park boundaries. To suggest so, as this publication did, is misleading. This senator has worked to buy out the Kantishna mining claims in Denali National Park.

One of America's crown jewels, Denali should be protected and enjoyed. It and other parks benefit from increased visitation because visitor support is vital to park programs. Under proper management, people are parks' best friends. Constructive suggestions on how our parks can best be managed should always be welcomed.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's Denali Task Force did not agree with my proposal for a northern access route into the park. But your article failed to mention that the National Park System Advisory Board overturned the task force's recommendation and suggested a northern rail route. My amendment explores the feasibility of a road or rail route, complete with environmental rules and regulations.

Denali is Alaska's top tourist destination. It makes little sense to keep the majority of visitors on a 90-mile ribbon of road into a 6-million-acre park—a park the size of Vermont. By the Park Service's own admission, many who try to see the wilds of Denali are turned away—of 490,149 visitors, only 241,995 took the bus into the interior. A northern access route would benefit visitors and decrease pressure on resources along the existing route. This proposal makes environmental and economic sense.

It took me ten years to convince the agency that we could increase visitation to Glacier Bay while protecting the environment. Admitting a few more cruise ships during the three-month season will not harm the environment. For many, the best way to see the grandeur of Glacier Bay is from the deck of a cruise ship.

Because much of Alaska's 54 million acres of parkland is remote wilderness, many park areas are limited to those few who can afford to hire the necessities to enjoy wilderness travel. We need places such as Denali, Katmai, and Glacier Bay to be more accessible.

To overcome overwhelming maintenance deficits, many are advocating public/private partnerships to channel private funds into parks. I support this concept. Congress passed concessions reform increasing competition and setting higher limits on entrance fees. This legislation, vetoed with the balanced budget bill, would have done more for parks than the NPCA-supported bill, which exempts 80 percent of concessioners from competition. I support competition among concessioners and private funds for parks.

My committee wrote legislation securing the future of the magnificent Presidio. The private sector will operate this portion of Golden Gate National Recreation Area so that, after 15 years, the Presidio will reach self-sufficiency. This bipartisan proposal will free up $25 million a year for other parks.

These ideas have come about because I and other Americans love our parks. We are faced with the necessity of doing more with less and stand united in our determination that we must do more. Unfortunately, your article misses these points and, therefore, represents an assault on the truth.

Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska)

EDITORIAL REPLY: The intent of our article was not to attack Alaska's congressional delegation, but to draw attention to policy initiatives that, if implemented, would threaten the wilderness character of the national parks in Alaska. We would like to address some specific points in Sen. Murkowski's response. The Park System Advisory Board did not "overturn" the recommendations of the Denali Task Force. The board approved the task force's report with an amendment endorsing a northern rail route —not a road—contingent on a stakeholders' agreement concerning the extent and nature of development to be allowed. Pressure is mounting to increase visitation to the national parks in Alaska. We believe additional visitors can be accommodated, but decisions must be based on an understanding of the resources and a commitment not to destroy the character of the parks in the process.

National Parks stands by its article.

Help from Our Friends, Cabin Fever, Asking for Concessions

Help from Our Friends

When I began to work for the federal government more than seven years ago, I expected to provide my best efforts as an engineer in exchange for pay and benefits that recognized the knowledge and abilities I developed in acquiring two degrees in civil engineering. Since that time, both parties have performed their part of the deal. (Of course I am not alone. Although the federal government certainly has its share of deadbeats collecting a paycheck for minimal effort, there are far more sincere, hard-working folks who serve with commitment and pride.)

With the recent budget fiascos resulting in government shutdowns, I, along with so many other "nonessential" personnel, was sent home on furlough. Since the "powers that be" ensured payment of salaries to all personnel during the shutdown, we were given, in effect, a bonus paid vacation period. Being paid for not working is reflective of the moronic way the government sometimes functions. I know there are a number of practical reasons for this, but the idea just doesn't sit right with me. For this reason, I am sending a check to NPCA for the pay I received for the 132 hours I did not work during the two furloughs.

I'm not foolish enough to return this money to the federal treasury. Instead I'd like NPCA to use it in its efforts to support the integrity of our National Park System—a system that belongs to all the citizens of this country. Because I am an employee of the National Park Service, the funds that paid my salary were intended to benefit the national parks through my work. I'm glad NPCA is around so this money will serve that purpose.

Robert F. Wolf
Lakewood, CO

Paul Gallaher recently admonished NPCA [Letters, November/December 1995] for deceiving him into believing that the group purchased land for federal parks, for lobbying Congress, and for having a bad attitude about the "heroic" efforts of the 104th Congress. I recently contributed to NPCA to help fight legislation such as H.R. 260 [the park closure bill that was deleted from the budget reconciliation package in October]. The NPCA information package that I received in the mail was quite clear regarding the association's admirable and important mission.

I cannot understand how the 104th Congress can be construed as "heroic." I agree wholeheartedly that the budget needs to be balanced and the national debt needs to be reduced. Closing parks would embellish the coffers of the U.S. Treasury; however, the amount is insignificant compared to the $260-billion tax cut proposed by the 104th Congress. The mind-set of this Congress is to relinquish irreplaceable wildlands for short-term and relatively minuscule gain.

It is odd that Gallaher implies that there is something deceitful about NPCA paying "people to lobby in Washington, D.C." Before the November 1994 elections, Newt Gingrich shamelessly announced that those wishing influence in his Republican Congress better get on board now or be closed out. Big business got the message and is now rewriting our environmental laws. There is clearly a difference between self-interested, greed-motivated lobbyists working for industries, such as timber and mining concerns, and selfless, nonprofit organizations that work to preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

Thomas S. Helms
Knoxville, TN

ANSWER TO "YOU ARE HERE"

Glacier National Park, Montana

Cabin Fever

As a first-year subscriber to your attractive magazine and volunteer coordinator for the 700-member citizens group that seeks help from Congress to preserve 67 cabins (and use of them) in the Mineral King Valley in Sequoia National Park, I am alarmed by errors in the Pacific Regional Report in the January/February 1996 issue. Most of the cabins were developed before the Park Service was established and are part of America's rich history, which NPS Director Roger Kennedy claims "is what national parks are all about." Our proposal—to continue our 100-year stewardship of the land and cabin use alongside mines, campers, inholder cabins, and hikers—does not constitute a threat to the integrity of the Park System or even a blip on the radar screen of park problems that require the attention of your readers.

Permit-holding cabin owners pay taxes, plus fees and administrative costs, to NPS. Contrary to your report, because none of the cabin permittees ever owned the property, none were compensated by NPS when Mineral King was added to Sequoia in 1978.

Ruth Shepherd
Mineral King District Association
Salem, OR

Asking for Concessions

I am a concessioner in the National Park System and have been a member of your organization for a number of years. I am disturbed by the continued publishing of misinformation pertaining to national park concessioners. Statements referring to concessioners' "sweetheart deals" are, for the majority of the parties involved, untrue. This type of false editorializing results in letters like the one written by Allston E. Weller III [January/February 1996]. The writer compares national parks to multimillion-dollar attractions such as Disney World! In most of the parks, if it were not for the concessioner, there would not be an attraction available to the average American citizen. Most likely as a result of the misinformation printed in your magazine, Weller has a distorted idea of concession benefits.

I entered into a national park concession with a desire to provide a memorable, safe, inexpensive experience to people visiting our park. I should point out that like a number of small concessioners, we have been in business for more than 13 years and have yet to realize the first penny of profit.

W.J. Hornberger
Biscayne National Underwater Park Co.
Stuart, FL

EDITORIAL REPLY: Concessioners provide valuable services in our national parks, but if we forget that the natural, cultural, and historic features preserved in the parks are their attractions, we have lost sight of the fundamental value of our National Park System.

Acknowledging that two fundamentally different types of concessioners operate in the parks—small "mom and pop" businesses and multimillion dollar corporations—NPCA worked with legislators to write language to treat the two differently. The bills introduced by Sens. Robert Bennett (R-Utah) and Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.) and Rep. Jan Meyers (R-Kans.) keep the present arrangement for concessioners generating less than $500,000 per year. More lucrative businesses would have to compete like any other business outside the parks. In the end, the numbers speak for themselves: in 1993, concessioners generated $667 million in revenues and paid less than 3 percent back to the government in fees. None of that money went to the parks.

Allston E. Weller III wrote that the fees at the national parks need to be increased. What he apparently does not know is that the fees collected at the gates go to the general fund, the same place income taxes go. These funds pay for the military, welfare, roads, the national debt, clinics, studies, administration of the IRS and other government entities, as well as federal lands.

Mark Gudmendsen
Oakhurst, CA

NPCA

Park News

BY KIM A. O'CONNELL

RESTORATION

Gore Unveils Everglades Plan

Polluters would pay to restore water flows in south Florida.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Water is the "liquid heart of Florida," lifelong Everglades activist Marjory Stoneman Douglas has written. Although decades of development in south Florida have drained and depleted this lifeblood, a new plan could go far to reverse the damage.

On behalf of President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore announced on February 19 a comprehensive seven-year plan to restore the south Florida ecosystem, which includes Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Biscayne National Park. The administration's plan calls for about $1.5 billion in funding over seven years—double the current levels—for Everglades restoration activities. Among the most notable aspects of the plan is a new penny-per-pound assessment on sugar grown in south Florida. The region's sugar industry is a large polluter of the Everglades.

"We are dealing with an extremely fragile ecosystem that is on the verge of collapse," Gore said. "Saving the Everglades is a priority for the United States of America. It's that simple."

In response to devastating flooding caused by hurricanes in the early 1900s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers initated a flood control project in 1948 that included constructing a series of canals and levees south of Lake Okeechobee. This newly created Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) allowed for the boom in farming and development that has characterized southern Florida for the last 50 years. In addition, the once-meandering, 103-mile Kissimmee River north of the lake was straightened and reduced to a 56-mile-long channel.

DAVID MUENCH

President Clinton has outlined a plan to restore water flows in the Everglades.

Because of extensive use of the EAA, particularly for the production of sugar, the water quality and hydrology of the Everglades ecosystem have steadily declined. In addition to implementing a water quality improvement plan, the administration would create an Everglades Restoration Fund that would be used to acquire at least 100,000 acres of land in the EAA to restore natural water flows. The fund would consist of congressional appropriations of $100 million a year for four years, as well as money generated from the penny-per-pound assessment on sugar, projected to raise $245 million over seven years. Also, Senate Majority Leader and presidential candidate Robert Dole (R-Kans.) has added $200 million for Everglades restoration to the farm bill.

Sugar growers say they have been unfairly targeted to bear the lion's share of the costs for the plan. In anticipation of Gore's announcement, about 2,000 protesters—including sugar farmers and industry officials—gathered in Miami on February 18 to oppose the new tax. However, both the administration and NPCA believe that the costs of restoring the south Florida ecosystem should be met by those that have con-

tributed to its decline.

"In Florida, people are concerned about the Everglades because it affects the quality of their lives," said Tom Adams, NPCA Washington representative. "These people strongly support efforts to compel businesses that have benefited from the Everglades to share responsibility for its cleanup."

The administration's plan is one of several Everglades restoration projects initiated in the last 18 months. In November 1994, the Corps of Engineers outlined several proposals to restore the area's hydrology, and the new plan would accelerate completion of this project.

As a founding member of the Everglades Coalition, NPCA thanks the administration for its commitment to restoring the south Florida ecosystem.

"The Everglades is the most wonderful example of how things can turn around," Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt said at a recent NPCA briefing. "We cannot protect Everglades National Park until we restore the entire ecosystem. Vice President Gore [has] laid out a dramatic proposal."

The south Florida ecosystem.

FUNDING

President Reveals 1997 Budget

NPCA says National Park System needs more money.

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Amid continued debate over federal spending for the remainder of this year, President Clinton released his fiscal year 1997 budget for the Interior Department and its agencies.

On March 19, the administration announced a $7.33-billion funding request for the department, which oversees the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and others. The Park Service's share is $1.5 billion, which constitutes a $181-million increase over expected fiscal year 1996 levels and about 20 percent of the overall Interior budget.

NPCA commended major funding initiatives in the request that will aid in critical park restoration projects. Perhaps most notable is the $100 million allotted for land acquisition in south Florida, which would aid in restoring natural water flows in and around Everglades National Park. The president also requested funding for other agencies to contribute to the effort. (See related story on page 13.)

In addition, the president has earmarked $111 million to purchase and dismantle two dams on the Elwha River in Olympic National Park in Washington. Breaching the dams—long supported by NPCA—would foster the return of the Elwha's once-bountiful runs of salmon.

The administration's request would also fund other high-priority projects at individual national parks. The budget request for park operations is $1.2 billion—$90.2 million more than the expected fiscal 1996 appropriation—which means a 3-percent increase for each of the 369 national park units and a total 10-percent increase for the 42 neediest parks. A prime example is the flood-ravaged Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park in the Washington, D.C., area, which would receive a $16-million supplement to the 1996 budget for its restoration.

However, the overall request for NPS land acquisition is down $13 million from the expected 1996 levels. At $36 million, the request inhibits the Park Service's ability to "buy land today to protect parks for tomorrow," according to NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard.

"The president's commitment to restoring the Everglades and the Elwha River is the wise investment we need to make if our national parks are going to be preserved and protected for future generations," Pritchard said. "However, in these tight budget times, the administration needs to look for creative ways to get more money to the National Park System. If the approved NPS operating budget is less than the president has asked for, some parks—or portions of parks—could be closed."

FY '96 Update

At press time, Congress and President Clinton had approved the latest in a series of stopgap measures to fund the Interior Department in lieu of fiscal year 1996 appropriations. The short-term continuing resolution ensures that most National Park Service programs can continue through April 24. Under a previous resolution, visitor services in the national parks are guaranteed through September 30.

Congress continues to struggle with resolving the Interior spending bill, and several provisions remain unacceptable to the White House. Chief among these is a stipulation that conditions NPS funding for and management of Mojave National Preserve on the agency's submission of a "conceptual management plan" to be approved by Congress. NPCA opposes this unprecedented request.

TOURISM

NPS Alters Plan For Cruise Ships In Glacier Bay

Revised proposal considers sensitive park resources.

GUSTAVUS, ALASKA — Three species of whales—the endangered humpback, the rare minke, and the distinctive orca—are known to occur in the cold waters of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in southeast Alaska. Responding in part to public concern for these creatures, the National Park Service has revised a plan that would increase the number of large vessels allowed in this domain of whales.

The Park Service released its initial Glacier Bay vessel management plan last summer, calling for a 72-percent increase in the number of cruise ships in the bay during the busy summer season. NPCA strongly opposed this approach and urged the Park Service to consider potential impacts on whales, to study how stack emissions from ships would diminish the park's already declining air quality, and to consider other types of vessels and park users. Furnished with these and other comments received on the plan, the agency went back to the drawing board.

The revised plan would increase Glacier Bay cruise ship entries by 30 percent in 1996 and 1997 and by as much as 45 percent thereafter, contingent on specified conditions. The number of cruise ships allowed during the season would increase from 107 in 1995 to 139 in 1996, although no more than two entries a day would be permitted. NPS can also reduce vessel numbers if problems occur.

The new plan also sets an important precedent for Alaska units of the National Park System: To mitigate the effects of motorized vessels, six specified marine areas (encompassing 7 percent of the park) would be closed to motorized use during the summer, the first designation of nonmotorized "wilderness waters" in Alaska. Other mitigating measures include vessel operating requirements, such as slower speeds near whales; restrictions on and closures of "special-use" areas; and strategies for responding to oil spills and for minimizing air pollution and underwater noise.

DAVID MUENCH

Another plan to allow more cruise ships in Glacier Bay has been released.

In NPCA's view, the plan still contains some deficiencies, such as vague standards about how future decisions will be made. In addition, the revised plan is not based on any research to prove that it would not harm the park's resources. NPCA is preparing additional comments on the plan.

LEGISLATION

State-Run Parks Spur Debate

Proposals could threaten integrity of park system.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Although the memory of last year's two federal shutdowns may be fading, legislation resulting from those tumultuous weeks is still of concern to Congress.

Visitors and businesses that rely on tourism were outraged at the temporary closure of the National Park System brought on by the shutdowns. Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona became a particular symbol of the dilemma when Gov. Fife Symington (R) threatened to have the National Guard reopen the popular park. He later proposed that his state take over management of the canyon, and Arizona Sens. John McCain (R) and Jon Kyl (R) introduced legislation that could satisfy the governor's wishes.

The bill (S. 1451) would allow the secretary of the Interior to enter into agreements that would let state or municipal employees replace National Park Service staff when the "normal level of park operations" cannot be achieved, such as during a federal shutdown. On March 7, the Senate subcommittee on parks held a hearing on the measure, and NPCA was a witness.

"This scenario is three strikes against taxpayers," Phil Voorhees, NPCA's associate director for policy development, testified. "They lose once when the parks are closed....They lose again when they have to pay for state workers to take over the jobs of Park Service professionals who have already been paid and trained to manage the parks. Then they lose a third time if, as the bill allows, the federal government reimburses states for running the parks."

Voorhees also pointed out that the bill is not limited to another federal government shutdown, does not define "normal level of operations," and would weaken the National Park System. "The National Park System tells the story of our history," Voorhees said.

Similar legislation (S. 1185) sponsored by Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.Dak.) would turn over management of Wind Cave National Park, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, and Jewel Cave National Monument to the state of South Dakota.

TAKE ACTION: Write to your senators, urging them to oppose S. 1451 and S. 1185. Address: U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

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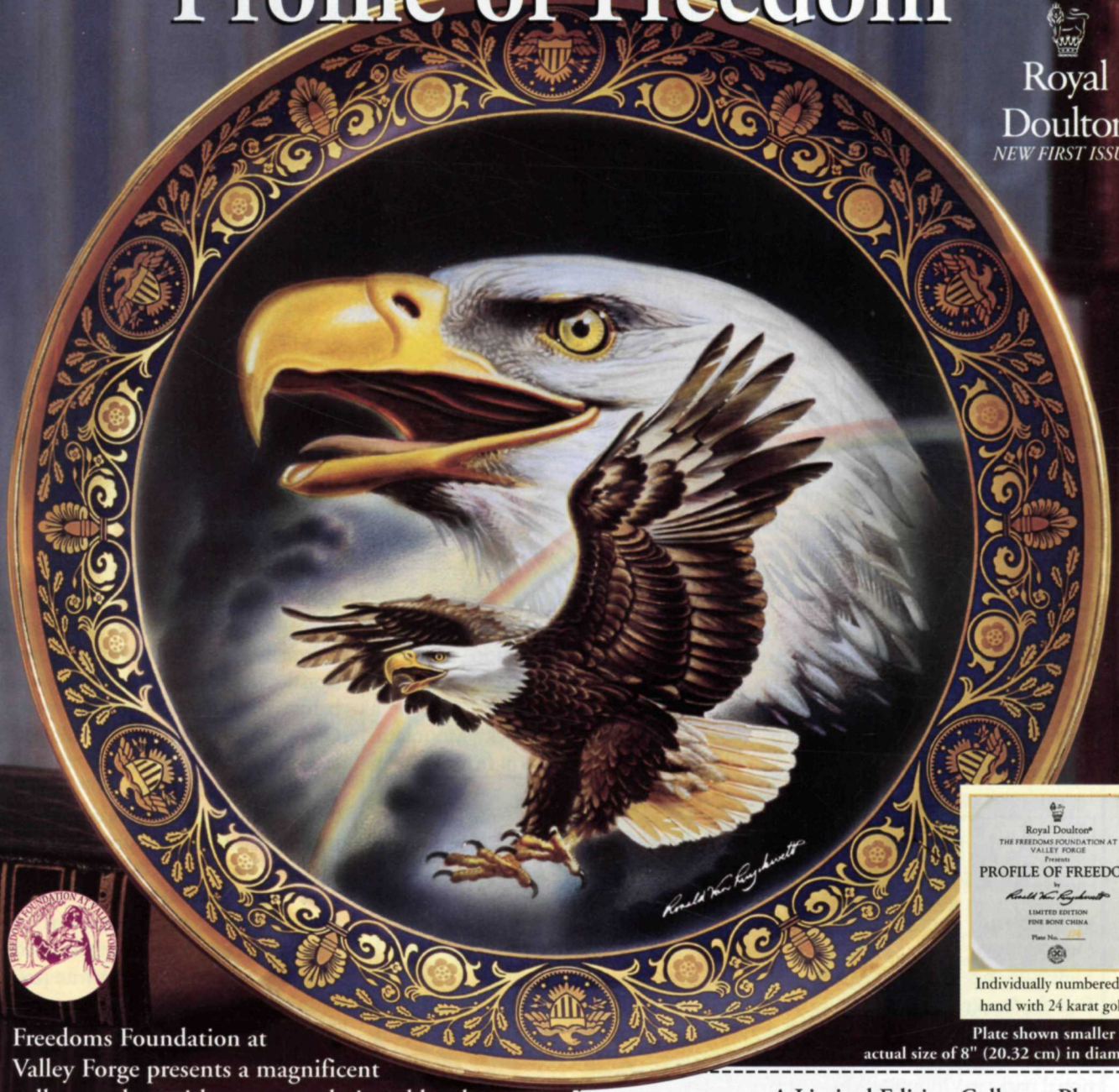

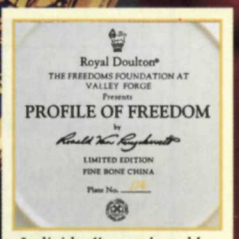

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TOURISM

Air Tour Industry Awaits Decisions

Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountain undergo scrutiny.

Pending decisions at Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountain national parks could affect how the air tour industry does business in national parks.

▶ At press time, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) was expected to release in April federal regulations on overflights at Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona. The proposed regulation would establish new and modify existing flight-free zones and flight corridors in the park, institute flight-free periods, and limit the number of commercial sightseeing aircraft authorized to operate over the canyon during certain hours. NPCA is working to ensure that the regulations consider broader implications for the park system and are adequate to protect natural quiet at the canyon.

LARRY ULRICH

The air tour industry is campaigning to begin flights over Rocky Mountain.

▶ The air tour industry is campaigning to begin flights over Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. Although Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña reportedly is prepared to issue a ban on overflights at Rocky Mountain, he is meeting opposition from FAA, an agency under his department's jurisdiction. Rep. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.) has led members of the Colorado congressional delegation in supporting such a ban, which NPCA strongly endorses. One member, Rep. David Skaggs (D), has introduced a bill (H.R. 1954) that would allow the National Park Service to determine the appropriate level of overflights at national parks.

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Urge Secretary Peña to protect natural quiet at Grand Canyon and to restrict overflights at Rocky Mountain National Park. Write to the Honorable Federico Peña, Secretary of Transportation, 400 7th Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

SAVE OUR NATIONAL PARKS

▶ **VIRGINIA PARKS:** NPCA's Save Our National Parks Campaign is in high gear. At a March 21 hearing before the Senate subcommittee on national parks, NPCA testified against portions of legislation affecting national parks in Virginia, a major campaign issue.

Approved by the House last September, the legislation (H.R. 1091) would reduce the authorized boundaries of Richmond National Battlefield Park and Shenandoah National Park, preempting studies that would help determine what the parks' ultimate boundaries should be. NPCA says the bill precludes public input, ignores the National Park Service's standards for establishing park boundaries, and could leave significant historical and natural features at risk of development.

"Shenandoah National Park and Richmond National Battlefield Park are two opportunities...for citizens everywhere to experience the splendor of our American landscape and the passion and grimness of the Civil War," NPCA Northeast Regional Director Eileen Woodford testified. "We ask Congress not to give up too easily these places so intrinsic to our national heritage."

NPS also testified against portions of H.R. 1091. The agency asked to be allowed to complete its general management plan for Richmond and its natural resource study for Shenandoah before Congress legislates the parks' boundaries.

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Urge your senators to oppose H.R. 1091. Write to them at U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

AIR QUALITY

Tennessee Reneges On Agreement

Deal was designed to control pollution at the Smokies.

NASHVILLE, TENN.—The state of Tennessee has reneged on an innovative agreement that would have helped to control the air pollution plaguing

Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

In late 1994, NPCA and the Department of the Interior filed separate appeals of the Tenn Luttrell Company's permits to build and operate two coal-burning lime kilns near the Smokies. Last April, after months of negotiations about the appeals, NPCA, Interior, Tenn Luttrell, the National Healthy Air License Exchange, and the state of Tennessee devised a landmark set of agreements.

Last year, ozone pollution levels in the Smokies were considered dangerously high by the American Lung Association for 67 days. The new arrangement allowed operation of the kilns while initiating a process by which the entities would work together to protect air quality in the park. The centerpiece of the agreement was a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Tennessee and the Department of the Interior, detailing the cooperative permitting process for new pollution sources. The agreement was, according to NPCA Southeast Regional Director Don Barger, "an important first step."

But on March 13, under pressure from the Tennessee Association of Business, the state rescinded the MOU, claiming that it would be a burden on industry. Although Gov. Don Sundquist (R) expressed support for the rescission, he created a nine-member advisory council to review the situation.

Despite its lead role in crafting the agreement, NPCA was not invited to sit on the council, but it has galvanized immense, vociferous public support for the park. "This agreement was negotiated in good faith with the state by the Department of the Interior and NPCA, and we relied heavily upon its execution in our decision to dismiss our appeal," Barger said.

The Interior Department also opposes the rescission. George T. Frampton, Jr., assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks, urged the governor to uphold his pledge to defend Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

At press time, the council had recommended the creation of a new MOU. The council agreed to two of NPCA's suggestions: that the state use

REGIONAL REPORT

News Briefs from NPCA's Regional Offices

ALASKA Chip Dennerlein, Regional Director

▶ The National Park Service has released development concept plans for two parks: Kenai Fjords National Park and Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. For Kenai Fjords, NPCA supports the alternative that provides for better access to Exit Glacier, one of the park's main attractions, by requiring shuttle service and improving trails and interpretation. The plan calls for a new visitor center to be developed in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. NPCA also supports the Bering Land Bridge plan, which advocates a similar cooperative strategy with Native corporations to establish new visitor facilities.

HEARTLAND Lori Nelson, Regional Director

▶ The Friends of the Crystal River is facing opposition within its ranks over a proposed land exchange at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan. The plan, drawn up in secret, calls for the exchange of 204 acres of parkland on which condominiums and a golf course would be constructed. Four members of the group's board objected to the plan, which is opposed by NPCA.

▶ Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.) has introduced an NPCA-supported bill to upgrade a county road near Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan instead of constructing a shoreline drive.

NORTHEAST Eileen Woodford, Regional Director

▶ Erosion has put the historic Nauset Lighthouse at Cape Cod National Seashore so close to the park's 60-foot cliff that it must be moved. NPS has issued an environmental assessment outlining five possible locations for the light, which the Coast Guard still operates as an aid to navigation. NPCA is urging the Park Service to choose a location that would be safe from erosion for as long as possible, uphold the lighthouse's historic integrity, offer the broadest vista for visitors, and protect endangered species in the area. The move would require a renegotiation of agreements and licenses among NPS, the Coast Guard, and the Nauset Light Preservation Society.

PACIFIC Brian Huse, Regional Director

▶ A cattle ranching and elk and deer hunting operation on Santa Rosa Island in Channel Islands National Park in California has damaged the natural landscape and threatened 19 species of plants, as well as the endangered snowy plover. In addition, fecal matter in park streams are at dangerous levels, and grazing has caused heavy erosion in riparian areas. NPS is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the management of Santa Rosa Island.

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Ask for and comment on the EIS, and urge NPS to return Santa Rosa Island to its natural state. Write to Acting Superintendent Tim Fetnicka, Channel Islands National Park, 1901 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, CA 93001.

continued

the existing MOU as the basis for developing a new one and that in the meantime the state will operate in the spirit of the initial agreement.

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Urge Gov. Sundquist to reinstate the agreement and review the way the state addresses park problems. Write to him at State Capitol, Nashville, TN 37423, or call 615-741-2001.

PRESERVATION

Abolition Effort Remembered

NPS studies ways to interpret historic Underground Railroad.

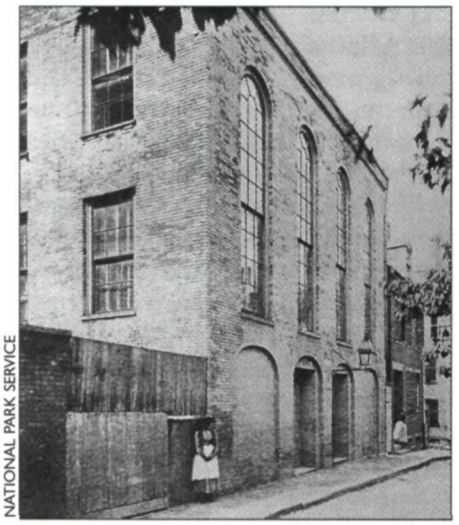
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The courageous deeds and words of 19th-century abolitionists Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass are well documented. Less known, but just as significant, are the hundreds of people and places that formed the Underground Railroad.

This heroic, clandestine struggle from slavery to freedom is the focus of a comprehensive study released by the National Park Service in February. The congressionally authorized study outlines various ways to commemorate and interpret the Underground Railroad by preserving the sites and routes that remain. More than 380 places from Florida to Maine—including existing national park units—served as way stations for escaped slaves in their pursuit of liberty.

"The Underground Railroad wasn't a place; it was one of the most important social, humanitarian movements in the history of this nation," said NPS Director Roger Kennedy.

Without adequate preservation or interpretation, many Underground Railroad sites are in danger of being lost, both physically and in the public consciousness. To remedy this, NPS has delineated five alternatives for preserving the Underground Railroad.

The options include creating an education and research center; establishing a National Park System Project Area,



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The African Meeting House in Boston had a role in the abolition movement.

comprising national historic landmarks, national park units, documented escape routes, and related structures over a large geographic area; and designating the Underground Railroad National Recreation Trail.

"Individuals were the key to the success of the Underground Railroad," said Iantha Gantt, NPCA's cultural diversity manager. "Now we need individuals to become involved in protecting its legacy."

TAKE ACTION: For more information or for a copy of the study, call NPCA at 1-800-NAT-PARK, ext. 223. NPCA's World Wide Web site has more on the Underground Railroad (see page 54).

LEGISLATION

Omnibus Park Bill Deadlocked

Senators argue over Utah wilderness provision.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Legislation to address a backlog of park-related bills has come to a standstill.

In mid-March, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee introduced an omnibus parks and recreation bill that included nearly 60 measures.

REGIONAL REPORT continued

PACIFIC NORTHWEST Phil Pearl, Regional Director

▶ NPCA is examining the application of a group of individuals to mine within the coastal wilderness of Olympic National Park. The claim, located near the park's Shi-Shi Beach, predates the addition of the park's 57 miles of wilderness coastline. The group has asked for either permission to mine or for NPS to purchase the mineral rights for an exorbitant sum. Mineral rights have been claimed on an estimated 25,000 acres in Olympic National Park, and claims exist on more than 6 million acres in the entire National Park System. "This issue brings to light the vulnerability of our national parks," Pearl said.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN Mark Peterson, Regional Director

▶ Legislation advocating the slaughter of Yellowstone bison is "both dangerous and unneeded," NPCA says. Phil Voorhees, NPCA's associate director for policy development, testified against the bill (S. 745) at a March hearing before the Senate parks subcommittee. Sponsored by Sen. Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), the bill calls for the park's 3,500 bison to be rounded up and tested for brucellosis, a disease the local ranching industry fears could be transmitted to livestock. Although no such transmission has ever been demonstrated, up to half of these animals could test positive and then be slaughtered.

SOUTHEAST Don Barger, Regional Director

▶ The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has proposed development of a national recreation area in its care. Land Between the Lakes now receives about 70 percent of its funding from federal appropriations; the other 30 percent comes from visitor fees. Faced with severe budget cuts, TVA would like the park to be more self-sufficient within five years by generating 80 percent of its operating money. To achieve this, TVA is considering options ranging from leasing some of the land for private development to constructing resorts and a theme park. NPCA has expressed grave concern about the precedent of granting exclusive uses of public land as a financing mechanism.

SOUTHWEST David Simon, Regional Director

▶ The Park Service has incorporated many of NPCA's suggestions into its new development plan for Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. The plan is designed to address visitor congestion and related resource damage at the park's popular Frijoles Canyon and at Tsankawi, an unexcavated ruin. Once funds are available, NPS will first conduct a visitor carrying capacity study, then implement a new shuttle system and relocate facilities at Frijoles Canyon.

In related news, a survey of sensitive plants in the Jemez Mountains near Bandelier that was partially funded by NPCA has borne fruit. The Arizona willow has been discovered at two locations, which will help to avert the listing of this species as endangered at this time.

Much of the legislation is supported by NPCA, including bills to create a public management corporation at the Presidio in Golden Gate National Recreation Area and to establish Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve.

However, the omnibus bill includes a measure that would designate 2.1 million acres of public lands in Utah as "wilderness" but allow development there. Other lands not covered in the bill could never again be considered for wilderness designation. NPCA and the conservation community are vehemently opposed to the measure.

Although a presidential veto was likely, a Senate filibuster launched by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.) effectively blocked consideration of the bill. A vote to break the deadlock failed, and the bill was pulled from the floor.

When Congress returns from its spring recess mid-April, however, it will likely reconsider an omnibus bill. NPCA has urged Congress to consider an omnibus bill that focuses solely on national parks.

MANAGEMENT

Canyonlands Bans Exotic Llamas

Rarely used animal is outlawed to protect bighorn sheep.

MOAB, UTAH — Exotic llamas have almost never been used to haul packs through the redrock backcountry of Canyonlands National Park. Yet the National Park Service is facing serious opposition over its decision to outlaw the animal to protect bighorn sheep from disease.

As at other units of the National Park System, NPS staff at Canyonlands have considered the llama as a possible pack animal for several years. But after consulting with veterinarians and wildlife experts, the Park Service deduced that llamas and other exotic animals posed a risk of transmitting Johne's disease or other maladies to the park's bighorn sheep populations, in addition to other

dangers. Since, in recent years, only one permit had ever been issued for using llamas, park staff did not expect much resistance when it decided to ban these creatures.

The International Llama Association, llama breeders and users, and even some members of Congress have opposed the park's decision, arguing that the threat posed to bighorn sheep is slim. Superintendent Walt Dabney is the first to agree.

"The fact that it's a slim chance is not the issue," Dabney said. "We have a bighorn sheep population that is extremely important, so there's not a compelling reason to take a chance on these [exotic] animals."

Canyonlands' bighorn sheep population is used to stock other areas where populations have been decimated by diseases or hunting.

The ban on llamas also applies to Arches National Park.

TAKE ACTION: Support Canyonlands' decision. Write to John Cook, Intermountain Field Director, National Park Service, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287.

TRANSPORTATION

Transit Experts Come to Yosemite

Symposium will inform future park planning.

YOSEMITE N.P., CALIF.—The notion that John Muir would be disappointed if he saw crowded Yosemite Valley today is almost as common as postcards of Half Dome. But the 19th-century conservationist would undoubtedly be pleased that the park is working to alleviate the congestion.

At press time, the National Park Service was planning to host a Yosemite transportation symposium April 8–11 in nearby Fresno, California. A panel of experts in transportation, planning, design, and environmental protection will participate in roundtable discussions to analyze various transportation modes for use in the Yosemite region. Representatives of gateway communities and other groups, including NPCA, will also attend.

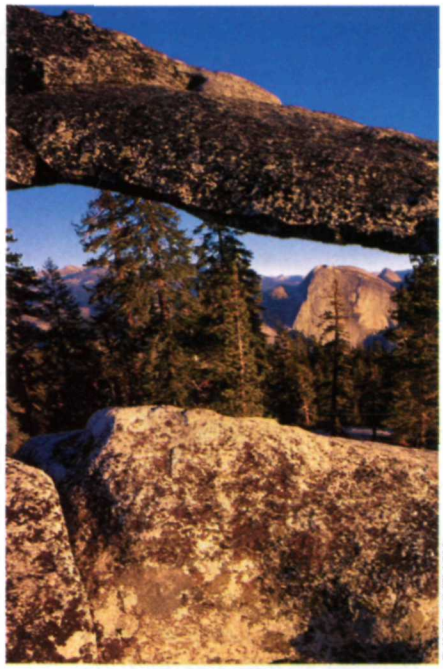
NEWS UPDATE

▶ **WOLF KILLER SENTENCED:** On February 26, a federal judge sentenced Chad McKittrick to six months in federal prison for killing an endangered gray wolf in April 1995. A jury found him guilty last October of possessing, killing, and transporting the animal—one of 14 wolves reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park last year.

▶ **GRAND CANYON FLOODED:** By activating controls at Glen Canyon Dam in Arizona, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt initiated on March 26 a week-long flooding of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. The torrent will simulate natural forces and aid in the creation of sand bars, which are important to spawning fish. Crowds gathered to witness the event, which Babbitt said signified a growing national commitment to the environment.

▶ **LYNX LAWSUIT:** A coalition of 13 environmental groups has filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over its decision not to place the lynx on the endangered species list. The plaintiffs charge that the agency ignored its own biologists' findings regarding the lynx—whose numbers have plummeted. (See "Tracking the Cats," *National Parks*, March/April 1996.)

▶ **TAX RELIEF:** Rep. James Duncan (R-Tenn.) has introduced legislation to establish a voluntary contribution box on the federal income tax form to fund national parks. A 1995 NPCA survey showed that nearly 80 percent of Americans support this.



DAVID MUENCH

A panel of transportation experts is looking at options for Yosemite.

Each year 4 million people visit Yosemite National Park, and most crowd into the incomparable Yosemite Valley. To lessen the crush of cars through the valley, the panel will examine such options as rail, bus, and other mass-transit systems. Some ancillary developments, such as new parking areas, are also likely to be discussed.

The transportation symposium comes at a time of unprecedented planning at Yosemite. In addition to a Yosemite transportation study released last year, at various stages of completion are a valley implementation plan, a development concept plan for the Tuolumne Meadows area, a wilderness management plan, and an effort to improve the concessions facilities at Glacier Point.

"NPCA is encouraging the park to integrate all of its planning efforts in a more cohesive fashion," said Brian Huse, NPCA Pacific regional director and a symposium attendee. "All of these other planning processes greatly affect or are affected by transportation throughout the park. To prepare these plans in isolation of a long-range transportation strategy is a waste of time, money, and resources."

Jerry Mitchell, Yosemite's chief of cultural resources management and coordinator of the valley implementation plan, says that the symposium, transportation study, and other plans contribute to a broad understanding of the park's—and the region's—transportation problems. He points out that the park is also involved in the interagency Yosemite Area Regional Transportation Strategy process. "The study focused on Yosemite from its boundaries in," Mitchell said. "The symposium will study it from the boundaries out."

NPCA has recommended that the Park Service prepare a Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) plan in tandem with these efforts. Mitchell does not rule out a VERP plan in the future: "After we...improve our traffic patterns, we'll see whether or not we need to go the next step."

LEGISLATION

Senate Considers R.S. 2477 Bill

Measure shows "reckless disregard" for parks, NPCA testifies.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Senate has begun to consider legislation to lay major roads across national parks.

At a March 14 hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, NPCA testified against the Revised Statute 2477 Rights-of-Way Settlement Act (S. 1425). The measure, sponsored by committee chair and Alaska Sen. Frank Murkowski (R), would allow highway rights-of-way to be claimed on virtually any tract of land, including national parks. This means that tracks ranging from footpaths to dirt roads could be paved into major thoroughfares.

"This bill is not about responsible transportation planning; it's about reckless disregard for the integrity of our National Park System," testified Chip Dennerlein, NPCA Alaska regional director. Interior Solicitor John Leshy agrees. The bill's implications, Leshy testified, go "beyond the mischievous to the truly staggering."

WISE USE WATCH

WISE USE LEADERS CAPITALIZE ON G.O.P. ALLIES

National Parks is tracking the activities of the Wise Use Movement, a campaign to roll back environmental protections.

Since the Republican party gained control of Congress in 1994, the movement has enjoyed considerable support from its allies in Washington. Espousing the Wise Use agenda, these legislators have mounted several crusades to exploit public lands and lessen the power of the U.S. government to protect the environment.

While preparing for a recent Wise Use conference held in Portland, Oregon, Wise Use leader Chuck Cushman spoke about the movement's relationship with Congress. Cushman's own ties to Congress include raising funds for Rep. Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho), a notorious and outspoken enemy of the environment.

"Many of our people naively thought that we elected a Congress, and they're going to...fix this thing," Cushman said. "That's not the way it works. The environmental groups know that. You elect these people, and you've got to stay on them in order to get them to do anything."

Met Johnson, co-founder of the Western States Coalition, which organized the Portland summit, adds this: "We do have an open door to the members of Congress, and we do use that open door regularly." The mission of the Western States Coalition, according to Johnson, is to "reduce the heavy hand of bureaucracy."

Of note is the conference's keynote speaker: Elizabeth Dole, wife of Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kans.), probable GOP presidential nominee.

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The state of Alaska alone has assembled claims for 1,700 roads and trails. More than 160,000 miles of rights-of-way could be established in Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Glacier Bay national parks. Other Western states are also at risk, NPCA contends.

TAKE ACTION: Write to your senators, urging them to vote against S. 1425, at U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

TECHNOLOGY

Wireless Industry Could Alter Parks

Telecommunications antennae may be built on public lands.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Telecommunications Act of 1996 will propel the U.S. wireless telecommunications industry into the 21st century. But it could also allow communications antennae to tower over Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and other national parks.

On February 8, with a stroke of the president's pen, the act became Public Law 104-104. One provision would permit the telecommunications industry to erect steel antennae and other equipment on federal lands, including national parks. In the absence of a structure or landform of high elevation, such as a mountain, 150- to 200-foot steel "monopoles" could be regimented across scenic landscapes.

Many parks and public lands could be targeted by the industry as potential antennae sites. To oppose construction, federal agencies such as the National Park Service would have to prove an "unavoidable direct conflict of mission" with the industry.

The Interior Department urges that an interagency task force be created to develop procedures for placing equipment on federal lands. In a joint letter to the White House, NPCA and nine other organizations strongly urged President Clinton to make use of this sort of task force.

MARKUP

Key Park Legislation

BILL	PURPOSE	STATUS
State-Run Parks S. 1451	Allows the secretary of the Interior to enter agreements allowing state employees to replace Park Service staff in certain situations. NPCA opposes.	The Senate subcommittee on national parks held a hearing on S. 1451 on March 7.
Omnibus Parks H.R. 1296	Includes nearly 60 park-related measures. NPCA opposes a provision that would open millions of acres of public lands in Utah to development.	A Senate filibuster blocked debate on the bill, and it was pulled from the floor. Congress may take up another version of this legislation.
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.	On March 14, the Senate resources committee held a hearing on S. 1425. The House parks subcommittee approved H.R. 2081 on October 31.
Virginia Parks H.R. 1091	Reduces the authorized boundaries of Richmond National Battlefield Park and Shenandoah National Park. Preempts studies to help determine appropriate boundaries. NPCA opposes.	The Senate subcommittee on national parks held a hearing on H.R. 1091 on March 21. The House approved the bill last September.

NPCA is working on 30 bills.

KATMAI *at a* *Crossroads*

BY BILL SHERWONIT

More and more people are flocking to Brooks Falls for a close-up view of Alaskan brown bears. Anticipating potential mishaps, the Park Service is considering ways to better manage this area.

MID-JULY, BROOKS River: thousands of sockeye salmon push their way up this Alaska Peninsula stream, bound for spawning grounds in Brooks Lake and tributary creeks. Nearing the end of their 1,000-mile journey, the salmon face one final obstacle: a six-foot-high falls that is not high enough to stop the fish but enough to stall them. Every few seconds salmon explode from the pool below in their attempts to scale the falls. Some can be seen darting through the water above. Others fall back to try again. And still others end up in the grasp of Alaskan brown bears, North American's largest carnivorous land mammals.

The coastal cousins of grizzlies, brown bears are by nature solitary. But here, with an abundant, easy-to-catch, and high-energy food source, they have learned to tolerate each other's company. As many as a dozen bears may congregate at Brooks Falls in July, grabbing sockeye from atop the falls, snorkeling in lunge pools beneath it, and watching from stream banks, waiting for scraps.

Also watching are 30 people, squeezed together on a narrow, elevated platform on the river's south shore. By summer's end, more than 12,000 people from around the world will visit Brooks Falls; many have never seen a bear in the wild.

A 1.5-mile-long clearwater stream that connects Brooks and Naknek lakes, the Brooks River is located in 4-million-acre Katmai National Park and Preserve, 300 miles southwest of Anchorage. Over the past 15 years, Brooks River has evolved into one of Alaska's premier bear-viewing sites. Bears often fish within 50 feet of the viewing platform, and they pass much closer when approaching or leaving the falls. Visitors also can see bears along the lower river (at a second platform) or even when walking through Brooks Camp, a nearby developed area that includes a lodge, cabins, National Park Service (NPS) visitor center, and campground.

Unlike Alaska's other top brown bear-viewing sites—most notably McNeil River and Pack Creek—visitor numbers have not been limited here. Only ten people a day are allowed to visit state-managed McNeil River, 65 miles to the northeast, but 200 to 300 may cycle through the Brooks Falls platform. As word has spread, the Brooks River area has become one of Alaska's fastest-growing tourist attractions. Visitation jumped from 3,337 people in 1976 to 14,294 in 1994. A fraction of those visitors come to fish for rainbow trout or salmon; others wish to see the nearby Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, formed

The Park Service is considering limits on the number of visitors allowed to view bears at Katmai.

FRED HIRSCHMANN. INSET: CARY C. GIVEN

BRAD MARKEL

An Alaskan brown bear catches a sockeye salmon at Brooks River.

BROOKS RIVER *Continued*

by a 1912 volcanic eruption. But since the mid-1980s, the majority have come for the bears.

Visitors must obey a series of safety rules, but for the most part, they are free to roam. From a safety perspective, the system so far has worked almost perfectly. Since 1970, only one person has been injured by a bear at Brooks, and no bears have been killed here "in defense of life and property" since 1983. Meanwhile the river's summertime bear population—an estimated 35 to 40—is at, or near, historic highs. Brooks, in short, has demonstrated that humans and brown bears can peacefully co-exist, if certain precautions are taken.

Yet, Brooks River is at a crossroads. Many people, both within the Park Service and outside it, believe the Brooks Camp development and steadily growing visitor use have adversely affected the bears, Native cultural resources, and quality of the visitor experience. "It's a classic case," says Katmai Superintendent Bill Pierce, "of a place being 'loved to death.'"

But it is more than that. During the July peak, many critics say, the Brooks River area more closely resembles a zoo or circus than an edge-of-wilderness place. In part, that reflects changing visitor attitudes, says Mark Wagner, Katmai's chief of interpretation and its Brooks Camp manager: "More and more, we're getting people with a cruise ship-bus tour mentality. They tend to be more naive around bears, and treat [Brooks] almost like Disneyland."

For years, bear experts have predicted that Brooks is "an accident waiting to happen," given the constant, often unmonitored, comings and goings of people and bears.

For years, bear experts and some park managers have predicted that Brooks is "an accident waiting to happen," given the constant, often unmonitored, comings and goings of people and bears. Even Wagner wonders how safe the area is. "We've been lucky," he says. "We're getting too many people. The more people and bears you have, the more chances for an incident."

BESIDES THE SAFETY ISSUE, researchers have determined that camp facilities along with crowding have intruded into critical bear habitat, harassing and displacing the animals.

Cultural resources also have suffered. Established in 1950, Brooks Camp sits on one of the region's most significant archaeological sites. Some damage already has been done, and Alaska's Natives say enough is enough. "These are sacred lands to us," says Margie Macauly, a member of the Council for Katmai Descendants. "We want them to be protected, to be treated with respect. There should be no development at Brooks River."

Nearly everyone agrees on this point: from the perspective of Brooks River's bears and cultural resources, the camp was built in just about the worst place imaginable. In 1950, it was not a big deal. Today, given changed public values and interests, it is.

For all these reasons, the Park Service has developed a plan that will dramatically alter the way it manages the Brooks River area. Seven years in the making, the final Development Concept Plan (DCP) is scheduled for release this year. Among other things, it will likely direct park managers to:

- ▶ Dismantle Brooks Camp and establish a new, lower-impact camp on the river's south side. Brooks' north side would become a "people-free zone."
- ▶ Put a cap on visitor numbers, and place new restrictions on sportfishing.
- ▶ Develop a more structured visitor program that includes guided walks to bear-viewing platforms.
- ▶ Begin working on a new concessioner contract that reflects changing management priorities at Brooks.

"Things can't remain the way they've been," says Pierce. "For too many years we've had to take a Band-Aid approach,

without being able to tackle the real problems. The reality is, we have too many uses, too many problems, in one little place. I can't afford to throw all my resources into this one spot, not when I have 4 million acres to manage. These changes will make it easier to manage Brooks."

While he may not agree with every detail of the DCP, Chip Dennerlein, NPCA's Alaska regional director, agrees that change is necessary—and overdue—at Brooks River.

"Even in the Alaska wilderness, situations change," Dennerlein says. "And things have changed dramatically at Brooks from what they were 20, ten, or even five years ago. Our responsibility is to recognize these changes and respond. With a little discipline at Brooks, we can continue to honor and enjoy these magnificent creatures."

A glimpse of Brooks River's history shows how dramatically human use of the area has evolved. Off and on for 4,500 years, Native peoples made it their seasonal and year-round homes, while using the river and nearby lakes as salmon-harvesting sites. Researchers have found artifacts from several different cultures and consider the area a major archaeological district. It has even greater significance to Aleut and Yupik residents of Naknek and South Naknek villages, about 50 miles away.

CARY C. GIVEN

Cabins at Brooks Camp in Katmai.

"The Brooks River is where my dad was born; it's where I grew up," says Trefon Angasan, an Aleut and vice president of corporate affairs for the Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC): "For many of us, those are still our traditional homelands; we have a spiritual connection to those lands." As recently as the 1950s, Angasan says, Natives would come to net salmon using traditional subsistence methods.

Fishing is also what brought tourism and the present-day Brooks Camp to the river. Brooks was the largest of five remote camps established within Katmai (then a national monument) during the 1950s by Alaska businessman Ray Petersen.

The original camp—the forerunner of Brooks Lodge—could accommodate up to 30 guests, who stayed in tents outfitted with bunks and sleeping bags. Nearly all of Petersen's early clients came to fish. And they discovered the Brooks River to be an angler's paradise, rich with grayling, salmon, and rainbow trout.

In the camp's early days, visitors saw

JEFF FOOTT

Since 1990 Brooks River has attracted more than 10,000 people who travel to Katmai each year to see bears.

few bears along the Brooks River, despite the area's high bear density and easy pickings for sockeyes at the falls. "Seeing a bear was a real big event," says Petersen. It was so unusual that photographs from the 1960s show people fishing and cooking salmon at the falls, now off-limits to anglers and busy with bears in July.

Rick Potts, former chief of Katmai National Park's resource management and research, has attributed the bears' absence to human harassment: "Bears traditionally are not tolerated around human settlements. They're either chased away, eliminated, or transported out of the area. It was the same at Brooks; first it was Native fish camps, then sportfishing."

Some researchers suspect bears continued fishing for salmon at Brooks Falls, but perhaps only at night. A dramatic, albeit gradual, change occurred when the Park Service began to actively manage the area in the 1950s. Instead of being killed or harassed, bears were now welcomed into Brooks. And as human tolerance of bears increased, so did their numbers and visibility. Within three decades, Brooks River was transformed from an exclusive fisherman's paradise into a world-renowned bear-watcher's haven that since 1990 has attracted more than 10,000 people annually, many of them "day trippers."

The explosion of day use, more than anything else, has changed the nature of the Brooks experience since the mid-1980s. As recently as 1983, only 702 day visitors annually passed through Brooks Camp; by 1992, the number had jumped to more than 6,000.

Former Katmai superintendent Ray Bane walked into this scene in 1987 and was "both tremendously impressed and appalled" by what he found. "Brooks was never intended to be an amusement park, but that's what it seemed to be at times," says Bane, speaking as a private citizen. "What had started as a small sportfishing operation ballooned far beyond what anyone ever envisioned. It seemed obvious we should move the camp, get out of conflicts with both the bears and the archaeological resources. To me that's still the number one priority; getting out of there."

Bane began the DCP process in 1989, imagining it would take only two years to complete. It was just a small piece of land to manage: one square mile out of Katmai's 6,250. "But I was extremely naive," he says. "There was a great deal of resistance to change, even within the agency." The plan remained in limbo and public use continued to rise, with no limits in sight, when Bane left Katmai in 1990.

Besides the rapid increase in day visitors, the biggest headache that Katmai's managers have faced since the early 1980s is the mix of anglers and bears.

The uncontrolled visitation has greatly disturbed current Superintendent Bill Pierce: "Everyone seems to agree that the bears are an important part of this ecosystem, and they're the reason most people come here. We have to put a cap on visitors, if we're going to do what's best for the bears."

Daily limits proposed for Brooks are not far below the highs of recent years: 260 people (including park and lodge staff) in July, the peak visitor month; and 220 people in September, considered a more critical time for bears as they prepare for hibernation. Crowding has not been a problem in either June or August, because few bears are around.

Besides the rapid increase in day visitors, probably the biggest headache that Katmai's managers have faced since the early 1980s is the mix of anglers and bears. For years, Brooks River served as a midsummer "meat fishery" for lodges in the Katmai-Bristol Bay region. Fishermen were allowed to keep five salmon a day, even as the region's bear population grew. Over time, a series of restrictions has been put in place, but anglers still fish the Brooks in July and keep one salmon a day.

That is going to change. If not this summer, then next, the entire Brooks River will be made a catch-and-release fishery. And parts of the lower river will be closed to fishing in July, and perhaps September, when bears return to the Brooks to feed on spawned-out salmon carcasses.

Brooks Lodge owner Sonny Petersen (Ray's son) says the river should have been made a catch-and-release stream years ago and that partial stream closures in July and September are reasonable.

More troubling to Petersen are the visitor cap and camp relocation. Park Service plans call for a phased move to a hillside terrace away from critical bear habitat and archaeological remains. When completed, the new facility would include a few rustic cabins, campground, dormitory-style hostel, centralized shower building, and visitor center.

Other critics want Brooks Camp removed and then replaced by a smaller facility south of the river—or no camp at all. The Council of Katmai Descendants

FRED HIRSCHMANN

Anglers fish for salmon in the Brooks River along with the bears.

opposes any development along the Brooks River, says Margie Macauly. All facilities should be relocated in King Salmon, the starting point for most Brooks River visits.

Some environmental groups also oppose the relocation plans, saying that other than a campground, all other facilities should be built outside the park. But NPCA's Dennerlein says, "We're not putting in anything new; we're replacing something already there, with facilities that will have less impact on the resources. Brooks Camp is not a bear gallery. People see bears in the context of the natural setting. We can limit development and still allow people to experience that setting. Brooks does not have to become a commuter wildlife experience."

ALTHOUGH FEW PEOPLE are happy with all elements of the proposed Brooks River changes, the final plan reflects the Park Service's willingness to work with a wide spectrum of interests. Playing a substantial role in its evolution was the Katmai Task Force, an informal working group that included Native residents of the area, lodge owners, conservationists, and developers. Formed in 1994 because local residents felt their concerns were not being addressed, the group "brought people together in a forum where they could talk among themselves and park staff," says Dennerlein. As a result, the DCP is "more responsive and realistic."

The task force also helped build bridges between the Park Service and local residents, who have often felt alienated from Katmai's management. And it started the move toward partnering. "It's clear," says Pierce, "that we need to work with our neighbors, identify ways in which we can build partnerships that will benefit both the park and local residents."

Angasan of the BBNC says the region's Natives have often felt the Park Service to be unresponsive to their needs and desires. But he describes Native relationships with Katmai staff as "better than ever" and says "we want to be partners with the Park Service; we want to be good neighbors."

MARK NEWMAN

A bear and her cubs wait for supper at Brooks River. The Park Service is concerned that too many visitors will affect the animals' habits.

Partnerships will occur in several ways. Already there is talk of building a more substantial gateway presence at King Salmon and Naknek. Local business could help spread visitor use to other areas, thus relieving some of the pressure on Brooks River. And the Park Service agrees that more emphasis is needed on the park's cultural history and resources.

Partnering, says Dennerlein, is a critical ingredient to improved management of the Brooks River and Katmai park as a whole. "The paradox at Katmai," he says, "is that we need a higher level of management to protect both the resource and the visitor experience, but we must do it with less direct federal involvement, because there is less money. Partnerships are one way to do that. What we do here can serve as a role model for national parks throughout Alaska and the rest of the country."

BILL SHERWONIT *lives in Alaska and last wrote for* National Parks *about Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.*

GUARDIANS *of* OUR LEGACY

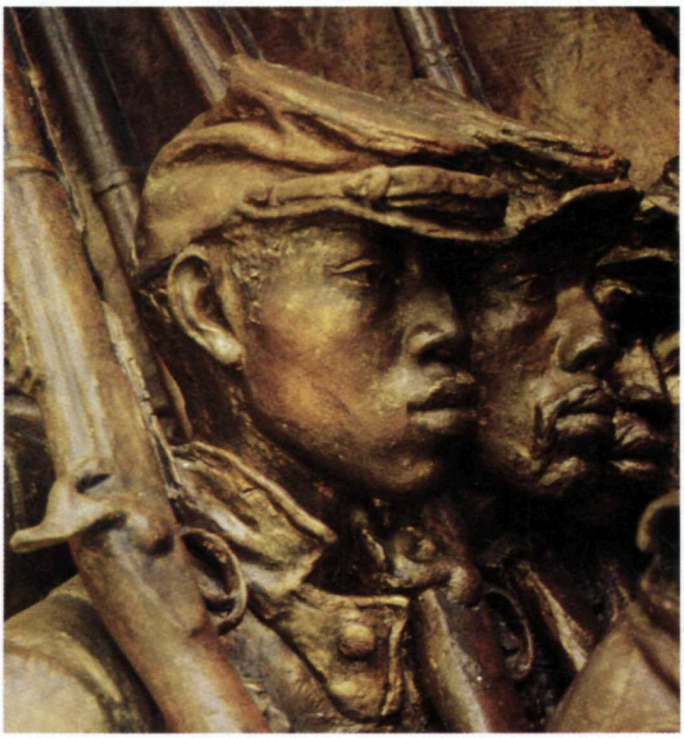
The National Park Service must often find creative solutions to caring for the millions of museum objects tucked away in historic parks.

BY KIM A. O'CONNELL

THANKFULLY SOMEONE had the foresight to label the box "miscellaneous famous people" before pushing it into a closet, so that when it was discovered, it would not be mistaken for an insignificant pile of papers. In 1994, a team of National Park Service (NPS) museum cataloguers found the box during a project to "unpack" Longfellow National Historic Site in Massachusetts. They were rewarded as they investigated its contents: original letters from such miscellaneous famous people as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Marquis de Lafayette.

Now cataloged, the letters and documents, dating from as early as the 17th century, count among the site's 600,000 archival items and 30,000 museum objects related to the life and travels of American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his family. Of the 369 units of the National Park System, Longfellow is among the most vital to understanding the history of American life. The park is in good company in the Northeast. The field area contains the largest museum collections in the park system, with more than 4 million objects and 11 million pieces of paper, nearly one-third of the Park Service's entire holdings. The collections cover a broad range of topics, from the banners and signs used by suffragettes to the oral histories of immigrants coming through Ellis Island, from the tools of the Industrial Revolution to President Martin Van Buren's bed.

"We tend to think of parks as historic structures and natural landscapes, but there's also the material culture," says John Maounis, director of the Park Service's Northeast Museum Services Center. "If we had the buildings without the collections, we'd have places where stories could be told, but the effects are so much greater because we have collections. In many cases, these collections are the hearts of the site."



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

TOM TILL

Historic places such as Thomas Edison's laboratory, left, and artifacts such as the Shaw memorial at Saint-Gaudens, above, are suffering because of a lack of funds.

Despite the significance of these collections to the American identity, most people are unaware that many priceless artifacts, furnishings, and documents are in serious danger of being lost. Decades of inadequate funding, staff, and storage and a daunting cataloging backlog have forced the Park Service to be a creative preservationist. Only about 40 percent of the parks adequately preserve and protect their collections, ac-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cording to Ann Hitchcock, chief curator of NPS: "Others have major deficiencies."

At the center of many of these parks are historic buildings that were simply not constructed to be museums or to house collections. The Longfellow house, which served as General Washington's headquarters during the siege of Boston, is no exception. When the house, which is in Cambridge, was given to the Park Service in 1972 by the Longfellow family trust, the agency concentrated on giving tours through the historic structure and gave less attention to understanding, documenting, and preserving the expansive collections. In addition to Longfellow's 10,000-volume library—which Charles Dickens once complimented because it contained the British author's complete works—the park contains 19th-century art such as paintings by Albert Bierstadt and Eastman Johnson; letters, journals, and photographs on all subjects; and an Asian collection that includes silk kimonos so rare that scholars have come from Japan to study them. More than 20 national park units are represented as well, including early photographs of Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Acadia national parks.

"For many years these items were buried in trunks in the basement and in the attic," says Superintendent Rolf Diamant, who also manages Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts. "They were literally packed into cupboards and drawers. There was no museum storage."

But with the help of John Maounis and the Northeast Museum Services Center, Longfellow implemented a broader approach toward collections management, reflecting a servicewide shift in philosophy. Curators have been able to create climate-controlled space in the basement of the house and begin to empty the closets and chests. "It has enabled us to gain control over the collections," Diamant says of the center, which provides professional support for museum programs throughout the field area on a short-term, project-oriented basis. "It's like the arrival of the cavalry."

Storage at the Olmsted site was once dangerously inadequate. The park holds 1 million original documents related to Frederick Law Olmsted, the nation's foremost park creator, and his sons, also designers and planners. Included are early drafts of the 1916 act creating the National Park Service, to which Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., added the agency's famous mandate to protect resources "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." But the collection's most challenging subset is the nearly 150,000 landscape architectural drawings and plans. The drawings were once rolled up tightly and stored in a vault with such poor conditions that "you almost needed a respirator to go into it, the mold was so bad," Diamant says. When some drawings done on fragile trace paper were unrolled, they crumbled beyond repair into what park curators call "potato chips." But with an increase in operating funds, assistance from the Northeast Document Conservation Center, and consistent support from the New England Backlog Cataloging Program, the park has been one of the lucky ones. The vault is now climate-controlled, and 8,000 drawings are cataloged and conserved each year.

Both the historic structures and the items within them are suffering at Edison National Historic Site in New Jersey. Two years ago, the park was named by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the nation's most endangered historic sites because of its collections. In addition, all 14 laboratory buildings used by the inventor Thomas Edison and his company leak. In addition, Superintendent Maryanne Gerbauckis now sits in Edison's former physics office, as more and more of the historic structures are taken over by modern functions. As a result, park visitors get to see very little of the Edison collection, whose extremely rare early sound recordings and motion picture materials are testimony to the inventor's genius. However, the park is seeking private funding to restore the laboratory complex and to build a new storage facility.

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

For years historic documents at Frederick Law Olmsted were stored wherever they could be, left. Today, above, many documents have been preserved and cataloged.

Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania is also staging a partnership to build a new Gettysburg Museum of the Civil War to store its more than 54,000-item collection, which includes objects not just related to the 1863 battle of Gettysburg but to the entire bloody conflict. The park houses uniforms, flags, artillery tubes, pistols, daguerreotypes, military musical instruments, and a large archival collection of diaries and letters. Unfortunately, park visitors can see only 8 percent of this collection when they come to Gettysburg. Although exhibiting the entire collection would be redundant in many cases, Gettysburg Chief Curator Mike Vice says, he would like to see 15 to 20 percent displayed.

"It's one of the major Civil War collections in America," Vice says. "Eventually there will be a feeling among the American public that steps have to be taken to protect it." Gettysburg's storage areas lack humidity and temperature controls, and the famous Cyclorama painting depicting Pickett's Charge has sustained moisture damage. Leather items are suffering from mildew and "red rot," a state of deterioration that cannot be reversed. Ideally, the new

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

museum would provide state-of-the-art storage and exhibit space and allow stabilization of the collection. Planning for the museum is in the earliest stages, and Superintendent John Latschar is seeking both nonprofit and for-profit partners to advance the project. No federal funding is expected.

At other parks, new facilities are out of the question, so old buildings must be "retrofitted" to hold collections. At Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine in Maryland, for example, remote sensors in a Civil War-era powder magazine that now houses thousands of artifacts are linked via computer to the museum technician's office. Temperature and humidity then can be monitored without entering the historic structure.

The storage deficit prompts questions about whether parks need to keep such large collections. John Maounis says, "Do we need everything from an Edison lab notebook to the bedclothing for his mansion? I think we do. We are not just collections managers, we are educators. We're charged with preserving and interpreting these things intact so that future scholars can ask questions we have not even thought of. We may not have evaluated it very well, but there's relatively little chaff in what we have."

YET THE PARK SERVICE has made great strides in evaluating and cataloging its collections and addressing a daunting backlog. The Northeast field area accounts for more than one-third of the total backlog, with an estimated 9 million uncataloged objects. But in the late 1980s, two events occurred to help the agency inventory its holdings. In 1987, NPS implemented the Automated National Catalog System. The same year the agency detailed its collection management problems and needs to Congress, which from 1988 to 1995 provided $20 million expressly for cataloging. Now more than 48 percent of the Park Service's collections are cataloged, and at present funding levels the backlog would be eliminated by 2011.

But when special project money is no longer available, the Park Service is faced with base funding levels that do not match the agency's professional standards for collections management. NPS can continue its success, Maounis says, only if it consistently receives an adequate operating budget for curatorial work, which it has not done. "Partly [the lack of funding] is a result of our failure to communicate the heritage education side of our mission and the values that are preserved in these collections," Maounis admits. "There's a deep lack of understanding about cultural resources and collections."

"Yet, despite the significance of these collections, most people are unaware that many priceless artifacts, furnishings, and documents are in serious danger of being lost."

As a result, with increasing frequency park staff must conduct fund-raising campaigns on their own, although many parks do not have enough employees to care for the collections, let alone raise money. Of 323 national park units with museum property, 178 have staff for whom curatorial work is a secondary function. Only one museum technician is on staff at Longfellow, and access to researchers is limited. The park is so financially strapped that in 1995 managers decided to close the park to visitors for half the year, a practice that continues.

One goal of NPCA is to raise awareness of the value of museum collections among Congress and the general public. "We need to urge Congress to ensure enough funding for the Park Service to manage these parks in a holistic way," says NPCA Northeast Regional Director Eileen Woodford. She also says, however, that parks and other museum facilities must pool resources and take advantage of partnerships.

Sometimes partnerships mean the difference between life and death for museum objects. For Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in New Hampshire, a partnership with a major museum is the only solution for an icon of American heritage: the Shaw memorial. Among the thousands of working models, cameos, coins, bas-reliefs, and monuments that are the legacy of American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the Shaw memorial is arguably the most heroic. The 11-foot-high by 14-foot-wide sculpture depicts African-American soldiers from the famed 54th Massachusetts regiment surrounding Robert Gould Shaw, the officer who was killed leading them into battle during the Civil War. But the memorial—which moved actor Matthew Broderick, who played Shaw in the movie *Glory*, to tears—is degenerating.

"The Shaw memorial has been in an exposed position for 40 years," Superintendent John Dryfhout says. "The plaster has fabric and other materials inside holding it together, and it's deteriorating internally. A piece that size requires a building that's twice as big as it is to hold it, and we can't [yet] accommodate that on a historic property."

To provide for the memorial's long-term care, the park has decided to lend the sculpture to an as-yet-unnamed museum. Until an adequate structure for the original can be constructed, the park and the Trustees of the Augustus Saint-Gaudens Memorial will raise money for a bronze replica, to be unveiled in 1997.

One federal facility is a crucial partner for parks in the National Capital field area. The Museum and Archaeological Research and Support (MARS) facility was created in 1982 to store and preserve items for the many parks in and around Washington, D.C. MARS maintains 40 collections, including artifacts related to Clara Barton and the American Red Cross, the lion's share of Frederick Douglass' library, and, at one time, Abraham Lincoln's death clothes (now on exhibit at Ford's Theatre National Historic Site in Washington, D.C.). But by far the most famous MARS property is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection, an uncensored gathering

of tokens and mementos left at the Wall.

Objects are highly personal and varied, always poignant, and present a unique management challenge for curator Duery Felton and museum technician Tony Porco. The collection—40,000 items strong and growing—ranges from the familiar black and green jungle boots to a special teddy bear. When a park ranger first walked by the bear resting against the black wall, it was unclothed, but with each pass someone had added something: first a red shirt, then an equipment belt, then a bayonet. Felton says people are becoming more and more creative, which means that he and Porco must sometimes rely on educated guesses as to the meaning of and care required for an object.

"Because it's a very contemporary collection, it's important to keep the objects in the context in which they were left," says Felton, a Vietnam War veteran. "Sometimes objects are left facing the memorial or away from the memorial. We've learned that how people leave objects at the Wall has meaning...if you're familiar with military or ethnic customs."

The greatest challenge for MARS, as for every park with museum pieces, is to make the collection available to visitors. The facility has helped to stage "Personal Legacy: The Healing of a Nation" at the National Museum of American History, the first-ever exhibition of the Vietnam Veterans collection and the first major collaboration between the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution. A book, *Offerings at the Wall*, brings the collection to people who may not be able to come to the nation's capital.

The Park Service is also turning to computer technology to make collections accessible. The agency now has a site on the World Wide Web, and several parks offer virtual tours of museum collections via CD-ROM and other electronic formats. Digitizing photographs and other materials for public consumption also saves wear and tear on the originals.

After nearly 15 years assessing and refining its own collection management strategies, the Park Service now finds itself in the vanguard for other museum curators. In response to a 1990 audit, the Interior Department asked NPS—whose collections constitute 50 percent of the department's holdings—to take the lead in developing the Interior Museum Property Program. The interagency program accounts for the department's collections, provides training for curators, and sets standards for preservation and protection. The program team is planning a conference to foster cooperation and improve technical expertise among federal and nonfederal curators.

As the 21st century nears, the National Park Service will continue working to bridge—or at least narrow—the gap between making museum collections accessible and ensuring their protection for future generations. "You have to look at a historic site just like you would look at an ecosystem," says NPCA's Woodford. "Once a species is extinct, a vital part of an ecosystem is gone. Similarly, if these objects are lost, they simply cannot be replaced."

KIM A. O'CONNELL *is News Editor for* National Parks.

IRENE OWSLEY SPECTOR

Many visitors leave items at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which are then cataloged by the National Park Service.

HOMECOMING

MIKE WALLACE

The California condor was nearly extinct in the 1980s, when just nine individuals existed in the wild.

Thanks to an extended captive breeding program, the California condor stands a chance of reestablishing itself in the wild. This summer nine condors will be released near the Grand Canyon, a place from which they have been absent for more than 70 years.

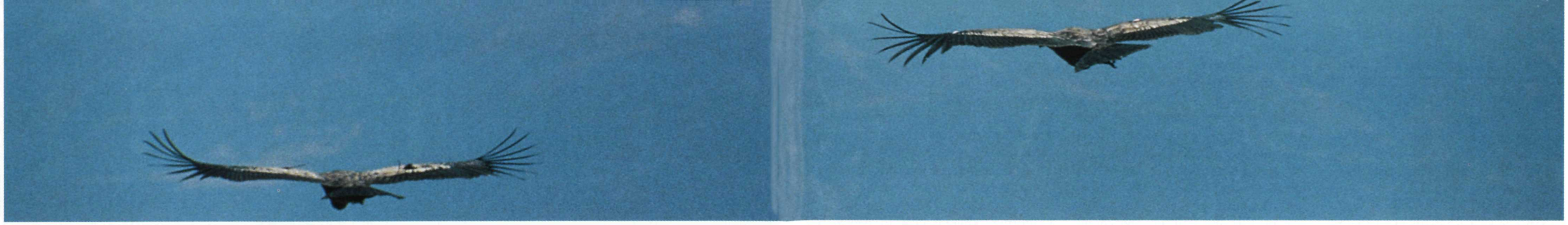
BY TODD WILKINSON

THE LAST TIME a California condor was seen soaring above the Grand Canyon, Calvin Coolidge occupied the White House and Paris was hosting the eighth summer Olympic Games. Although more than 70 years have passed since the giant avian scavengers vanished from Southwestern skies, their return in the coming weeks to the Vermilion Cliffs of northern Arizona is being trumpeted as a biological milepost.

To federal wildlife officials who have carefully orchestrated the return of this "flagship" endangered species, condor reintroduction represents a chance not only to resurrect a bird pushed to the brink of extinction but to restore public confidence in a vanguard law that, like the condor itself, has been stridently persecuted by special interests.

Indeed, as Congress continues to mull over sweeping changes in the Endangered Species Act and the Wise Use movement continues to fight reintroduction, the future of federal intervention on behalf of rare plants and animals may be determined by the direction the condor takes. "A lot is riding on its wings," says Mike Wallace, the national condor recovery team leader based at the Los Angeles Zoo, where captive condors are being bred for future release in the wild.

The Vermilion Cliffs are upwind of the Grand Canyon within a rugged section of desert controlled by the Bureau



MIKE WALLACE

of Land Management. Wallace believes it may take only a matter of months for the first group of "founders" to drift into the chasmic airspace that fills this natural wonder of the world. Should the winds of tolerance continue to blow favorably, it is conceivable that the big birds will also wend their way northward into Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, to Zion National Park, and perhaps to the red slickrock cathedrals of Bryce Canyon National Park.

According to biologist Bert Harting, a consultant with the Peregrine Fund, which helped write the environmental assessment that cleared the way for the condor's homecoming, the vast mosaic of public land in northern Arizona and southern Utah is extraordinary condor habitat because it is so remote. Harting says that national parks and wilderness areas, especially, are vital components of the recovery zone because they provide adequate refugia for a bird that can cover 100 miles in a daytime reconnaissance. Grand Canyon itself is 100 miles long and 50 miles wide at its broadest point.

"With this release and further augmentations in the years ahead, the goal is to establish a regional population that will eventually be self-sufficient and self-perpetuating," Harting says. "Once that objective is met, the condor's status will be downgraded from endangered to threatened. I don't think anybody wants to see that happen more than the biologists who have invested years of their lives into the project."

In June, five male and four female condors will be brought to the Vermilion Cliffs and left alone in holding pens to acclimate them to their new surroundings. By early summer, the doors will be opened to release the birds. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt says that even President Clinton is keeping a keen eye on the birds' progress.

Conservationists are delighted. "What the skies over the Grand Canyon need is more quiet soaring condors and fewer noisy airplanes," says David Simon, Southwest regional director for the National Parks and Conservation Association. The public is excited, too: officials with the National Park Service and other federal agencies have been fielding hundreds of telephone calls from interested tourists as far away as Europe and Asia.

HOW DID SUCH an uncomely creature become recognized as the poster child for managing endangered species? Part of the answer lies in the mystique of the condor itself, a primal, intelligent buzzard that experts say has been grossly misunderstood.

Condors are the largest avian flyers in North America, with wingspans that can reach 9-1/2 feet. Wallace, himself a hang-gliding enthusiast, says that watching *Gymnogyps californicus* is "magical. It's like seeing a dinosaur come into view from the past," he explained. "I've watched these birds for a couple of decades and I still get a spine-tingling sensation."

Yet, Western culture has ascribed to them a rather unsavory reputation. Like their smaller cousins, the black and turkey vultures, condors have been maligned for 400 years as omens of death. Although many Native American tribes still pay reverence to these birds in their oral traditions, Spanish settlers following in the wake of Columbus associated condors with the macabre because of their ominous habit of circling in the sky, scouting out their next meal.

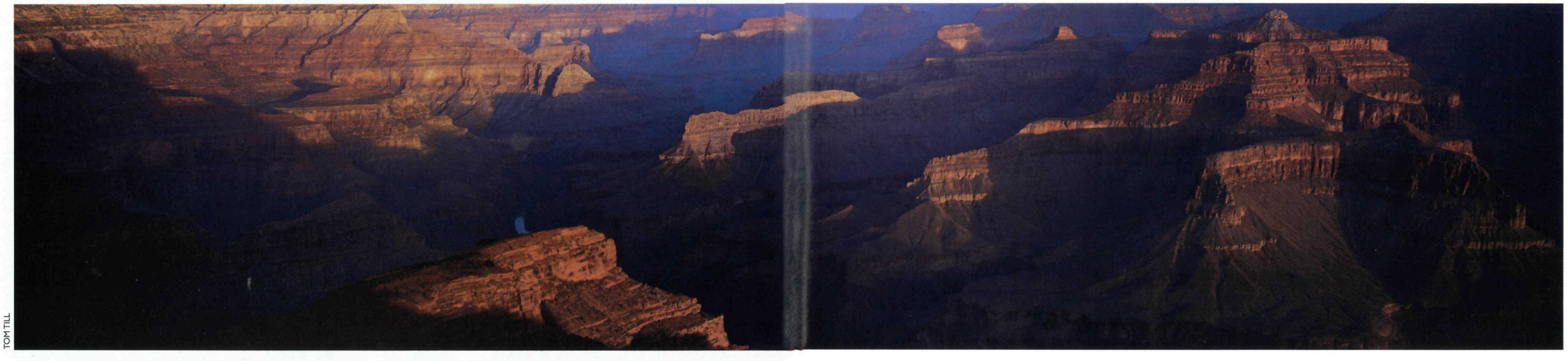
Despite this reputation, condors have many admirable characteristics. They are long-lived, achieving ages of 50 to 80 years; they are attentive parents; they are loyal to ancient nest sites; and, for better or for worse, they are highly curious about humans. And because condors feast solely on the flesh of dead animals, they pose no threat to domestic livestock such as cattle or sheep. The name California condor actually is somewhat of a misnomer because it implies they were endemic only to the Forty-Niner state. At the end of the Pleistocene Epoch 11,000 years ago, condors were native to several different parts of the continent. Sightings were recorded or remains found in upstate New York, Florida, British Columbia, and throughout the desert Southwest and northern Mexico.

The condor's decline began with the encroachment of European colonization. By the end of the 19th century, the condor's chief natural food source of big game had been depleted because of overhunting by humans. In 1924, a rancher reportedly saw the last condor in Arizona feeding on a calf carcass with a pair of golden eagles near the town of Williams. By the early 1930s, the giant birds were completely extirpated from the Southwest after being shot by local residents who boasted in saloons about killing the birds for sport.

Soon thereafter, the final vestiges of the species were found in an area surrounding California's Central Valley. Ornithologists predicted that extinction was imminent. Reacting to a public outcry, the California legislature passed foresighted laws aimed at protecting the condor, but subsequent decades of shooting, lead and chemical poisoning, starvation, and collisions with power lines made the situation even more dire.

Six years before the Endangered Species Act was passed into law in 1973, the condor already was included on the government's inaugural list of endangered species. During the 1980s, as deaths from lead poisoning continued to mount, just nine wild individuals remained. A couple dozen additional birds existed in captivity.

The prospect of losing the species forever forced the federal government to contemplate two agonizing alternatives: either allow the few remaining birds in the wild to continue on their inevitable course toward extinction, or round them up and try to reestablish the species through captive breeding, as was done with the black-footed ferret. In 1987, the latter option was chosen.



TOM TILL

The leader of the condor recovery team at the time was Lloyd Kiff, then the curator of ornithology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. Today, Kiff is science director of the Peregrine Fund, headquartered in Boise, Idaho.

Kiff says it was possible that the last remaining condor pair might have bred successfully in the wild (although the last two eggs laid by the female were thin-shelled because of DDT), but the odds were against these birds surviving very long.

"Without a doubt, our lowest point in condor recovery was bringing them in," Kiff explains. "The high point was releasing the first birds from captivity in California and giving them a chance to successfully fledge young from the nest. Nine years ago, I bragged that we would get them back out there, and we did."

Success could never have been achieved without assistance from the San Diego Wild Animal Park, the Los Angeles Zoo, and, later, the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, all of which continue to serve important roles in expanding the size of the captive flock. This trio of propagation facilities is the anchor to a condor population that has grown to more than 100 individuals.

Any time animals are sequestered from the wild, however, scientists are concerned that each successive generation of offspring will lose the knowledge necessary to survive under natural conditions. The challenge was not only to return the birds to their former haunts as quickly as possible but teach them to avoid the same hazards that doomed their ancestors.

For a condor, power poles are enticing places to roost, but the lines strung between them can be deadly. In preparation for their release in California and at Vermilion Cliffs, condors in captivity underwent a regimen of "aversive conditioning," whereby they were exposed to simulated power poles that delivered soft shocks whenever they landed on them. Similar tactics might also be used to dissuade condors from descending upon road-killed animals on highways near the Grand Canyon's rim.

Dubbed "Dr. Condor" by his colleagues, team leader Wallace is a global guru in the gestalt of these amazing buzzards. Before the release of captive birds in the Los Padres National Forest, he spearheaded an experiment tracking Andean condors' movement across the landscape in South America and later in California. "There is a condor culture, a tradition there, that young birds learn in order to survive," Wallace says. "We are starting from scratch with California condors that have never tasted freedom, but the birds released in the Grand Canyon are the offspring of wild parents in California."

Wallace says the doubts raised by skeptics have always been overcome. "They said we would never be able to hatch wild-laid condor eggs in the lab, but we have. They said we would never get captive condors to lay fertile eggs, but we've done that," he pointed out. "They claimed that condors would never breed with radio transmitters on their wings, but they're doing it. They insisted we would never be able to capture [condors] without causing injury, and the day would never arrive when we released them again to their original habitat. Those obstacles, too, have been overcome."

ALTHOUGH CAPTIVE condor populations are thriving, wild releases in California have been problematic, given high densities of human development in their former U-shaped range. This is precisely why the strategy outlined in the recovery plan calls for establishing several subpopulations to reduce the risk of catastrophic loss from threats such as disease and to create genetic pools.

Besides the condors freed at Vermilion Cliffs, a population of 17 individuals inhabits Los Padres National Forest 50 miles north of Los Angeles. Other possible release sites during the remainder of this century include federal lands in New Mexico and Big Bend National Park in Texas. "Once again, national parks are proving their value as a safety net for all species, including humans," reminds NPCA's Simon. "All across the United States, they offer the chance for redemption and the

promise of a second chance."

In two decades, roughly $25 million has been spent in public and private funds to save the condors. Critics charge that condor recovery is too expensive and lacks results, implying that perhaps the species should be allowed to go the way of the dodo and the passenger pigeon.

The Peregrine Fund's Kiff says, "It pains me to hear the condor recovery program painted as a waste of money," he said. "On an international or even national scale, the amount of money spent on condors is comparatively negligible. We live in an affluent society where individual actors make greater sums in a year, and individual paintings sell for more at auction. Is not the condor worth an equivalent amount as an art form or for its entertainment value?"

The condor recovery program has brought together more than a dozen different governmental agencies and conservation groups across a wide spectrum to work on achieving common objectives. Kiff says that building public-private partnerships makes economic sense in an era when wildlife budgets are being slashed.

Robert Mesta agrees. Mesta does not fit the typical profile of a federal bureaucrat. A Native American with flowing black hair sometimes tied in a ponytail, he is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's principal spokesman on condor recovery and a biologist handed the daunting task of selling the idea to hostile citizens in rural Arizona and Utah. Shy and soft-spoken, he has opened lines of communication in places where cooperation was thought impossible.

"This particular part of the country has a history of confrontation with the federal government, and [the residents are] not happy with what they perceive to be multiple layers of regulation and red tape asserted upon their lifestyles," Mesta says.

One defining moment, he says, occurred in late January when the Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored a public meeting in the southern Utah town of Kanab, a Wise Use bastion where anti-federalism sentiments often boil over. At a meeting attended by a couple hundred people, Mesta said some of the condor proponents actually feared for their personal safety. "In the room that night, the tension and hate and distrust for the federal government [were] so thick you could almost choke on it," Mesta said. "The major problem, as I see it, was lack of information. The more educated you are, the less likely you will find these birds to be a threat."

The irony is that the town of Kanab bills itself as a gateway community to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and is likely to benefit greatly from an influx of condor watchers, who are already flocking to the foot of the Vermilion Cliffs.

MIKE WALLACE

Faced with the prospect of losing the condor forever, scientists tried captive breeding to reestablish the species.

Among the unfounded rumors of people opposed to condor recovery is that ranchers would be held liable if, say, a condor happened to take a drink at a cattle trough and accidentally drown. Another misconception is that the presence of condors will result in the shutdown of logging, mining, and livestock grazing on Forest Service and BLM lands abutting the national park.

These rumors are false, says Mesta. The truth is that seldom has there been a species more benign to traditional land use than the condor. "These birds won't affect timber sales, they won't affect mining or hunting, and they will have zero impact on the livestock industry," notes team leader Wallace. "The only thing that's required from the general public is to keep an open mind."

To assuage the fears of local residents, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service asked Interior Secretary Babbitt to invoke the special 10-(J) clause contained in the Endangered Species Act, allowing the birds to be managed as "experimental, nonessential." The 10-(J) stipulation is the same regulatory tool used in Yellowstone to make the return of the wolves more palatable to ranchers.

The status gives biologists greater flexibility in resolving potential conflicts throughout the recovery zone. In addition, the various cooperating agencies have all signed a memorandum of understanding committing them to provide ample warning to local communities if any change in the condor's status is proposed. Mesta considers this a formality because once the condors establish themselves and demonstrate that they pose no threat to human livelihoods, such precautions will be moot.

At the same time, Mesta hopes the condor's struggle will lead to a greater appreciation for endangered species. Perpetuating the survival of condors involves deep moral and ethical issues that have been decidedly absent in congressional debates over the Endangered Species Act. Condor recovery shows that the law can work as it was intended.

"Doing what's right for these birds involves...accepting responsibility for our own actions. It comes from the philosophy that if you cause a problem, it's your responsibility to address it and fix it. Within our culture today," he adds, "this is the standard by which we measure our worth as a society. I believe this attitude translates over to our environment, too."

TODD WILKINSON *lives in Bozeman, Montana, and writes regularly for* National Parks *magazine.*

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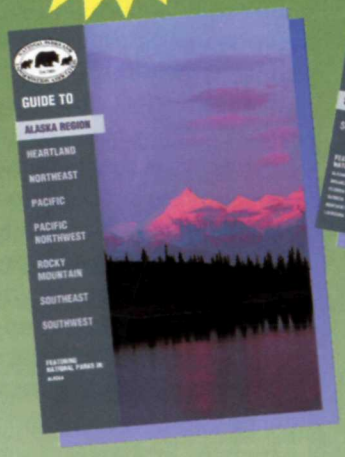

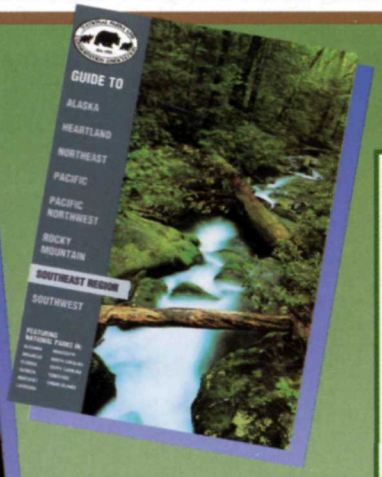

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NP-MAG M/J 96

Sandy Points

With the right combination of natural forces, a sand dune can form almost anywhere. The park system encompasses many of the best examples.

BY CLAYTON E. JACKSON

GENERATIONS OF painters, writers, and photographers have been inspired by wind-sculpted dunes, with backdrops of blue mountains or crashing surf. Sand dunes come in many forms and as many colors as paints in an artist's palette.

The typical dune is formed as wind picks up loose particles of sand, eventually depositing them behind an obstruction such as a rock. Given the right combination of sand, wind, surf, and natural or manmade obstructions, a dune can form almost anywhere. The Sand Hill region of north central Nebraska is one of the world's largest and most unusual dune areas. The grass-covered dunes of the Sand Hills cover an area as large as New Hampshire and Vermont combined. Substantial dune fields are widespread in the United States, yet rare enough that the National Park System encompasses many of the more outstanding examples. These sites are great places to hike, watch birds, investigate geography, and see the unique creatures that develop around and rely upon the dunes.

Mojave

For millions of world-weary travelers, the recently established 1.4-million-acre Mojave National Preserve in California offers quiet respite. Included in this Delaware-size tract of land are the 45-square-mile, 600-foot-high Kelso Dunes.

Anyone who spends time at Mojave usually comes to hike, photograph, or contemplate Kelso Dunes. Hiking the dune crest takes about two hours, and the view in the rarefied desert air is outstanding. Visibility can extend up to 100 miles, making the strenuous hike worth the effort.

One of the more unusual features of the Kelso Dunes is the noise they make when disturbed. Called "booming" or "singing," the rumbling sound is emitted as sand avalanches on the steeper, leeward side of the dunes.

The Mojave also contains nearly three dozen volcanic cinder cones, including the Cima Dome, which is covered by what many believe to be one of the world's largest and thickest Joshua tree forests. Mojave also contains one of the largest and best preserved limestone caverns in the state of California. To make reservations for Mitchell Caverns guided tours, call 805-942-0662.

Hikers can follow a trail to the top of Teutonia Peak on Cima Dome or an eight-mile trail linking the preserve's two campgrounds—Mid Hills and Hole-in-the-Wall. Both camping sites have picnic tables, pit toilets, and well water. A variety of services are available in the nearby community of Baker.

For more information, write to Mojave National Preserve, c/o Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 601 Nevada Highway, Boulder City, NV 89005; or call 702-293-8918.

Great Sand Dunes

With a 700-foot vertical drop, the Great Sand Dunes are among the tallest in North America. Located in the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado, Great Sand Dunes National Monument was established in 1932 to protect 39 square miles of dunes.

The building process for these sand dunes probably began during the last Ice Age. Streams of glacial melt carried

JOHN ELK III

Visitors explore Kelso Dunes at Mojave National Preserve in California.

CLAYTON E. JACKSON *last wrote for* National Parks *about fossils.*

gravel, sand, and rocks out of the San Juan Mountains—50 miles west of Great Sand Dunes—onto the floor of the valley. This sand was then carried across the valley by prevailing southwesterly winds, and transported up against the Sangre de Cristo Range. These sand-laden winds—which lose just enough energy to drop their sandy loads—were funneled up through three low mountain passes: Mosca, Medano, and Music.

The dunes are built up in another way. Medano Creek flows along the dune field's leading edge, washing sand back into the valley from which it came. This sand is then blown back onto the dunes by "reversing winds" that come down out of the passes. The reverse winds pile the dunes back onto themselves, building them ever higher.

Hiking to the top of the dune crest is a popular visitor activity and takes about an hour for the physically fit. In the sand, hikers may find the tracks of the ord kangaroo rat, a mammal capable of surviving without ever drinking water. Several insect species here are found nowhere else in the world, such as the Great Sand Dunes tiger beetle and a type of darkling beetle.

Several trails lead around the dunes into the mountains. Picnicking and camping also are popular, and flush toilets, drinking water, picnic tables, and fire grates are available. The Pinyon Flats Campground is open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis. Backcountry camping requires a free permit, available at the visitor center. Motels, restaurants, and other services are available in Alamosa.

For additional information, write to Great Sand Dunes National Monument, 11500 Highway 150, Mosca, CO 81146; or call 719-378-2312.

Sleeping Bear Dunes

The northwestern shore of Michigan's lower peninsula is a remarkable land of towering coastal sand dunes, dizzying bluffs, wilderness islands, azure lakes, and dense hardwood forests. Many of these scenic wonders are within the boundaries of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore on Lake Michigan.

JEFF GNASS

Beach dunes have formed near the shore at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan

Today's sand dunes were yesterday's glacial debris. Meltwater from the glaciers dropped sandy debris between huge ice lobes and formed Empire Bluffs, the Sleeping Bear Bluffs, and Pyramid Point. Glacial deposits provide the sand for the dune building that continues now. Lake Michigan's constant wave action undercuts the bluffs, causes sediment to fall into the lake, and deposits the sand along the shoreline. Prevailing southwesterly winds are able to gain strength across Lake Michigan's open water, pick up the sand, and blow it inland to form dunes.

The two major dune types at Sleeping Bear are beach and perched. Beach dunes form near the shoreline; Aral Dunes along Platte Bay are one of the most dramatic examples. They rise more than 100 feet above Lake Michigan. In contrast, perched dunes are found on the tops of the Sleeping Bear Plateau, Empire Bluffs, Pyramid Point, and the west coast of South Manitou Island. Most perched dunes are a thin dune blanket resting on a bluff of glacial debris. The wind continues to erode the upper layers and blows the free sand onto the dune. The total dune area is four square miles.

Many rewards await the visitor. The 7.1-mile Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive provides panoramic views of Sleeping Bear Dunes, Lake Michigan, and Glen Lake. Climbing to the top of the dunes is allowed at Dune Climb and involves a scramble of 130 feet. Thirteen trails, varying from 1.5 to 14.7 miles, are also available. Platte River and D.H. Day campgrounds are open throughout the year on a first-come, first-served basis. Wilderness camping is available at des-

ignated backcountry sites on the mainland and on South and North Manitou islands. North Manitou provides a 15,000-acre wilderness experience all its own, including a virgin grove of white cedar. The North American champion white cedar is here and measures 17.6 feet in circumference and 90 feet tall. Accommodations and other services are located in any number of local communities.

For more information, write to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 9922 Front Street, Empire, MI 49630-0277; or call 616-326-5134.

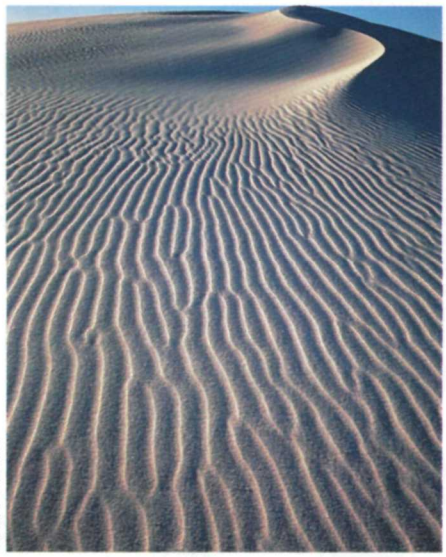
White Sands

In the Tularosa Basin in New Mexico lies one of the country's great natural treasures, and one of the best places to study the adaptability of plants and animals to a harsh, unusual environment.

The beautiful White Sands dunes look more like waves rolling off storm-tossed seas than sand dunes. White Sands, a study in the growth process of dunes, is an active field: dunes travel several feet each year, and new ones are constantly being formed.

The first dunes to form downwind from Lake Lucero, a dry lake, are dome dunes. These dunes have been known to migrate nearly 40 feet in a year. As dome dunes migrate into the heart of the dune field, they fuse together in long rows and become stretched by the wind. At this point, traverse dunes emerge. Among the largest sand formations at White Sands, some travese dunes are 400 feet from back to front and as high as 40 feet. Eventually traverse dunes become so stretched that they are breached by the wind. When this happens, the dune's leading edges curve around to form a crescent or barchan dune. Inevitably, the points of the barchan dune become snagged and firmly anchored. The wind pushes the dune inside out, as the nose moves past the anchored points. The result looks like a boomerang and is called a parabolic dune—the final growth stage of White Sands' dunes. The noses of some parabolic dunes can extend 900 feet ahead of the anchored arms.

White Sands also offers a look at the color adaptations of some species. Snout and tiger beetles are a lighter hue than specimens found at other locales. And a nearly transparent variety of cricket becomes almost invisible against a gypsum background. Both the bleached earless and Cowles' prairie lizards have adapted to life in the dunes, becoming almost pure white. The Apache pocket mouse has a white coat unlike the more common tan coloring among pocket mice. A short distance away from the visitor center, the same species of lizards and mice are tan.



SCOTT T. SMITH

The wind forms patterns in the sand at White Sands National Monument.

The Dunes Dive is an eight-mile loop through the heart of the dunes. Interpretive displays and pullouts make it easy for the visitor to explore the dunes first-hand. Plants and animals are more easily seen along a self-guiding nature trail on the edge of the dune field. Photography is best when brilliant Southwest sunrises and sunsets further accentuate the already stunning dunes. Many ranger-led activities are also available in the summer months, including: orientation talks, nature walks, evening slide presentations, and star talks. The monument does not have camping facilities, but three public campgrounds are within 35 miles. A primitive backcountry camp site is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Alamagordo, 15 miles away, has accommodations and visitor services.

For more information, write to White Sands National Monument, P.O. Box 1086, Holloman AFB, NM 88330; or call 505-479-6124.

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What's a Park Worth?

Last year's federal shutdown focused attention on both the economic and intrinsic value of parks.

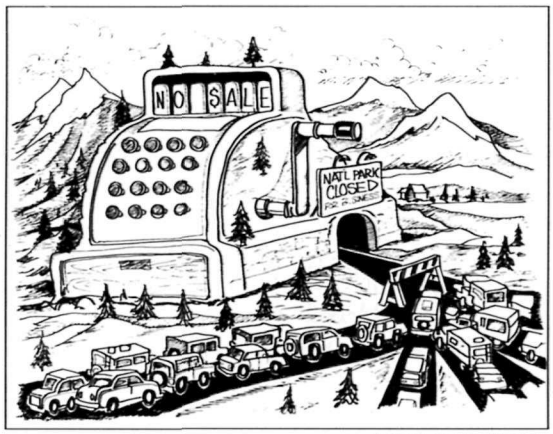
BY VIRGIL G. ROSE

LATE LAST YEAR, our national parks, along with the rest of the federal government, were closed for more than three weeks. During that time, a hue and cry was heard from nearby communities and businesses about the economic hardship caused by the federal shutdown. Communities next to national parks lost millions of dollars in tax revenue and profits; small concessioners were pushed to the verge of financial ruin; park rangers' salaries were delayed; and the U.S. Treasury lost as much as $2 million because the National Park Service (NPS) was not collecting entrance fees.

The Interior Department calculated that gateway communities and surrounding regions lost $14 million in tourism revenues each day the parks were closed. Many towns in which parks are the largest source of income were financially devastated. Mariposa County, near Yosemite National Park, reportedly lost as much as $10,000 a day in taxes; 1,600 jobs disappeared; and hotels and restaurants sat virtually empty. Similar horror stories were repeated around the system. Goodwill also suffered as potential visitors, many from overseas, missed an opportunity to experience some of America's greatest wonders. The Interior Department estimated that 383,000 people were turned away from national parks every day of the 25-day shutdown.

The national parks lost other things, too, during the closure—things distinct from the Park Service, gateway communities, or the concessions industry, and not measurable in hard numbers.

They lost some of their revered status in the American culture. National parks traditionally have been revered as "the best idea America ever had," and closing them for even one day should have been unthinkable. When the parks did close last year, a clamor arose, and Congress subsequently hurried to reopen them. Many park advocates saw this move as a comforting reaffirmation of the parks' political inviolability.



DOUGLAS MACGREGOR

On closer inspection, however, a disturbing theme became apparent. Many people, and members of Congress in particular, wanted to open the parks only because they make money. For example, the Park Service, using a "money generation model," has calculated that the parks pump about $10 billion annually into the economies of their regions.

But using this information as the primary reason to keep the parks open is misleading and dangerous. Even if national parks made no money, we should be thankful they exist and do everything possible to keep them open, fully funded, and professionally staffed. The money, no matter how great, does not begin to match the nonmarket worth of even the lesser-known sites of the park system: the Obed Wild and Scenic River, one of the last remaining wild rivers in the East; and Lava Beds National Monument, where volcanic eruptions created a natural fortress used by the Modoc Indians to fight off the U.S. Cavalry in 1872.

But the parks lost something else during the shutdown—something that will be harder to recover than revenue: the care and protection by the parks' stewards, the men and women of the Park Service.

Because of the nature of the society in which they exist, parks require constant tending; without it they will gradually erode and disappear. Closing parks and prohibiting entry of employees deemed "nonessential," such as rangers, scientists, and interpreters, is as thoughtless as building fences around the parks and walking away. We could wall off the cathedral redwoods of John Muir National Monument and let strip malls creep up to the edge, but it would no longer be a park; it would be a doomed refuge under siege. A Yellowstone National Park bordered by mountains hollowed out for mining, watered by streams filled with acidic wastes, and surrounded by forests pockmarked with clear cuts would not be the park we want to preserve.

If the price of freedom is constant vigilance, as Thomas Jefferson said, then the price for national parks is constant commitment. The men and wo-

VIRGIL G. ROSE is chairman of *NPCA's Board of Trustees.*

men of the National Park Service know that better than anyone. They live in substandard housing and work long hours for low wages in difficult conditions to protect the resources we too often take for granted. If the government shutdown taught us anything, it is the danger of complacency. Park Service rangers, biologists, interpreters, and historical experts are the first line of defense, essential to ensuring that parks will exist for future generations. By locking NPS employees out of their jobs, Congress unfairly diminished their role and put the entire National Park System at risk.

It is often said that national parks are our natural and cultural treasures. But do our elected officials really act as though they treasure these parklands? Based on their response when the parks were taken away from us, the answer is no. They value them, but they do not treasure them. I value many material things, but in most cases only because of what they can do for me—their practical utility. I do not think about the needs of my computer, for instance. I use it hard every day, and when it wears out, I will trade it in for a new one.

In contrast, I treasure a drawing my daughter Julie made in the first grade, and an old coin my father gave me. They are irreplaceable no matter their cash value. How many of us lavish time and effort caring for and preserving the things we cherish, often well beyond what a "rational" economic analysis would recommend? These are only inanimate objects, yet they mean something more to us than dollars and cents. How much more devoted should we be to our national parks?

Places that are now national park units molded us into a nation. Sometimes they made our hearts sing. At Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine, Francis Scott Key was moved in 1814 to write our national anthem. And sometimes they made our souls cry. At Manzanar National Historic Site, thousands of Japanese-Americans were interned during World War II for no crime other than sharing the same race as an enemy nation.

Looking across the landscape of the park system is like peering into the stars to see how the universe began. Stand at the top of Kill Devil Hill on a windy day and you can hear gulls mock the Wright brothers as they wheel out a clumsy flying machine to attempt what no one has ever done before. Turn your attention 1,500 miles to the west, and hear the ring of the sledgehammer as the transcontinental railroad line is joined at Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869.

As an engineer, I was taught about things that could be counted and measured precisely, but in the debate over the government shutdown too little attention has been paid to the park values that cannot be added up on a calculator. Many noneconomic values are associated with national parks—keeping our history alive, preserving wildlife and natural wonders, safeguarding our cultural icons—and we need a new yardstick to measure them. Fortunately, the Park Service is taking the first steps toward that through a program focusing on social science, including "green" economics, in the parks. Putting a price tag on resources that are inherently noncommercial seems to devalue them in our profit-conscious society. We must not let that happen to our parks.

This raises the question of whether in 100 years our great-grandchildren will treasure Yellowstone or simply value it. The answer depends on what we do today. If we promote national parks because they make money, our descendants will preserve them only until a more lucrative use comes along. But if we acknowledge that the meaning and worth of national parks come from elsewhere, if we stress that national parks are important because of what they teach us about ourselves, then perhaps our children will treasure them and the hopeful phrases of the legislation establishing the Park Service will come true: "To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to…leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

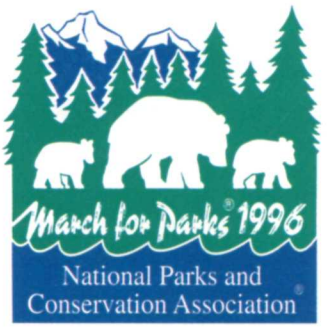
NPCA Notes

BY M. KATHERINE HEINRICH

March for Parks

▶ NPCA would like to thank the national agencies and organizations whose support helped make 1996 the most successful year yet for March for Parks, the association's annual Earth Day event:

American Volkssport Association
National Park Service
National Recreation and Park Association
National Tree Trust



Take Credit

▶ NPCA members are encouraged to apply for the new NPCA Visa card, which offers a low introductory interest rate of 5.9 percent and gives you the power to help the parks every time you use the card.

The NPCA Visa card is available with no annual fee and will help you save money while you help save the parks. After September 1, the card offers a low 15.9 percent fixed interest rate. Other benefits include travel insurance and convenience checks.

The standard NPCA Visa card features a captivating grizzly bear family portrait and the NPCA logo, while the Visa Gold card with the NPCA logo offers an extended line of benefits. Either way, with every purchase, a contribution will be made automatically to NPCA—at no additional cost to you. For more information about applying for the card, turn to the ad on page 26.

High Road to China

▶ NPCA will be well represented in a delegation of American park officials, experts, and enthusiasts traveling to China May 5–19. Officials from China's Office of National Scenic Areas (ONSA)—the equivalent of our National Park Service—traveled to the United States this winter seeking information and resources applicable to the management of their country's 119 national parks. The ONSA delegation requested a follow-up meeting in China.

NPCA Chairman of the Board Virgil Rose and several NPCA board members, along with representatives of the National Park Service, will travel to China to facilitate a needs assessment for that country's national parks and offer technical expertise and advice on management training.

March for Parks, NPCA's annual Earth Day event, has drawn increasing international participation in recent years. Soren Jensen, NPCA's March for Parks program manager, will join the delegation as an ambassador and recruiter for March for Parks.

Rocky Mountain Hi

▶ Please welcome Mark Peterson, NPCA's new Rocky Mountain regional director, based in Fort Collins, Colorado. As NPCA's representative in the Rocky Mountain area, Peterson takes up the challenge of issues affecting some of the National Park System's crown jewels, including Yellowstone, Grand Teton, and Zion national parks.

Peterson, former executive director of Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, has also worked as an interpreter at Arches National Park, a science teacher, an outdoor educator, and an environmental journalist. He has completed studies toward a Ph.D. in natural resources from Colorado State University and plans to complete his dissertation this year.

Peterson joins NPCA's seven other regional directors, who evaluate legislative and policy decisions affecting the national parks in their regions and work with local and regional groups on park issues.

Flip Your Lid

▶ NPCA encourages its members to support Stonyfield Farm Yogurt in its efforts to contribute to dialogue on environmental issues. Stonyfield Farm launched a "Flip Your Lid for the Earth" campaign in April, printing 4 million lids for yogurt containers with a message urging Congress to vote on behalf of the environment. The company asks consumers to send the lids to their members of Congress and provides a toll-free number to help those who do not know the name of their representative.

Look for Stonyfield Farm yogurt featuring the "Flip Your Lid" campaign in your supermarket, and thank your grocery manager for

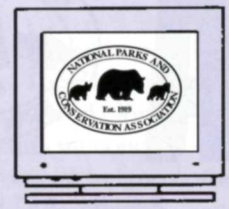
helping to make this campaign possible.

Travel with NPCA

▶ NPCA presents two travel opportunities to members and their friends and family this fall. The tours feature visits to some of the most spectacular natural, cultural, and historic parks in the American West with the comforts of first-rate cuisine, accommodations, and transportation. Both journeys are accented with presentations by naturalists, historians, and park rangers.

The itinerary for "National Parks of the Colorado Plateau," scheduled for September 20–28, includes visits to six national park units in the Southwest: Walnut Canyon, Navajo, Canyon de Chelly, Wupatki, and Sunset Crater Volcano national monuments and Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site. For more information on this trip, turn to the ad on page 57.

The second tour, "National Parks of the North: Montana by Private Rail," is scheduled for September 24–October 2. Until NPCA's inaugural trip on this route last year, the Montana Rail Link—which virtually connects Yellowstone and Glacier national parks—had not seen overnight passenger traffic in decades. For more information on this tour, which also features Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, see the ad on page 7.



NPCA Online

If you haven't yet visited NPCA's America Online (AOL) site, you have a treat in store! The America's National Parks site, accessed with the keyword **PARKS**, is a resource for everyone who loves the parks. The Park Education and Visitor Center features information for travelers and researchers alike. The Park Activist Network area contains updates on park issues and action alerts with contact addresses and more. A handy park telephone directory is available for downloading from the files area.

As summer approaches, we hope you will make good use of the site as you plan your trip to a national park. Share with us in "Your Park Experience." Participate in our park photo contest. Also check out our newly redesigned World Wide Web site, accessible through AOL or directly through the Internet. To receive NPCA's free AOL starter kit, call 1-800-NAT-PARK.

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Nancy Sturm, NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036
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National Parks

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This glacier-sculpted park features a variety of wildlife and wildflowers.

JACK DYKINGA

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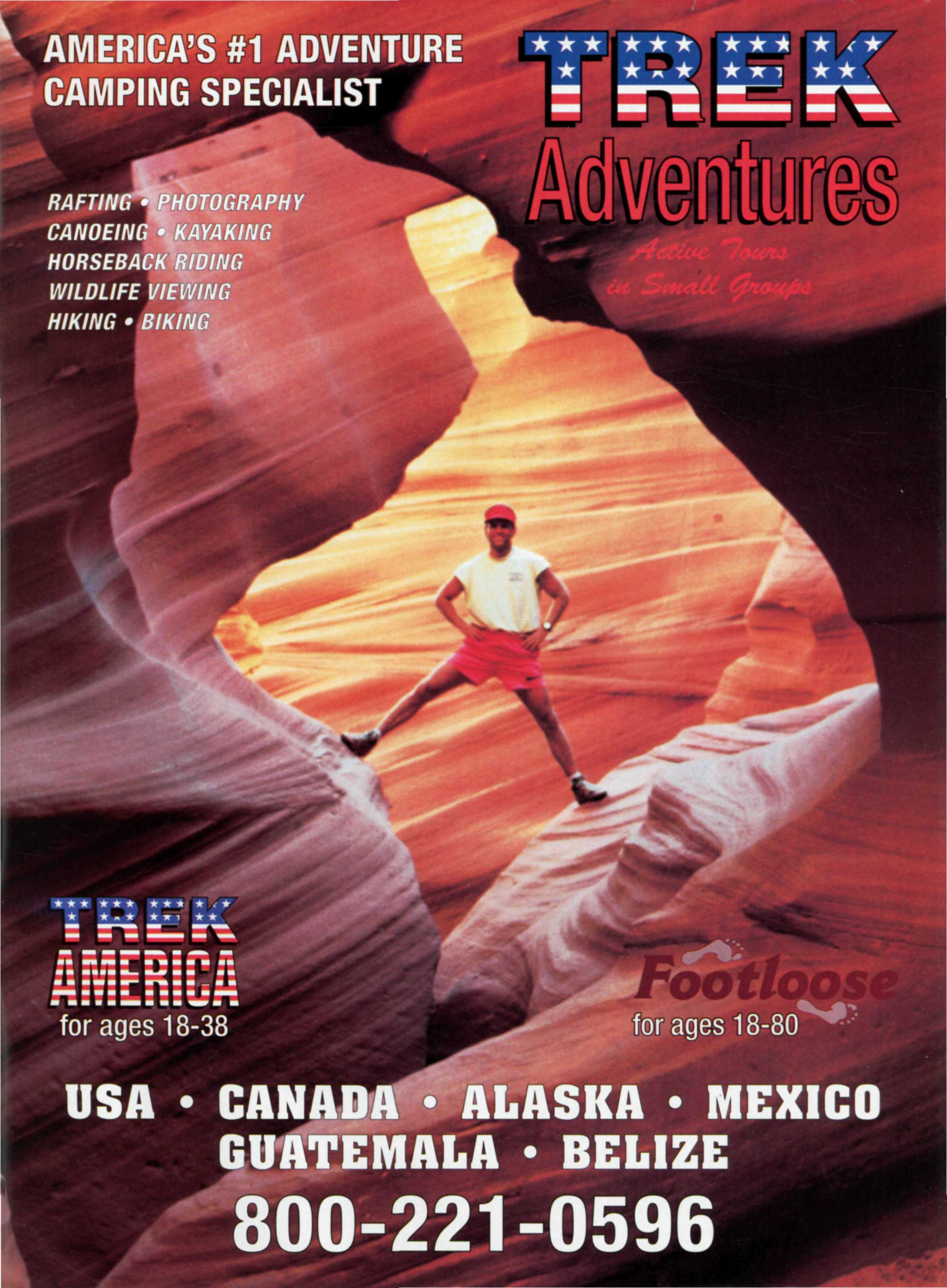
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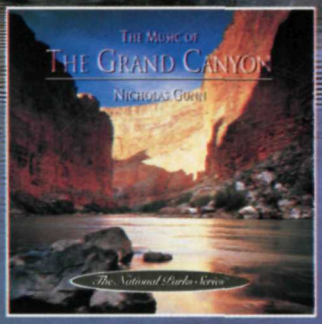

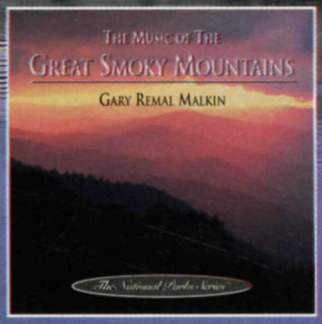

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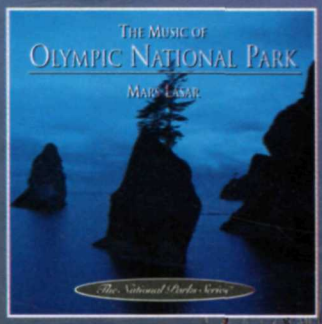

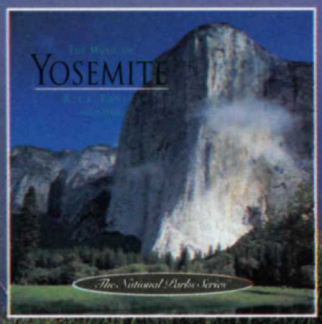

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