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National Parks

The Magazine of
The National Parks
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Association

MAY/JUNE 1997

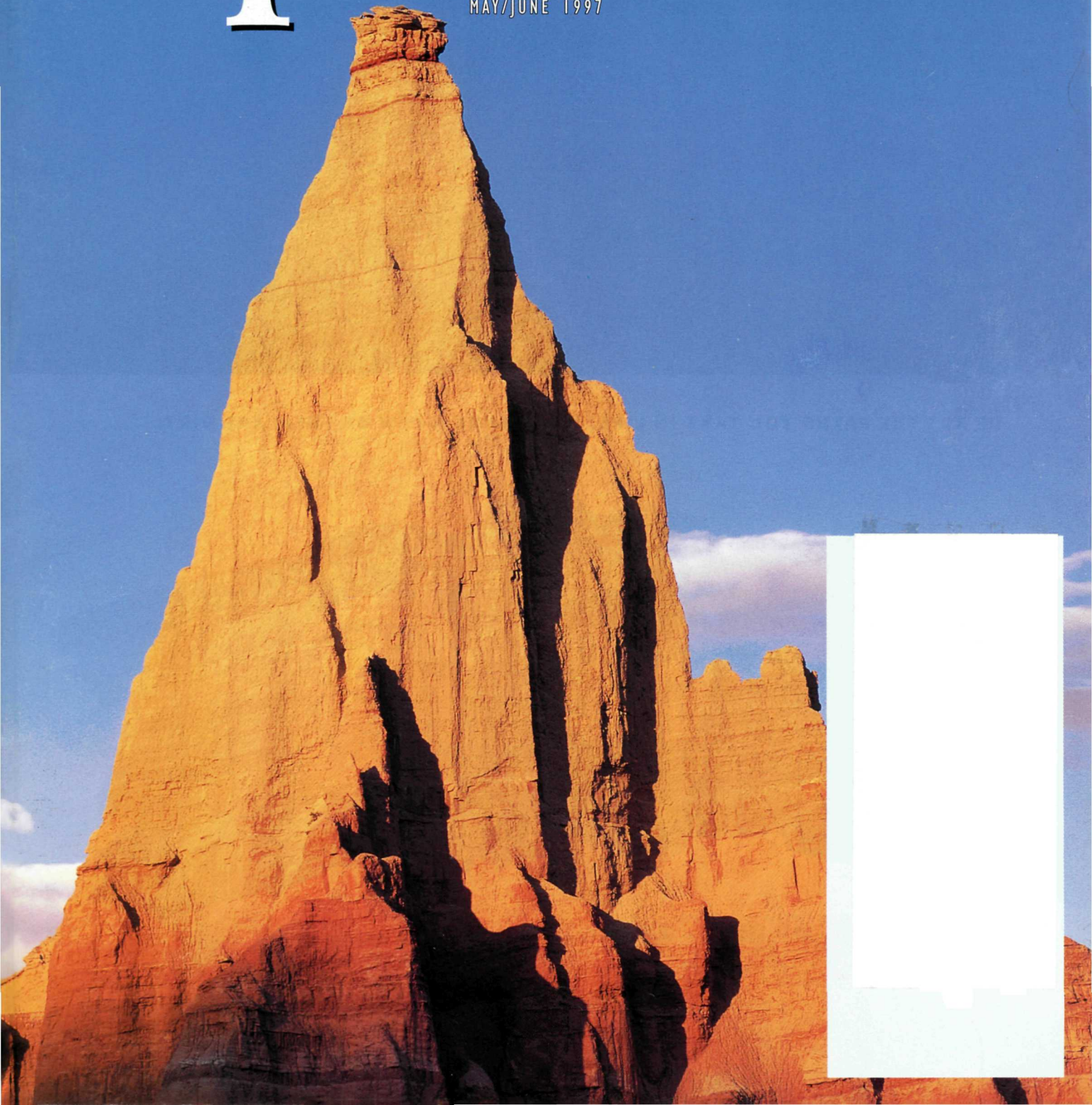
Challenge of Escalante

Vanishing Treasures

Amphibian Decline

The Outer Banks

Taking Responsibility



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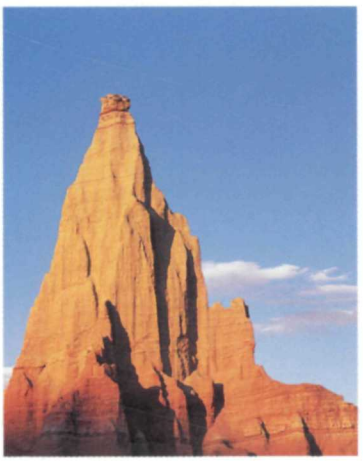
National Parks
Vol. 71, No. 5-6
May/June 1997
The Magazine of the National Parks and Conservation Association

PAGE 38

GARY MASZAROS/DEMBINSKY PHOTO ASSOC.

FEATURES



COVER: Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Utah, was the latest site formed through the Antiquities Act. Photograph by D. A. Horchner.

TOM TILL

PAGE 42

DEPARTMENTS

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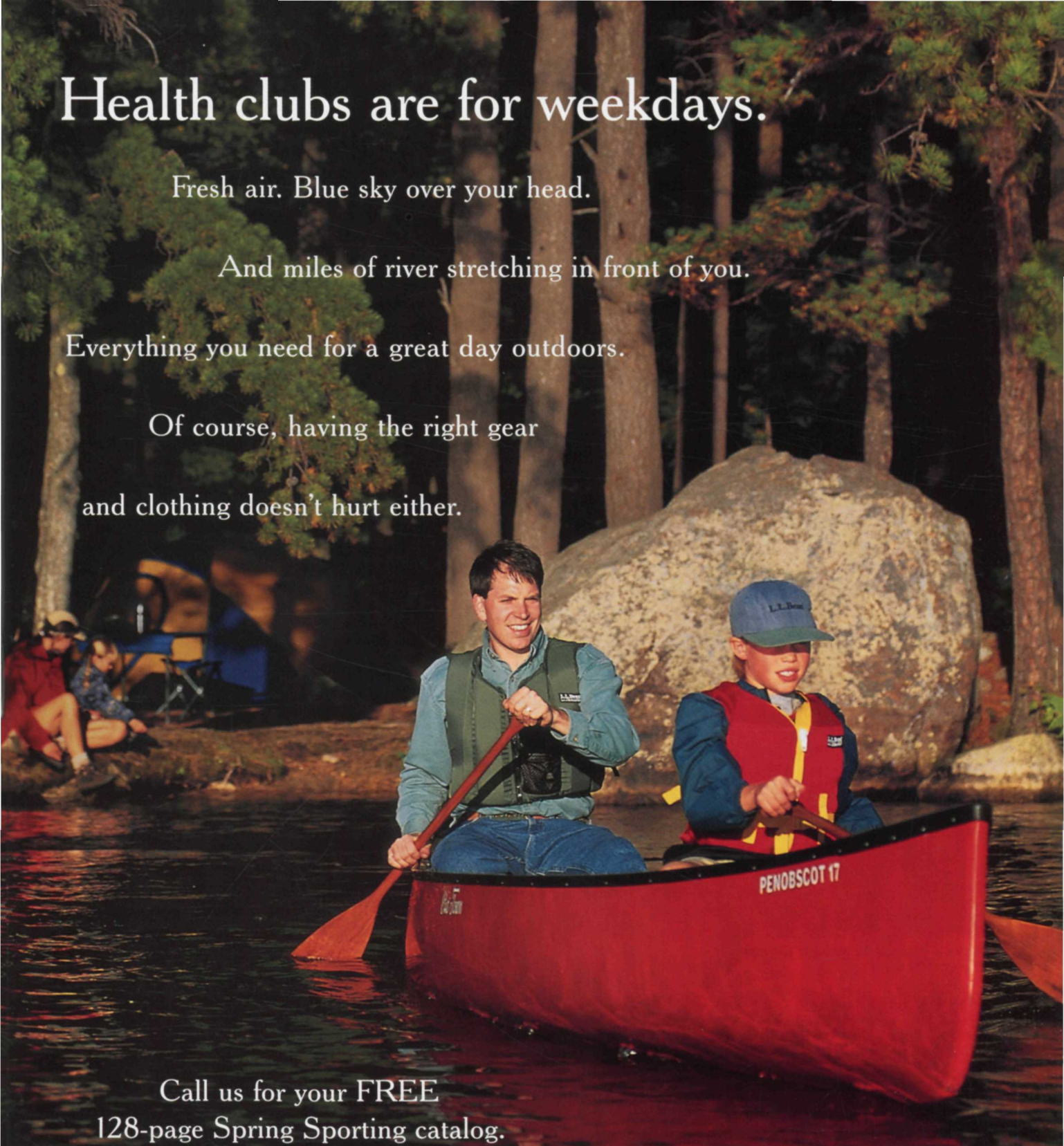

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Prairie Song

NPCA celebrates the formation of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, and Pritchard steps down.

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AT OUR ANNUAL meeting in April, we honored your efforts in establishing the first privately owned national park unit, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve. This is an outstanding place in its own right, but it is also a metaphor for all parks and the people who work to make them happen.

DUPONT PHOTOGRAPHERS

My appreciation for this uniquely American landscape grew along with me on my grandparents' prairie cattle operation. It was a wonderful part of my summers, pitching hay onto the back of a wagon before a rain, walking among the cattle, deciphering the secret messages in the wind, suffering through the withering prairie heat.

My early acquaintance with the prairie taught me to pause in awe every time I visit a park, to cherish the history and culture in them—and to stand by the people who make them possible.

Ultimately, it is Congress that makes these special places accessible to all of us and generations to come. But without the National Park Trust (NPT), a charitable organization established by, but separate from, NPCA, Tallgrass would be little more than a dream. With NPCA's help, NPT bought the land for the preserve and will hold most of it for the Park Service to manage.

In the 17 years I have served as president of NPCA, we helped to double the acreage of the National Park System, increased the membership of NPCA from 23,000 to 500,000, and protected the parks day by day. But the creation of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve holds special significance for me. So it is perhaps fitting that the annual meeting celebrating it also marked my stepping down as president of NPCA.

During these 17 years, my heroes have been the private citizens who for decades have embodied the vision that led to NPCA's existence. NPCA's founders understood that only a private group without ties to government could ensure that our national parks would remain unimpaired for future generations. It is private citizens, too, who must issue the call to establish new units of the park system.

Our nation has preserved less than 4 percent of its landscape as national parks, while the world standard is 10 percent. Federal budget and resource constraints make parkland acquisitions difficult. Innovative partnerships like the one that created Tallgrass, together with enthusiastic grassroots support, may be our best hope.

That's why I will continue to work with NPT—and with you—to help raise the money to pay off the mortgage on Tallgrass Prairie, and identify other properties worthy of national park status. I can think of no other action that can better demonstrate our concern for the future than helping to establish a national park.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of working to preserve one of America's most wonderful ideas, our national parks.

Paul C. Pritchard

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ABOUT NPCA

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

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

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

HOW TO JOIN: NPCA depends almost entirely on contributions from our members for the resources essential for an effective program. You can become a member by calling our Member Services Department. The bimonthly *National Parks* magazine is among the benefits you will receive. Of the $25 membership dues, $3 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

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

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

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

Slow Fade


VICKI PARIS

IN LAST summer's movie blockbuster, *Independence Day*, space aliens—with Hollywood's signature pyrotechnic—blow the White House to smithereens. The viewer is duly outraged. Even in this cynical age, certain landmarks are sacrosanct in the American psyche.

And yet, if with decidedly less sizzle, a sinister force is right now at work, slowly but surely destroying our cultural heritage. Its *nom de guerre* is Neglect, and it is operating under our noses.

In my visits to the national parks, I have seen my share of outdated interpretive plaques, ancient plumbing, and peeling paint. And while I deplore this state of affairs, I'm resigned to the fact that in an era of perennial funding shortages, the amenities must take a back seat to the resources themselves.

Except. Except that in an appalling number of cases, even the very resource is moldering away (See "A Culture in Ruins," p. 34). Park Service stewards have been able to do little but stand anxiously by while the weird, Darwinian tableau unfolds.

In an unhappy coincidence, this issue also highlights efforts in Congress to repeal the Antiquities Act—the original legislation designed to protect the country's historic and prehistoric sites and artifacts. I suppose we can appreciate a certain ironic logic: What's the point of designating a site as worthy of protection if we have no means of actually preserving it?

Finally, we look at vanishing treasures of another kind: amphibians. Research is just getting under way to study the problem. Let's hope we're not too late.

Leslie Happ, Editor-in-Chief

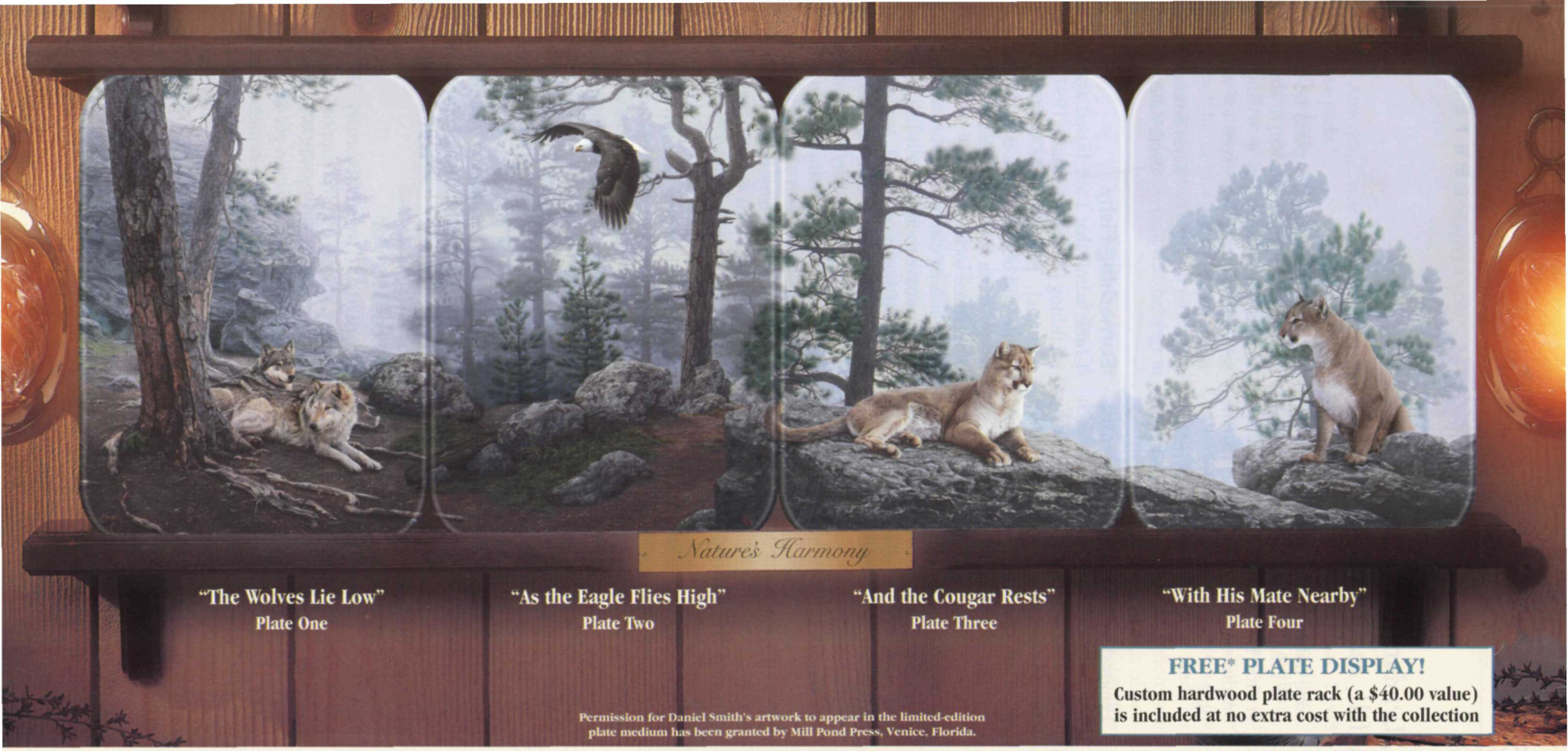

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Plate Two

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"With His Mate Nearby"
Plate Four

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Horseback Riding, Lyndon LaRouche, Joshua Tree Landfill, Ice Fishing

Scents and Sensibility

I take exception to the article "Hoofing It"[November/December 1996, Excursions]. In my opinion, NPCA should be criticizing horseback riding rather than promoting it. On my first visit to the Grand Canyon, I made the mistake of hiking the North Kaibab trail. My enjoyment quickly evaporated as I had to constantly navigate mule-ruined stretches of trail. The primary causes of the trail's bad state were severe erosion and excrement. One of the things I value most when I am hiking is the wonderful smells: pine, flowers, and lush green vegetation at creeks and springs. However, for most of that hike, I smelled fresh and stale urine. The mule trips provide a great way for people to have a great time and enjoy the "adventure" of riding a mule. However, they can also wreck the experience of others who want to experience a national park for the more intrinsic things it has to offer.

Martin Miller
Eau Claire, WI

Left or Right?

I enjoyed David Helvarg's informative article on the "Wise Use" Movement's targeting of national park personnel but was surprised when I read that the Lyndon LaRouche group promotes a "hard right agenda."

Sometimes I watch LaRouche's public-access television program, and all indications point to LaRouche promoting a hard left agenda. Now that the Cold War is over, LaRouche doesn't have the Soviet Union to use as a bogeyman. Today, he seems to preach that the British monarchy, Bush Republicans, Wall Street, multinational corporations, the International Monetary Fund, and free traders are engaged in a conspiracy to take over the world. He has nary a kind word to say about President Clinton, and his solution to get the economy going appears to be massive government spending and huge public-works programs.

If LaRouche's outfit is an "extremist group," I would venture to say that it is on the extreme left, not the extreme right.

Patrick Chrisholm
Alexandria, VA

I enjoy the photographs in your magazine, but that is about it. With each issue, I find I am more disillusioned by the contents. It is so blatantly biased and close-minded, I have found it hard to enjoy any of the articles.

This magazine espouses extreme environmentalism. You label anyone who does not agree with you as radical, right wing, or militant. All political conservatives or Christians do not hold to the same views on all issues and should not be put in such a little box.

Yvonne Lysne
Ferryville, WI

Dump the Dump

I can't help but wonder where the priorities of the National Park Service are. Joshua Tree National Park is part of my backyard. It is owned by all Americans, most of whom oppose the nation's largest garbage dump proposed for a site 1.5 miles from the park. More than 20,000 tons of garbage will be trucked in every day for the next 100 years.

The Mine Reclamation Corporation (MRC) assures the public that it will protect the park and monitor various impacts during the lifespan of the dump. It insists that no odors from the landfill will be noticeable in the park. How can that many million tons of garbage not produce odors? And if MRC has to monitor impacts, how can it be sure the park can be protected?

MRC will give NPS more than $20 million for research on potential impacts. It was a big slap in the face to the managers of Joshua Tree National Park for decision-making powers to be taken out of their hands. It is an even bigger slap in the face to the taxpaying public to let one of our parks be sold out to the highest bidder. It almost sounds like Washington is willing to sell one of our crown jewels for some quick money.

Kevin Emmerich
Death Valley, CA

Something Fishy

I must admit that I am biased against ice fishing [January/February 1997, Excursions], popular as it is here in Maine, and beneficial as it is in ameliorating "cabin fever," and other forms of wintertime social malaise.

Ice fishing can prove to be extremely destructive to indigenous fish populations if live bait is used. Anglers are prone to dumping their unused bait into the lake when they are through fishing. As a result, many outstanding trout waters have been sullied forever. I know of a pond in New England where the trout now have to compete with suckers, chub, bass, and perch because of this sloppy practice.

I believe that there are many admirers of the park idea who deplore a policy that ends park protection of wildlife at water's edge. Philosophically, it must be hard for a preserver of ecosystems to defend that dichotomy. To extol it by inference in a *National Parks* article seems questionable.

John M. Kauffmann
NPCA Board of Trustees
Mount Desert, ME

Access for All

On page 18 [January/February 1997, News], you say that you support raising fees at many national parks. Why don't you expend more effort to get our government to force concessioners to pay their fair share, and lobby Uncle Sam to kick in a few more dollars, rather than support taking it out of the pockets of

ANSWER TO "YOU ARE HERE"
Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska

the Americans who manage to get to those parks?

Our parks are not exclusive resorts, but continued price increases like these will drive away the very Americans for whom the parks were created—the ones who cannot afford luxurious vacations and instead settle on seeing our natural wonders—land that belongs to *them*!

James E. Althouse
Jolon, CA

Home on the Range

The bison of Yellowstone National Park and the Jackson bison herd, which summers in Grand Teton National Park and winters on the National Elk Refuge, are two distinct herds occupying separate areas [January/February 1997, Rocky Mountain Regional Report]. Even though winter range for bison, elk, bighorn sheep, moose, and other wildlife is extremely limited in Jackson Hole, the appalling slaughter of bison is not proposed for the Jackson bison herd. Given the need to balance the size of the Jackson bison herd with available winter habitat, several alternatives are being considered that limit the total herd size and prescribe methods to maintain those limits.

Whatever alternatives are selected, NPCA members can be assured that both the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service place great importance on maintaining the Jackson Hole bison herd as an integral part of this nation's wildlife heritage.

Barry Reiswig, Manager
National Elk Refuge
Jackson, WY

Undermining Parks

During the 1980s, I was fully involved in the fight to save the 1872 Mining Law. The appearance of national organizations that represented groups such as miners, loggers, ranchers, inholders, and private property rights was welcome. The only thing these umbrella groups did was provide a national forum and unifying force to fight the unending environmental agenda.

I am not surprised that David Helvarg ended "Open Hostilities" [September/October 1996] by blaming the natural-resource industries for the creation of the base for anti-government militias. The people of the rural West depend on public lands for survival. It is a mistake to believe you can ruin the lives of thousands of people without consequence. Right after President Clinton stopped the New World mine, I said it did not matter if the mine were two miles or 500 miles away from Yellowstone, environmentalists do not want mining anywhere.

Dave English
Oceanside, CA

Proper Praise

The lifesaving crew at Pea Island in the Outer Banks of North Carolina certainly deserved gold medals for its rescue of the crew of the *Newman*, but the reader would never know that from the "Heroes of Cape Hatteras" article [January/February 1997]. Fortunately, I have *Graveyard of the Atlantic* by David Stick. It describes this rescue with the detail it deserves. I recommend the book to those interested in reading about real heroism.

Henry Fisher
Columbus, OH

CORRECTION

The Save Our National Parks Campaign update in the March/April 1997 issue incorrectly reported the size of the backlog of repairs and improvements needed in the park system. The National Park Service estimates that the backlog is between $5 billion and $8 billion.

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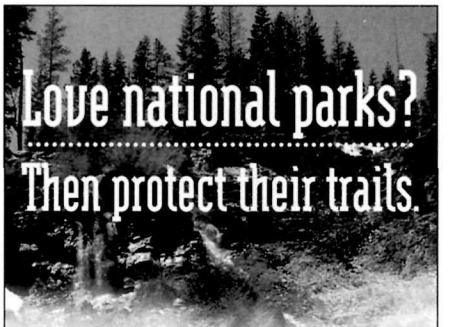

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NPCA

Park News

BY M. KATHERINE HEINRICH

LAND ACQUISITION

Lands To Be Added to Kenai Fjords

Exxon settlement funds used to acquire 30,200 acres.

SEWARD, ALASKA — Harlequin ducks, harbor seals, and other species harmed by the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill will find a lasting refuge in 30,200 acres of privately held lands that will be added to Kenai Fjords National Park.

In a $14 million deal approved by the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council, seven tracts within the park will be transferred to the National Park Service, ensuring protection of their rocky points, coastal wetlands, and forested slopes. Although the lands have been used by park visitors and managed as part of Kenai Fjords National Park, they are owned by English Bay, an Alaska Native corporation.

"This is a tremendous achievement for the future of the park, for wildlife, and for the American people," says NPCA Alaska Regional Director Chip Dennerlein, who serves as an advisor to the council. "It's a win-win-win situation, thanks to the efforts of the trustees and the English Bay Corporation."

The council, backed by $900 million from the civil settlement with the Exxon corporation, is charged with restoring the natural resources damaged by the oil spill through scientific studies and habitat-protection initiatives. To date, the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council has purchased lands, conservation easements, and timber rights on 421,000 acres in areas affected by the spill. The Kenai Fjords land acquisition is the first within a national park.

Six of the seven parcels were marred by oil after the spill, harming seabirds, marine mammals, and intertidal flora and fauna. An evaluation and ranking of available lands found that the Kenai Fjords tracts offer extraordinary opportunities for the restoration of pink salmon, marbled murrelets, sea otters, and other species, in addition to cultural and archaeological resources damaged by the spill.

The English Bay Corporation has close ties to the Alaska Native village of Nanwalek, formerly known as English Bay, which is located about 30 miles southwest of Kenai Fjords. The corporation is expected to sign the final agreement in May.

TAKE ACTION: Private lands, or inholdings, within Kenai Fjords are also held by Port Graham, another Alaska Native corporation. Write to the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustees asking that they pursue land acquisition agreements with Port Graham and other Native corporations that own property within national parks in the spill zone. Address: 645 G Street, Suite 401, Anchorage, AK 99501-3451.

ADJACENT LANDS

Army Wants Lands Next to Death Valley

Training center expansion poses threats to desert parks.

DEATH VALLEY, CALIF. — The U.S. Army's proposed expansion of its National Training Center (NTC) in southern California threatens to encroach on Death Valley National Park.

The 5,000 soldiers stationed at the NTC at Fort Irwin do battle—with full-scale tank maneuvers and helicopter flights—against as many as 7,000 visiting troops at a time, year-round. Fort Irwin sprawls across 642,000 acres, although according to the Army, only about half of the area is suitable for training exercises.

Because of improvements in weapons technology, tanks and helicopters can hit targets at ever-increasing distances. The Army claims it needs to annex 331,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) territory to provide realistic training with the new technologies.

The NTC's proposed expansion to the north and east would result in a 35-mile shared border with Death Valley. A narrow strip of BLM land known as the Bowling Alley currently separates Fort Irwin from the park. Under the Army plan, this mile-wide strip, which functions as a buffer zone, would be added to the NTC along with hundreds of thousands of acres nearby.

"If this proposal goes through, we'll have tanks, trucks, and military aircraft operating immediately adjacent to Death Valley, the largest wilderness area in the lower 48 states," says NPCA Pacific Regional Director Brian Huse.

According to Death Valley's former superintendent Ed Rothfuss, military vehicles have been known to go astray by more than a mile, winding up in the park. Rothfuss also notes that it is not uncommon to find other signs of military incursions—such as spent ammunition cartridges—in the southern reaches of the park.

Rothfuss served as superintendent through 1994, when the California Desert Protection Act expanded Death Valley in several directions, including southward toward Fort Irwin. At one point, the Bowling Alley was slated for addition to the park, Rothfuss says, but ironically, the tract was deleted from the final legislation because the Army did not want Park Service lands to come so close to its training grounds at Fort Irwin.

Death Valley's current superintendent, Dick Martin, says NPS still has an interest in adding the Bowling Alley to the park.

If the Army takes over the area, it will cut off all public access to new parklands in the southern part of Death Valley by closing a dirt road that winds through the Bowling Alley and the adjacent areas of the park.

"That road is the only access to that whole part of the park," Martin says. "That area has been available to the public for decades and the environmental impact statement does not give an articulate reason why it...would be inaccessible to the public."

The desert protection act, which also established the nearby Mojave National Preserve and expanded Joshua Tree National Park, declared the Bowling Alley a wilderness study area. The Army's proposed expansion of the NTC also jeopardizes four more wilderness study areas established by the 1994 act.

In a letter to Secretary of Defense William Cohen, California Rep. George Miller, the ranking Democrat on the House Resources Committee, notes: "At a time when other federal agencies are spending millions of dollars to protect ecologically sensitive desert lands, we should not spend $40 million which could contribute to the significant degradation of a vast amount of pristine desert land. The Army's plan... threatens to undercut historic decisions made less than three years ago in the California Desert Protection Act."

TAKE ACTION: Join NPCA in commenting on BLM's environmental impact statement on the proposed expansion of the NTC. Write to BLM opposing the expansion because of threats to Death Valley and the California desert. The plan would limit access to the park and destroy Mojave Desert vegetation, Joshua Tree woodlands, and desert tortoise habitat. Increased military activity would also affect air quality in the region. Address: BLM, 150 Coolwater Lane, Barstow, CA 92311.

LITIGATION

Legal Victory Protects River

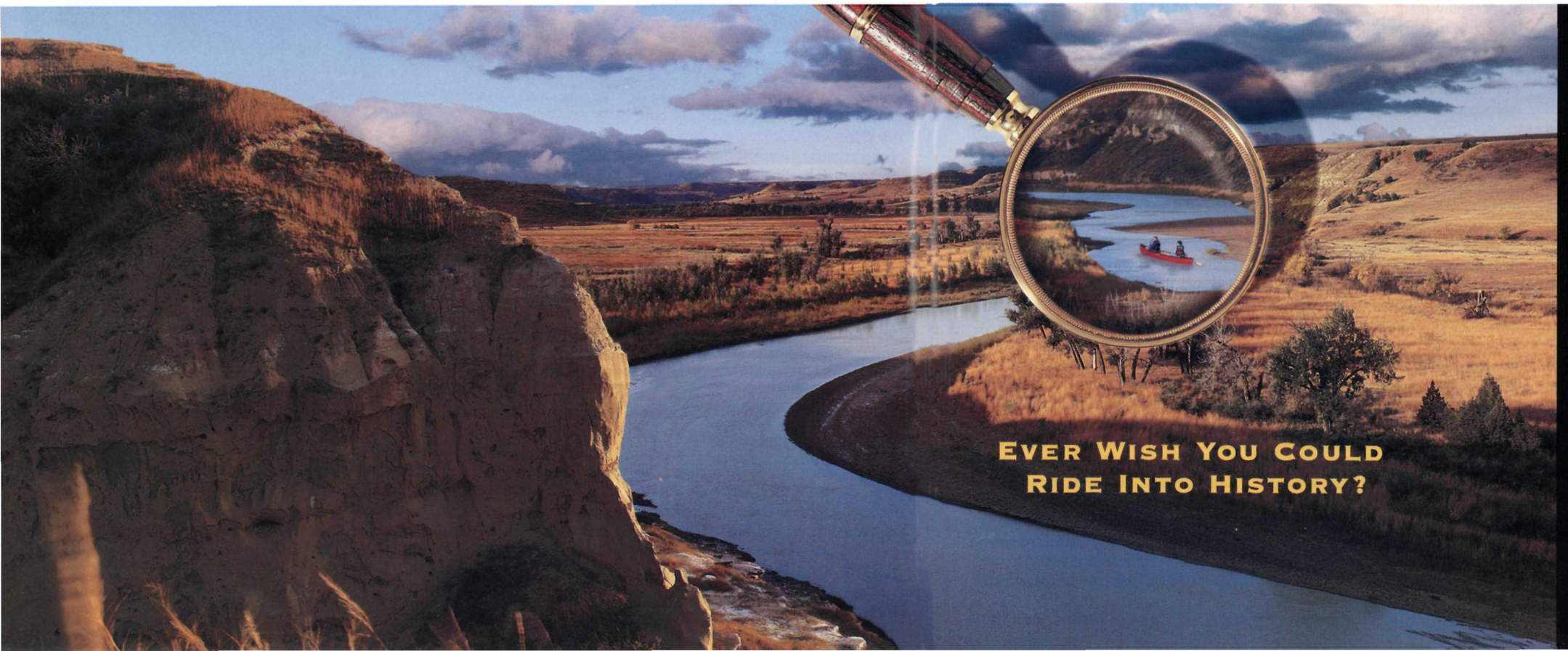
Court rules that BLM failed to protect Donner und Blitzen River.

PORTLAND, ORE. — In a victory for conservation and the nation's 151 wild and scenic rivers, a federal court has ruled that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has failed to protect Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River.

NPCA joined the Oregon Natural Desert Association and other conservation groups to file a lawsuit against BLM, claiming that the agency's management plan for the river failed to meet standards prescribed in federal environmental laws. BLM's plans for Donner und Blitzen, which flows through arid southeastern Oregon, called for continued grazing in the river corridor, new parking facilities, and road improvements.

"Just 28 of our wild and scenic rivers are managed by the National Park Service," notes NPCA Counsel Elizabeth Fayad. "NPCA intervened in this case to ensure that each unit of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System is managed in accordance with strict national standards."

The court held that BLM violated the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by allowing cattle grazing to



LARRY ULRICH

A legal victory will help protect vegetation in the Donner und Blitzen watershed.

continue without completing the required environmental impact statement (EIS). The judge also found that the agency failed to consider whether other elements of its comprehensive management plan for Donner und Blitzen, including the parking lot and road projects, were consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). Under NEPA, these proposed actions should also have been subject to an EIS and public review.

According to WSRA, a wild river is "free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America."

WSRA also declares that wild and scenic rivers "and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." When Congress designated Donner und Blitzen in 1988, it classified the river area as "wild," the most restrictive of the three classifications outlined in the act.

The court evaluated evidence that grazing had damaged native riparian and upland plants in the Donner und Blitzen watershed. BLM acknowledged the results of an independent scientific study, which found that woody, streamside plants, such as willows, were overgrazed to a point where they failed to reproduce.

Willows, alders, and cottonwoods stabilize stream banks and shade waters, keeping them clear and cold and hospitable to native fish, including the wild redband trout. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that water temperatures in two major streams in the Donner und Blitzen river area exceeded Clean Water Act standards for the protection of native cold-water fish.

The judge determined that BLM failed to strike an appropriate balance between continued grazing and the protection and enhancement of the river values that led to the designation of Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River. The court brief concludes, "cattle grazing may continue, but only in accordance with the strictures of the WSRA to protect and enhance."

"This case strengthens the spirit and intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act," says NPCA Pacific Northwest Regional Director Phil Pearl. "In planning for the river, BLM neglected its management responsibilities under WSRA. This ruling will result in better management for Donner und Blitzen and set an excellent precedent for other wild and scenic rivers."

FUNDING

President Unveils 1998 NPS Budget

NPCA says parks need more money for maintenance backlog.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—President Clinton's proposed fiscal year 1998 budget for the National Park Service represents a strong commitment to park funding, but the park system's needs continue to exceed the agency's dollars. The president's $1.6 billion budget request for NPS reflects an increase of $176 million over the 1997 appropriation.

"President Clinton has asked Congress for the barest minimum needed to keep the National Park System intact," says NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard. "This is a good budget as far as it goes, but the truth is that even if the parks get every dollar the president has asked for, they will continue to fall behind."

Over the past 15 years, appropriations for NPS have fallen by 14 percent, once inflation is taken into account. At the same time, park visitation increased more than 28 percent. The chronic funding shortfalls have resulted in a multibillion-dollar backlog of maintenance, preservation, and land acquisition projects, along with cutbacks in programs for visitors.

The president's NPS budget request includes an additional $66 million for park operations, including a funding increase of at least 1 percent for each unit of the park system.

NPCA applauds major initiatives earmarked in the 1998 proposal, including startup funds for the five new parks established in the omnibus parks bill at the end of the last session of Congress. The budget includes $375,000 for Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas, which will cover park staff pursuing planning efforts.

One of the most ambitious projects in the budget proposal is the Everglades Restoration Fund, which would receive $100 million for scientific research and

land acquisition to improve the vitality of the ecosystem in and around Everglades National Park in south Florida.

The administration's budget also includes $24.9 million to restore the Elwha River ecosystem in Olympic National Park in Washington. The funding request would enable NPS to proceed with efforts to acquire and dismantle two dams that cut off salmon runs in park waters.

In addition, the president requested $3.5 million to launch the Vanishing Treasures Initiative. This ten-year project focuses on preserving more than 2,000 historic and prehistoric ruins scattered across 41 parks in the West. (See related story on page 34.)

The president's budget proposal is now under consideration by Congress. Sources there say this is the first Clinton Administration budget that is not considered "dead on arrival."

PRESERVATION

Virginia Enacts Easement Law

State opts for a new way to preserve open space.

RICHMOND, VA.—The Virginia state legislature has passed a landmark conservation bill that gives private landowners an incentive to pursue easements, a move that will enhance the preservation of lands around national parks and other natural and historic areas. Virginia Gov. George Allen (R) signed the Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund Act in April, clearing the way for the measure to take effect in July.

"This is a significant victory for land conservation in Virginia," says NPCA Northeast Regional Director Eileen Woodford. "The new law encourages the use of conservation easements, a vital tool for the preservation of cultural and natural landscapes in and around the parks in Virginia."

Conservation easements allow private landowners to sell or donate development rights on their lands, ensuring that the property will remain open space, such as meadows, forests, or farmland. Virginia's law sets up a trust fund to help private property owners cover the expenses involved in conveying an easement, including appraisal costs and legal fees for changes to a deed. Funds also may be used to purchase all or part of the value of easements made available by willing sellers, but the law encourages landowners to donate easements.

The easements will be held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation—a state commission that also will oversee the trust fund—and local co-holders, such as soil and water conservation districts or public park authorities.

A national park, such as Shenandoah—a narrow strip atop the Blue Ridge Mountains—stands to benefit from conservation easements. Once inside the park, Shenandoah's visitors enjoy views of rolling green foothills to the east and the bucolic patchwork of Shenandoah Valley farmlands to the west—nearly all of it private property. As suburban sprawl creeps outward from Washington, D.C., 70 miles to the east, conservation easements may play a significant role in the preservation of Shenandoah National Park's natural and cultural landscape.

Faye Cooper, executive director of the Valley Conservation Council, says national parks may be among the priority areas selected for projects. Cooper and her organization played a lead role in advocating the new legislation and have taken an active interest in the planning process for the fund. "There's not a lot of money," she notes, "so the goal is to protect the most of the best lands available. The priority sites will likely be related to areas that are already protected, like the Blue Ridge Parkway and Shenandoah National Park."

Catharine Gilliam, a Charlottesville-based community organizer, says the legislation attracted a broad base of support, with the Virginia Farm Bureau lobbying for its passage alongside representatives of local and regional conservation groups.

"National parks are our common heritage," says NPCA's Woodford. "Virginia's progressive use of conservation easements demonstrates how states can contribute to the preservation of significant lands, including our national parks."

NEWS UPDATE

▶ **THE LIGHT MOVES:** Because the sands have shifted over time, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse at Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina is now perilously close to the water's edge. A team of scientists found no alternative to moving the 126-year-old structure. NPS is seeking the $12 million needed to move the 208-foot-tall lighthouse a half mile from the ocean. NPS may start work on the move in May 1999.

▶ **PARKWATCHER:** An anti-park World Wide Web page called "ParkWatch" has been suspended, thanks to NPCA's efforts. NPCA argued that the site infringed on its registered rights to the name, which is used in the association's activist newsletter, *ParkWatcher Flash*. The web site was sponsored by the Property Rights Alliance, which is part of the "Wise Use" Movement, a coalition of groups working to roll back environmental protections.

▶ **RECOVERY:** Two of the four rare books stolen from Adams National Historic Site in Massachusetts last fall have been returned. The books are being held as evidence in the case, which is being handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

▶ **GRAND OPENING:** The flood-damaged portions of Yosemite National Park reopened to visitors in March. The Clinton Administration has taken steps to provide funding for the recovery efforts following January's record flood.

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TRANSPORTATION

St. Croix River Bridge on Hold

NPCA and others advocate mediation to solve bridge dispute.

ST. PAUL, MINN.—Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson (R), aided by his administration and Republican state legislators, blocked a state resolution recommending mediation to resolve a dispute over a proposed bridge across the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway on the Minnesota-Wisconsin border.

Sponsored by Minnesota state Sen. Carol Flynn (D) and Rep. Dee Long (D), the resolution echoed a call for mediation from NPCA and a coalition of local and national conservation and taxpayer groups. The controversy revolves around a proposal by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for a $100 million, four-lane, mile-long bridge across one of the nation's first wild and scenic rivers.

At the urging of the Carlson Administration, state Republican lawmakers voted against the resolution. Carlson has rejected mediation, which means that—for now—MnDOT will not come to the table.

Because of the bridge plan, the nonprofit organization American Rivers has declared the St. Croix one of the most threatened rivers in the nation.

The 1997 *Green Scissors* report identified the "mega-bridge" as a project that would waste taxpayer dollars while harming the environment. Construction of the proposed St. Croix River bridge would involve dredging in 3.5 acres of the riverbed. Eight of the bridge's 26 massive piers would be located in the river, which is habitat for six rare and endangered species of freshwater mussels.

Under the authority of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA), the National Park Service in December determined that the bridge "would have a direct and adverse effect on the scenic and recreational values of the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway." The ruling halted the project, but MnDOT has challenged the Park Service's legal authority to block the bridge plan.

As early as 1987, MnDOT received notification that under WSRA, the bridge would be subject to NPS review.

"It's possible to solve regional transportation problems without protracted and costly litigation and without compromising the river," says Lori Nelson, NPCA Heartland regional director. "Throughout the planning of this bridge, MnDOT has consistently ignored Park Service concerns about potential impacts on the riverway. A proper assessment of alternatives that present fewer threats to the river has not been done, and it appears that the only way we can make it happen is to bring all interested parties to the table to work out a rational solution."

In February, five members of the Minnesota and Wisconsin U.S. congressional delegations wrote to President Clinton asking for alternative dispute resolution and a meeting with all the federal agencies involved in the project.

Former U.S. Sens. Walter Mondale and Gaylord Nelson, who represented Minnesota and Wisconsin, respectively, when the St. Croix was designated as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, have also endorsed mediation as a means of ending the controversy while protecting the river. Mondale and Nelson have urged all parties to the dispute to look at creative solutions using existing infrastructure, including those options that present the fewest threats to the river. The former senators have expressed concern about a proliferation of river crossings obscuring the scenic character of the St. Croix.

NPCA's Nelson says that efforts are under way by bridge opponents and proponents to draft federal legislation. Such measures could include preservation of bridge funding while mediation takes place. "With funding priority preserved, we'll be able to examine other alternatives, including an upgrade of the present bridge, siting a replacement in an existing bridge corridor, or improving access to the four-lane Interstate 94 bridge to the south, which was completed only two years ago," Nelson says.

TOURISM

FAA Delays Park Flight Rules

New flight-free zones over Grand Canyon delayed until 1998.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After trumpeting new flight-free zones designed to restore natural quiet over Grand Canyon National Park, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has announced a lengthy delay in implementing the new regulations.

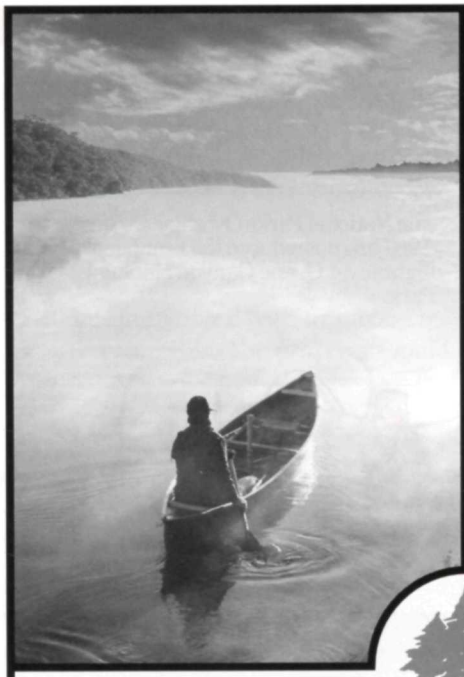
In December, FAA unveiled a package of rules for air tours operating over the park, all of which were scheduled to be implemented on May 1.

Most of the new regulations, including a dusk-to-dawn curfew on park overflights and a cap on the number of aircraft operating over the park, will go into effect as planned. But FAA delayed the flight-free zones until 1998 after the air-tour industry complained that it could not train its pilots on the new routes in four months.

"FAA announced its regulations with great fanfare, claiming that more than 80 percent of Grand Canyon would be free of the intrusion of air tours," says NPCA Southwest Regional Director David Simon. "Now FAA is delaying the heart of its proposal—the most effective means of restoring natural quiet in the park—and giving visitors another season of noise. But even if this rule eventually is implemented," Simon adds, "it will not go far enough in reducing noise at the Grand Canyon."

FAA developed the regulations in response to the National Park Overflights Act of 1987. NPCA and other conservation groups filed a lawsuit claiming that the new rules fail to meet the standards of the 1987 law. The air-tour industry has also filed suit, arguing that the regulations are too stringent.

"Ten years ago, legislation I authored to promote safety and provide for the substantial restoration of natural quiet in the Grand Canyon was signed into law," says Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.). "Natural quiet still has not been



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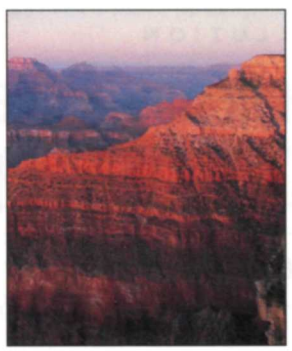

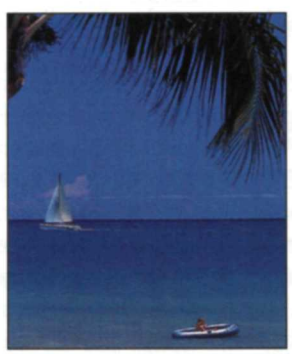

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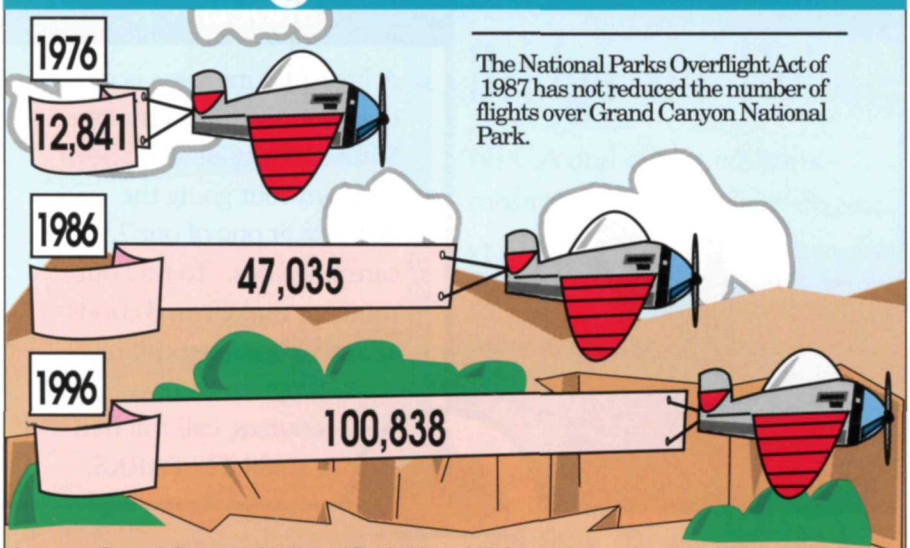
Overflights soar



Source: Grand Canyon National Park Airport/Arizona Department of Transportation

restored in the Grand Canyon.... [This] experience teaches us that we cannot afford to wait until natural quiet has been lost before we take steps to protect and preserve that resource."

Expressing frustration over federal agencies' inability to solve the overflights problem in the national parks, Congress has taken the matter into its own hands. McCain and Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) each have introduced bills designed to give the National Park Service greater authority in addressing the overflights issue.

"The senators have proposed different, but equally valid, approaches to restoring natural quiet in our parks," says Phil Voorhees, NPCA's associate director for policy development. "Work is under way on a unified bill that would give the Park Service more authority to determine what's appropriate in its airspace."

Akaka's bill would allow the Park Service to develop individual air-tour management plans for each park. The legislation would enable NPS to ban overflights in parks that are currently air-tour free, an idea hailed by NPCA.

McCain's proposal calls for the Interior Department, which oversees NPS, to develop park overflights regulations. FAA would be charged with implementing and enforcing the rules. FAA's input on policy decisions would be limited to safety issues.

TAKE ACTION: Write to your members of Congress, urging them to support Akaka and McCain's legislation. Alert them to the importance of natural quiet in the national parks and NPS authority over appropriate use of park airspace. Addresses: U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; and U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

POLLUTION

Tennessee Agrees to Air Quality Plan

State, NPS approve a new process for permits affecting the Smokies.

GATLINBURG, TENN. — The search for solutions to the air pollution plaguing Great Smoky Mountains National Park should accelerate, thanks to the cooperation of the state of Tennessee. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the state and the U.S. Department of the Interior, which oversees the National Park Service, is intended to improve the permit process for new pollution sources that could affect the park and other Class I areas under the Clean Air Act.

"This agreement improves coordination, not air quality," says NPCA Southeast Regional Director Don Barger. "But it's a great step forward toward the regional cooperation needed to protect air quality in the Smokies."

NPCA was instrumental in negotiating an earlier version of the MOU, which the state of Tennessee unilaterally rescinded a year ago in response to pressure from business interests.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which sits astride the Tennessee-North Carolina border, faces air-quality problems that rival those of major industrial and urban areas. According to the park's air resource specialist Jim Renfro, Great Smoky Mountains has the highest concentrations of nitrogen-oxide pollution of any region in North America. In the summer of 1996, the park also recorded its highest-ever levels of sulfur-dioxide pollution.

Topography and meteorological forces often combine to leave the park with ground-level ozone pollution twice as high as that of lower-elevation cities, such as Knoxville and Nashville. Prevailing winds carry industrial pollutants such as nitrates and sulfates toward the Smokies, where they are intercepted by ridge tops and deposited in park soils and waters.

Although air quality in Great Smoky Mountains still meets guidelines established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), it has approached the limit for human health three times in the last two years, Renfro says. If new, stricter air-quality standards proposed by EPA are approved, he adds, most of the Smokies would become a "nonattainment area," meaning the park would no longer be in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

The MOU, which must be approved by the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board, will provide the Park Service with earlier notification of potential new sources of pollution. The agreement also will establish a more predictable process for those applying for emissions permits.

Tennessee Gov. Don Sundquist (R) anticipates that the new procedures will benefit the state and the park and result in "fewer delays, last-minute surprises, and lawsuits."

One of the more innovative features

of the agreement would enable permit applicants to offset their projects' impact on park resources by purchasing pollution credits from other companies. The MOU calls upon the Southern Appalachian Mountain Initiative (SAMI), an eight-state regional air-quality effort, to establish a nitrogen oxide emission-offsets market.

At press time, a biannual SAMI meeting was scheduled for April. The initiative's member states may address Tennessee's draft MOU and the possibility of signing onto the agreement.

"Tennessee is taking the lead when other states have refused to do so," Barger says. "NPCA applauds its effort and joins in asking other states in the region to get beyond rhetoric and start taking positive steps to protect our national treasures."

PLANNING

NPS Finalizes Denali Plans

Park Service also completes study on new northern access.

DENALI N.P., ALASKA — Visitors to Denali, the top tourist destination in Alaska, will find more opportunities to enjoy and learn about the park if two new Park Service plans are implemented. But Denali's wilderness character could be compromised forever if road interests succeed in pushing through a new northern access route for the park.

NPS has signed a final decision on a plan to enhance Denali's entrance area and road corridor, also known as the park's front country. A separate proposal concerning the park's south side, including a new visitor center and trails originating in the adjacent Denali State Park, also has been approved.

"The front-country and south-side plans make a genuine effort to focus on access to *what* Denali is, not simply *where* it is," says NPCA Alaska Regional Director Chip Dennerlein. "These plans aim to protect Denali's special character while providing visitors with better opportunities to enjoy the park. Additional camping areas, short nature trails, and a true visitor center encourage people to learn, explore, and connect with the park."

The Park Service intends to balance the development of additional visitor facilities in the park with improved resource protection. The proposal would limit the number of vehicles on the park road and the commercial services available in the park.

Dennerlein says these strategies comprise "a positive and sustainable vision for Denali's front country. The critical task before us is to ensure the proper implementation of these plans."

In a separate process, NPS has completed work on a feasibility study for a new northern access route—a road or rail—through Denali. The Park Service has rejected the idea in the past.

In a 1995 transportation study, NPS concluded that a new road would be

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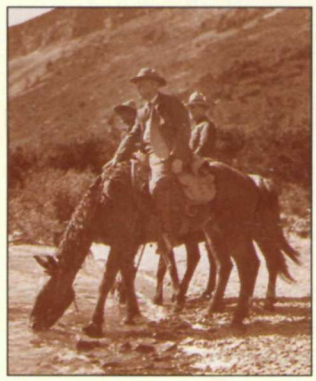

Stephen Mather (foreground) pictured with Yellowstone Superintendent Horace Albright (right), c. 1920

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REGIONAL REPORT

News Briefs from NPCA's Regional Offices

ALASKA Chip Dennerlein, Regional Director

▶ NPCA is working with the Alaska Land Managers Forum, which includes Alaska Native landowners and representatives of state and federal land-management agencies, to focus on the future of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Within the 13-million-acre park are nearly 1 million acres of Native land claims, more than 1,400 right-of-way claims, and nearly 700 mining claims. The park has no NPS visitor center, trails, or rest rooms. Dennerlein says Wrangell-St. Elias will be a "laboratory" for management in the 11 parks created in the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Plans are under way for the park's backcountry, scenic McCarthy Road corridor, and other projects.

HEARTLAND Lori Nelson, Regional Director

▶ After a seven-month process, a mediation team charged with developing new management plans for Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota is at loggerheads over motorized recreation. Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.) requested mediation to search for a compromise between conflicting legislative proposals offered by other members of the Minnesota congressional delegation. The mediation board developed a tentative agreement in January, but in February, members of organizations representing motor interests withdrew their support. At issue is a possible ban on personal watercraft, and restrictions on snowmobiles on the park's Chain of Lakes trail. If the mediation is successful, Wellstone and Minnesota Reps. Jim Ramstad (R) and Bruce Vento (D) plan to introduce a bill that would implement the plans suggested by the team.

NORTHEAST Eileen Woodford, Regional Director

▶ Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Rep. Martin Meehan (D-Mass.) have introduced legislation (S. 469/H.R. 1110) to designate the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord rivers in Massachusetts part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Concord River runs through Minute Man National Historical Park. ✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Write to Rep. James Hansen (R-Utah), chair of the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, to request a hearing on the legislation. Address: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

PACIFIC Brian Huse, Regional Director

▶ In recognition of her outstanding leadership in bringing Yosemite National Park through a record flood this winter, NPS will move Superintendent B.J. Griffin to a new position, general manager of the Presidio of San Francisco. The Presidio, now part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, will be managed in cooperation with the Presidio Trust, and Griffin will oversee the establishment of a unique partnership between the trust and the Park Service. John Reynolds,

continued

too costly, could have adverse impacts on park resources, and, compared with the existing road, would give visitors fewer wildlife viewing opportunities.

But Alaska Sen. Frank Murkowski (R) determined long ago that a second road is needed in Denali, one of his staff members says. During the last Congress, Murkowski added a provision to the Interior Department appropriations bill that required NPS to complete a new report on a second access route into the park.

Denali park planner Mike Tranel says the NPS study simply assesses the technical feasibility of developing an 80- to 90-mile route along the old Stampede mining trail to the Wonder Lake area in the heart of the park. According to NPS and the Alaska Department of Transportation, a road or railway could be constructed along the corridor at a cost of $110 million to $198 million. The report draws no conclusions about whether a new route is necessary or compatible with park values and management plans.

"A new north access route would bring large-scale associated developments to the heart of Denali, changing the wilderness character of the park forever," Dennerlein says.

He also contends that it is senseless to study any park project in a vacuum, setting aside park purposes, federal laws, and regulations.

"The Organic Act, which established the National Park Service, instructs the agency to provide for the public enjoyment of park resources 'in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired,'" Dennerlein says. "For any project to be judged *feasible* for construction within the boundaries of a national park, that project must be judged *acceptable* within the guidelines of the Organic Act."

✍ **TAKE ACTION:** Write to your members of Congress and park Superintendent Steve Martin. Urge that they implement the two approved Denali visitor plans and reject another major route through the park. Addresses: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510; Denali National Park, P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755.

PRESERVATION

NPS Takes Action at Channel Islands

Undercover operation leads to arrest in park artifact theft.

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, CALIF.—Following up on a tip from a local Chumash tribeswoman, the National Park Service launched a two-year undercover operation that culminated in the seizure of more than 900 Native American artifacts and the January arrest of island resident Brian Krantz. Krantz has been indicted on charges of taking human remains from a Native American burial ground, a felony; and harming archaeological resources, a misdemeanor.

The eastern end of Santa Cruz, one island in the archipelago of Channel Islands National Park, came under Park Service care in February after several years during which the agency shared control of the 6,300 acres with a private landowner. Francis Gherini held onto a 25 percent ownership share after his three siblings sold their shares to NPS in 1989 and 1993. Despite Park Service concerns, Gherini maintained a lease agreement with Island Adventures, a company that offered kayaking and hunting trips on the property.

Island Adventures employed Krantz as a hunting guide and caretaker at Smugglers Cove, where a historic adobe housed the company's clients.

Posing as a wealthy hunter, NPS investigator Todd Swain booked several trips with Island Adventures and went undercover on Santa Cruz Island three times between August 1995 and December 1996. On each occasion, Krantz served as his guide. Between hunting and fishing excursions, Krantz led Swain and his partner, Jeff Sullivan, on tours of Native American cultural sites, including a burial ground and a midden, or refuse heap.

According to Swain's search warrant affidavit, the investigators watched as Krantz dug into a grave site with his bare hands, pulling out skull, rib, and jaw bones. Swain covertly tape recorded much of the digging sounds and conversation while Sullivan took photographs of the excavated bone fragments. Krantz offered the men their choice of the bones as souvenirs but cautioned them that possessing or even disturbing Native American remains is illegal. A forensic anthropologist later identified the bones as those of a prehistoric female Native American.

WILLIAM L. CLAIBORNE

Artifacts were seized at this adobe, now part of Channel Islands National Park.

Swain and Sullivan also say they observed Krantz pocket artifacts, including a "donut stone" used as a weight on a digging stick, and that the guide later placed this object on display alongside scores of other artifacts at the Smugglers Cove adobe.

In January, the Park Service obtained a search warrant and collected a helicopter-load of artifacts and other evidence that resulted in Krantz's arrest and indictment. The objects included bowl fragments, shell beads, mortars and pestles, and manos and metates—portable grinding stones and surfaces.

"Santa Cruz Island offers world-class resources, and this investigation shows why it's high time for the island to be fully protected as part of Channel Islands National Park," says NPCA Pacific Regional Director Brian Huse.

"The Park Service ran a top-notch investigation, but some people are claiming that these are trumped-up charges designed to justify NPS control of Santa Cruz," Huse says. "The fact of the matter is that this investigation began more than two years ago as the result of a citizen's tip. The property has been under the sole care of the Park Service since February, and the former owners are required to vacate by May. That has nothing to do with this case."

In a separate action, Congress authorized a Park Service buyout of Gherini's share of the property on Santa Cruz Island as part of the omnibus parks bill that passed last fall. Former Rep. Andrea Seastrand (R-Calif.) sponsored the measure that resulted in the first legislative taking since 1988, when a Virginia developer was forced to sell a Civil War battlefield rather than build a shopping center there.

Channel Islands park archaeologist Don Morris says little can be done to reverse the damage done to the island's cultural resources. "When material is moved from context," he says, "objects of antiquity have no voice to tell us about their past." But Santa Cruz still has a wealth of archaeological resources, he adds, and a comprehensive survey is under way.

Krantz is free on bail while awaiting trial. He also faces misdemeanor charges for guiding without a license and for shooting a raven, a migratory, nongame species.

REGIONAL REPORT continued

manager of the Presidio, will become director of the NPS Pacific West Regional Office, while Stanley Albright, who currently occupies that position, will become acting superintendent at Yosemite.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST Phil Pearl, Regional Director

▶ Olympic National Park in Washington has received more than 2,000 comments on its Lake Crescent management plan, most of which oppose the use of personal watercraft (PWC) on the lake. NPCA thanks its members for taking action on this issue, which could set a precedent for the National Park System. Before the final days of the comment period, responses overwhelmingly opposed PWCs. At the last minute, a coalition that includes representatives of the PWC industry and "Wise Use" groups delivered a pile of petitions and form letters to the park. But Pearl notes that the public review process is not a vote, and that government agencies tend to give more consideration to the kind of responses sent by NPCA members—thoughtful letters composed by concerned citizens who have taken time to learn about an issue.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN Mark Peterson, Regional Director

▶ The Clinton Administration has offered $65 million in cash to Crown Butte Mines, Inc., to block the development of the New World Mine near Yellowstone National Park. The offer came seven months after the administration proposed to exchange federal assets for Crown Butte's interest in the site. The money will come from federal mineral royalties from sites in Montana. At press time, Crown Butte was considering the offer, which also must be approved by Congress.

SOUTHEAST Don Barger, Regional Director

▶ One day before the Mississippi Commission on Environmental Quality (MCEQ) was set to decide whether to allow natural gas drilling in state waters near Gulf Islands National Seashore, the company interested in the lease withdrew its proposal. The Texas-based Frontier Oil Company expressed interest in revising its plans. NPCA had worked closely with state and local groups, testified at a public hearing, and, through alerts and phone banking, notified its members in Mississippi of the threat to Gulf Islands, generating a great deal of phone calls to MCEQ members.

SOUTHWEST David Simon, Regional Director

▶ NPCA cosponsored a workshop that enabled the public to weigh in on the future of transportation at Grand Canyon National Park. NPS subsequently released an environmental assessment detailing two main options for reducing automobile congestion in the park: alternative-fuel buses and light-rail trains. NPCA supports the light-rail alternative, which would avert the need to construct a large parking lot in the park. The light-rail system would run between Tusayan, near the park's entrance, to visitor facilities at Mather Point and Grand Canyon Village, and offer opportunities to connect with tour buses traveling along the park's scenic rim drives.

MANAGEMENT

Organ Pipe Highway: Collision Course?

NPS voices concerns after Arizona raises speed limit.

AJO, ARIZ.—With no warning to the National Park Service, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) raised the speed limit on the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument Highway to 65 miles per hour in March.

"This is an accident waiting to happen," says NPCA Southwest Regional Director Dave Simon. "ADOT is treating the park road like any other highway. NPCA and the Park Service see the road as an opportunity for a model project with ADOT. With interpretive pullouts and a reasonable speed limit, this road can safely serve park visitors and through travelers alike."

Disregarding concerns first raised by NPCA and then by park officials, ADOT removed signs marked with a 55 mph speed limit from within park boundaries and posted new signs just outside the park that declare a 65 mph speed limit. Although the two agencies had discussed ADOT's proposal to raise the speed limit, the state implemented the change with no advance notice to NPS—despite the fact that Park Service rangers are responsible for patrolling that section of highway.

The two-lane route—also known as State Highway 85—is the only paved road through Organ Pipe and a major artery for travel between southern Arizona and the Republic of Mexico.

Park Superintendent Tony Bonanno says, "We wanted the state to acknowledge that this road serves park visitors—that it's not just a through road—but our concerns did not seem to carry much weight."

The Park Service's concerns include the safety of park visitors and impacts on park wildlife. As with any national park road, Bonanno says, "we have people cruising at low speeds to enjoy the scenery, pulling over to look at wildlife and take photographs. It's just not com-

TOM BEAN

A higher speed limit on the Organ Pipe highway endangers wildlife and visitors.

patible with high-speed travel."

NPS regulations set the maximum speed on park roads at 45 mph. At Organ Pipe, Bonanno says, the Park Service agreed to a speed limit of 55 mph out of consideration for the road's dual function.

But even at 55 mph, NPS research shows that some stretches of highway 85 are "killing zones" for park wildlife—particularly reptiles, including sensitive species such as the rosy boa. Park staff have observed an increase in skid marks on the highway since ADOT raised the speed limit, Bonanno says—a sign that drivers are having difficulty avoiding wildlife or of "friction" between fast and slow traffic.

Bonanno has written ADOT officials requesting reinstallation of the 55-mph speed limit signs within the national monument.

"Right now we have 23 miles of park road with no speed limit signs. We've got people doing 75 [mph] mixed with people doing 45 [mph]," Bonanno says. "As a manager responsible for the safety and welfare of park users, I cannot allow an extended period of time to pass with no signs on the road."

At press time, Bonanno said he would direct park staff to post 55-mph speed limit signs in the park if ADOT does not respond by mid-April.

TRANSPORTATION

ISTEA Spells Progress for Park Transit

Landmark transportation law is due for reauthorization.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Policy wonks pronounce the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) "iced tea," and its reauthorization could provide a refreshing change to the way visitors get to and through the national parks.

"Creative transportation planning will enable the Park Service to allow public access while better protecting park resources," says Al Eisenberg, NPCA's deputy director for conservation policy. "ISTEA is the principal vehicle for improving transportation in and around the national parks."

The 1991 act is due for reauthorization this year. Politicians and lobbyists representing every state, many metropolitan areas, road-related industries, and other interests have assembled to fight for their share of the $155 billion program, funded through federal gasoline taxes.

When it was enacted, ISTEA marked a new direction for federal transporta-

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tion policy. The act requires state and metropolitan area transportation plans to address alternative forms of transportation, including biking. Under ISTEA, these plans must also take national park and other public lands transportation issues into account.

One innovative feature of the act guarantees funding—about 2 percent of ISTEA dollars—for "transportation enhancements," including bike trails, landscaping projects, and preservation of scenic and historic resources. Unfortunately, the national parks have not benefited from this program because the states, which administer these funds, are reluctant to spend money on projects on federal lands.

The National Park Service receives $84 million a year from ISTEA's Federal Lands Highway Program, most of which goes to road repair, maintenance, and construction. Under a new Clinton Administration proposal, NPS' share of ISTEA funding would nearly double to $161 million a year.

NPCA supports increased funding for park transportation, along with another feature of the administration proposal, which would allow the Park Service to work with states and metropolitan areas on projects that would benefit the parks. This amendment to ISTEA would allow NPS to offer neighboring communities matching funds to develop shuttle systems, bike trails, and other park-enhancing transportation options outside the parks.

At Gateway National Recreation Area in New York and New Jersey, for example, ISTEA funds could be used to build parking facilities at a ferry landing, enabling visitors to get to the park by boat, and reducing traffic congestion at the park's Sandy Hook entrance.

The House and Senate transportation subcommittees are considering several ISTEA-reauthorization packages, including the Clinton Administration proposal. NPCA will continue to advocate an increase in NPS' share of ISTEA funds, in addition to measures encouraging the Park Service to devote more of the money it gets to comprehensive planning efforts and the development of alternative transportation systems, including buses and light rail.

"WISE USE" WATCH

U.N. CONSPIRACY THEORISTS BACK BILL

REP. DON YOUNG (R-Alaska) has reintroduced a bill that would require congressional approval of international land designations—such as United Nations World Heritage Sites—within the United States. U.N. conspiracy theorists and "Wise Use" groups pursuing an anti-environmental agenda have lined up behind the measure, known as the American Lands Sovereignty Protection Act.

The bill failed to pass last year after Young brought it to the floor under suspension of rules, a tactic generally used for noncontroversial measures.

Conservationists say the legislation is unnecessary because U.N. designations are purely symbolic and do not entail any transfer of management authority. Biosphere reserves and world heritage sites in the United States—many of which are national park units—and the private lands around them are subject only to U.S. law.

According to Dan Barry of the Clearinghouse for Environmental Advocacy and Research, U.N. conspiracy theorists are no longer just on the fringe of the "Wise Use" Movement.

"There are a number of people and groups working to demonstrate that there's a global conspiracy between environmental groups and the United Nations to establish an eco-world order," he says.

At a conference organized by the new group Sovereignty International, participants declared that national parks are the welcome mat for a new world order. The organization also claims that the United Nations has adopted the agenda of the radical environmental group EarthFirst! and that national park units will become "human exclusionary zones."

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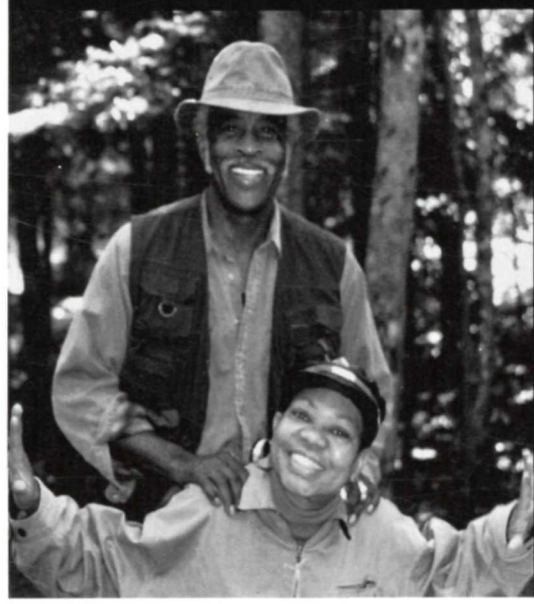

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A Monumental Challenge

When President Clinton used the Antiquities Act to declare Grand Staircase-Escalante a national monument, he reignited the controversy surrounding Utah's wildlands and the powers granted by the act.

BY TODD WILKINSON

FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY, the fate of southern Utah's unprotected federal wildlands has been up for grabs in a high-stakes game of political poker.

The Vermilion Cliffs, the Grand Staircase, the Cockscomb, the Waterpocket Fold, and the redrock maze of the Escalante Canyons provide only hints of the geologic wonders for which this corner of the Colorado Plateau is renowned. Other treasures found here include ancient encampments of the Anasazi and Fremont cultures, prolific deposits of prehistoric fossils, and a sensitive desert ecosystem.

Conservationists have long pressed Congress to preserve these Bureau of Land Management (BLM) holdings as a park or wilderness, while energy developers, prospectors, and individuals affiliated with the "Wise Use" movement have clamored to excavate billions of dollars worth of coal, natural gas, and minerals from them.

The protracted deadlock was broken on September 18, 1996, when President Clinton called a press conference on the rim of Grand Canyon National Park. Invoking executive authority under the Antiquities Act of 1906, the president proclaimed the 1.7-million-acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. ➥

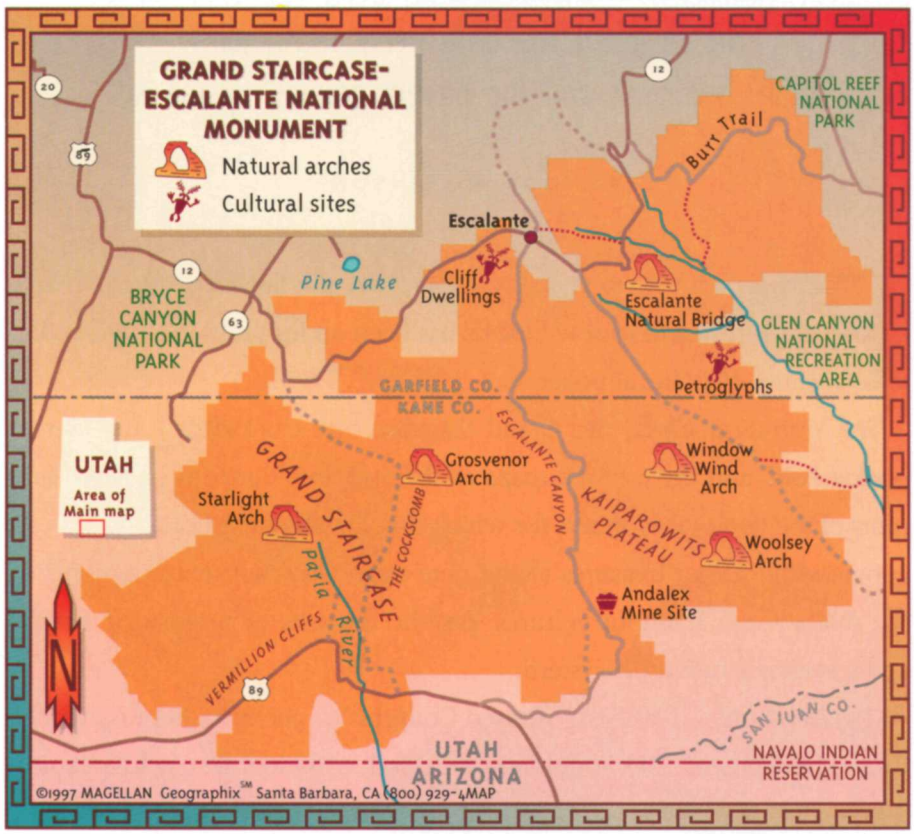
Grand Staircase-Escalante is the 105th monument to be declared such under the Antiquities Act and the first to be managed by BLM.

D.A. HORCHNER

Powerful Protection

Regarded as the president's crowning environmental achievement in his first term, the creation of Grand Staircase-Escalante put the spotlight on a dusty, 90-year-old federal code last used in 1978 by President Jimmy Carter to create 15 monuments covering 56 million acres in Alaska.

"Most people forget the Antiquities Act even exists because it has been so rarely used in recent years, but when it is pulled out people get excited—as President Clinton now understands," says Barry Mackintosh, a historian with the National Park Service (NPS).



The act has been used to create the majority of what many consider our most spectacular parklands, including Grand Canyon and Death Valley national parks. Other sites created this way include Channel Islands and Carlsbad Caverns as well as Statue of Liberty and Devils Tower national monuments. In fact, all of Utah's national parks except Canyonlands began as monuments.

"The Antiquities Act has been the single most important vehicle for presidential action," says public lands policy expert Charles Wilkinson. "It gives broad powers to the presidents...who have used it extensively and courageously to designate national monuments to protect, as the act says, 'objects of historic or scientific interest.'"

Some Republican lawmakers recently have portrayed the Antiquities Act as a guise used by liberals to increase the size and domain of the federal government. But statistics show that Republican presidents hold a decisive edge over Democrats in the number of national monuments created by executive order. The bipartisan Roosevelt family was responsible for 30. Republican Theodore Roosevelt, the first president to use the act, set aside 18 monuments, and Democrat Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed 12.

As the name implies, the Antiquities Act originally was used to preserve paleontological, geological, and Native American cultural sites. Archaeologists realized that without safekeeping, the integrity of priceless sites such as Casa Grande, Canyon de Chelly, and Mesa Verde would be lost to looters or commercial development.

Language embedded in the act was specific when Congress initially drafted the bill at the urging of Theodore Roosevelt. The act's intent is to set aside the minimum amount of acreage necessary to protect a site. Expansively interpreting those parameters, Roosevelt added broad sweeps of land that would eventually become the nuclei of Grand Canyon and Olympic national parks. In some respects, Roosevelt was ahead of his time; he understood that simply drawing a circle around an area does not necessarily preserve it.

AT RIGHT: The Kaiparowits Plateau is among the geologic wonders for which this part of the Colorado Plateau is known.

Legislative Backlash

Despite its obscurity, Grand Staircase-Escalante had been eyed for protection by conservationists and farsighted politicians since the 1930s.

Harold Ickes, Interior Secretary under Franklin Roosevelt, lobbied hard to have Congress create an Escalante National Park in the early 1930s, and in 1935, a study commissioned by the Utah State Senate recommended National Park Service protection. NPCA highlighted Escalante in its 1988 National Park System Plan as worthy of inclusion in the National Park System.

Pioneering geologist Clarence Dutton coined the term Grand Staircase after noticing the landscape's similarity to a stairway composed of cliffs and plateaus that rise in an unbroken sequence 5,500 feet to the rim of Bryce Canyon. Encompassed by Bryce Canyon National Park to the west, federal wilderness to the north, Capitol Reef National Park to the northeast, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the east, and fingers of Lake Powell on the Navajo Indian Reservation to the south, Grand Staircase-Escalante seemed like the missing piece of a giant jigsaw puzzle. Even so, the monument's designation has been opposed nearly as long as it has been promoted.

Recent opposition to the designation of Grand Staircase-Escalante has been led by the Utah congressional delegation, including Rep. James Hansen (R), a vociferous critic of the Park Service and a man who believes Utah already has its share of national parks, along

SCOTT I. SMITH

with Republican senators Bob Bennett and Orin Hatch, who described the president's action as "the mother of all land grabs."

Actor and environmentalist Robert Redford, who joined Clinton at the ceremony announcing the formation of Escalante, took opponents to task in an opinion piece written for *The Los Angeles Times*. "Utah Republicans, who wanted to open the land to exploitation, acted like this was their fiefdom, saying only they know what is best for it," wrote Redford, whose Sundance Resort is in Utah. "In truth, every American has a stake in the matter, since the land in question belongs to the people of this nation, not to the politicians of Utah."

NPCA and its coalition of preservation groups are bracing for a backlash in Congress.

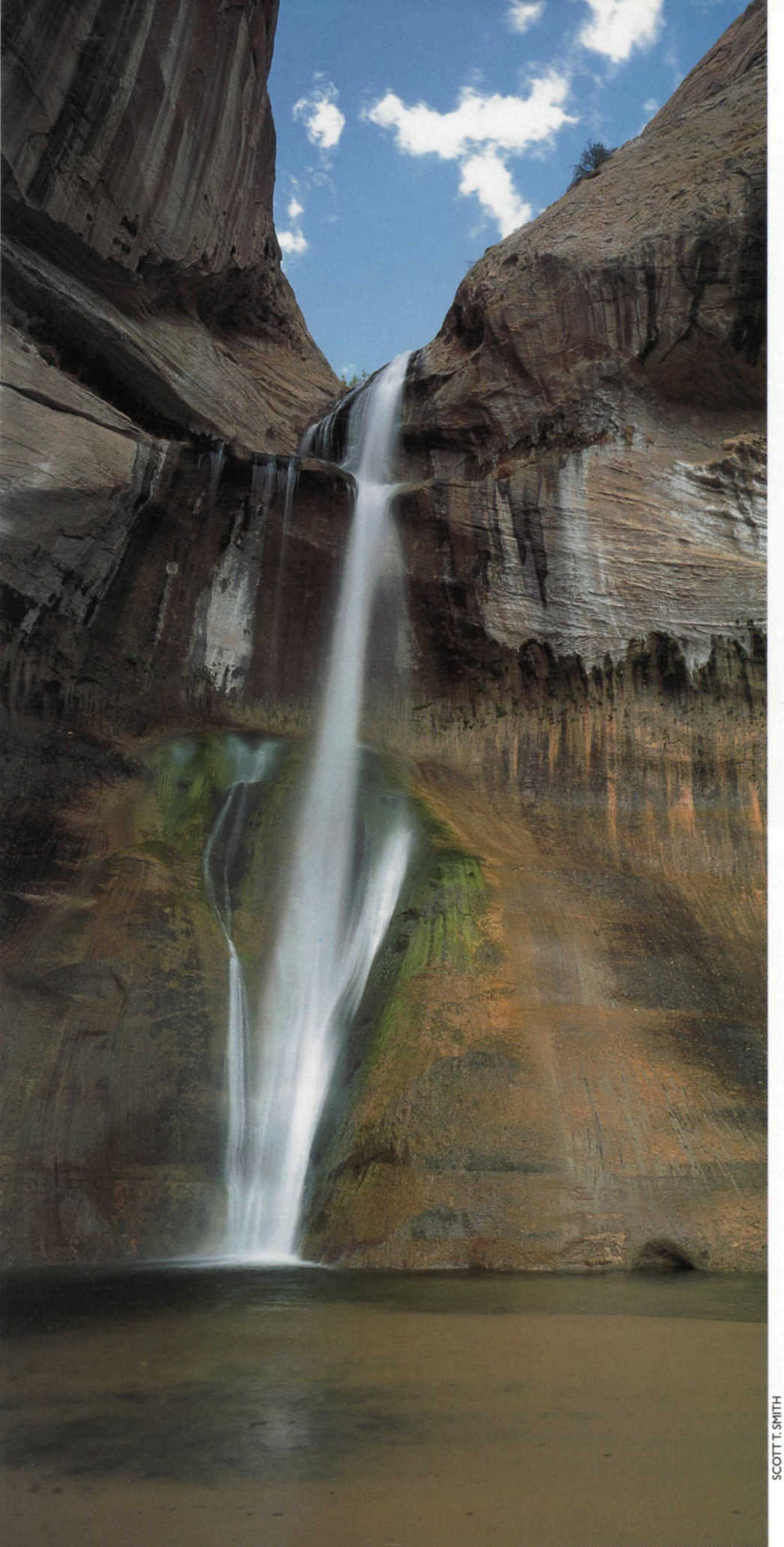
TOM TILL

Penstenmon and claret cup cactus are among the plants found in Grand Staircase-Escalante, which includes sensitive desert ecosystem.

Members of Utah's congressional delegation have vowed to shrink the monument's boundaries and pass an amendment to ensure that the Antiquities Act can never again be used in their state. In late March, the Utah delegation introduced legislation in the House and Senate that would restrict presidential authority to proclaim monuments to 5,000 acres or less and require prior consultation with affected governors for larger parcels as well as prior congressional approval.

Rep. Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho), who chairs the House subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, has gone a step further and introduced legislation that would limit the act's ability to declare monuments anywhere.

Other bills, introduced by Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and



SCOTT T. SMITH

Among the most remote areas in the country, Grand Staircase-Escalante was one of the last places to be mapped.

Rep. Wally Herger (R-Calif.), would exempt Idaho and restrict monument designation for Mount Shasta, respectively. Federal legislators are fighting the monument designation in other ways as well. Both Hatch and Hansen have threatened to underfund the monument.

Controversial History

Threats to take punitive action are not unprecedented. In 1943, Franklin Roosevelt created the Jackson Hole Monument as a precursor to Grand Teton National Park. The House and Senate passed legislation to repeal the act's proclamation, but it was vetoed by Roosevelt. Then, the state of Wyoming sued the federal government, challenging the act's constitutionality. In 1950, the act that proclaimed Jackson Hole part of Grand Teton also included a stipulation that no additional land in Wyoming could be proclaimed a national monument without congressional approval.

Clifford P. Hansen (no relation to Rep. Jim Hansen), a former senator and Wyoming governor, was a county commissioner in Jackson Hole at the time of the lawsuit. Hansen, who is now in his 80s, says condemning the creation of the monument was a mistake.

Still, Wyoming's defiance warned presidents to invoke the Antiquities Act sparingly. A few presidents, such as Lyndon Johnson, have deployed the act in the waning hours of their terms. Alaska's congressional delegation sought to have its state exempted in the late 1970s, after Carter created 15 monuments there.

Mackintosh says that Clinton's tactic is similar to that taken by Franklin Roosevelt and Carter to outflank a Congress bogged down by a political impasse. Clearly, Clinton also had political motives. The president could re-endear himself to the conserva-

tion community, which was uncertain of his environmental commitment and unhappy with his timber salvage initiative, and set aside a spectacular tract of land in a state where he had little political capital to lose. In the 1992 presidential race, the Clinton-Gore ticket finished last in Utah behind George Bush and Ross Perot. The ticket lost to Robert Dole there in 1996.

But the president's action has a significant qualification. Grand Staircase-Escalante is the first national monument ever placed under the sole direction of BLM.

"It just subjects any major resource development activity to intense scrutiny given the fact that it would occur inside a monument," Mackinstosh says. "In a sense, the president chose to antagonize a lot of people without his action having any kind of enormous effect on the reality of land use. Leaving it under BLM was...done to appease those who are most hostile." Mackintosh says more people in Utah probably trust the Bureau of Land Management than the Park Service.

A Novel Experiment

A couple of elements set this site apart from other national monuments. It is far more primitive than most, and it is intended to blend recreation with existing land-use practices such as livestock grazing and sport hunting.

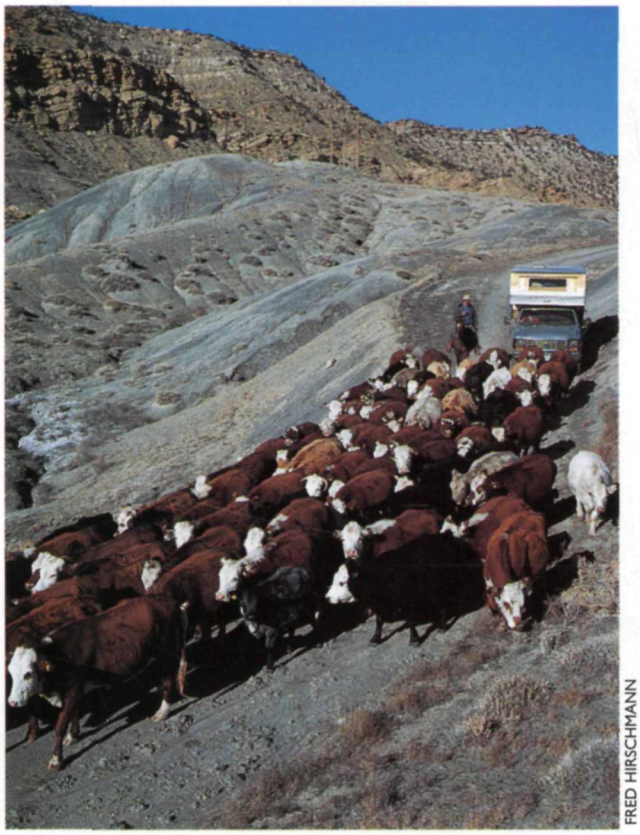
Three-fourths the size of Yellowstone, Grand Staircase-Escalante has just two major paved roads—U.S. Highway 89 across the south and U.S. Highway 12 slanting to the north. The remainder is infused spartanly with dirt roads that turn impassable after a hard rain. The region is so rugged that it was the last pocket of public land to be mapped in the lower 48 states and one of the last to receive telephone service.

"The area is extremely remote, complicated to navigate on foot, and during the summer almost unbearably hot," says monument manager Jerry Meredith. "Every year, people die out there."

Handed the task of crafting a management blueprint in three years, BLM is accepting its new responsibility with enthusiasm. Meredith says the project has generated excitement because it allows BLM to prove it can be a worthy caretaker in the face of skepticism.

Although Meredith is eager to prove that BLM can manage the monument, not everyone is confident the agency will be able to preserve the lands.

Mark Peterson, NPCA's Rocky Mountain regional director, says "whether true protection really emerges will be determined over the next three years."



FRED HIRSCHMANN

Uses such as hunting and livestock grazing will be allowed to continue on monument lands.

Peterson says citizen vigilance is the only way that Grand Staircase-Escalante will maintain a course of preservation in the face of pressure on BLM to build new roads, increase visitor use, and ignore crucial environmental monitoring. "What makes this landscape unique is its rustic character, but all of this could change if a lot of the people in Utah demand full development of tourist facilities and get their way," he says.

In March, commissioners of Utah's Kane and Garfield counties sought more than $6 million from Congress for road improvements, rescue services, and other expenses that they said would be incurred because of the new monument. Congress had not acted on the request this spring.

The most immediate concern, Peterson adds, is what happens to the 170 outstanding mining claims, oil and gas leases, and private stakes to rich deposits of coal dispersed throughout the monument.

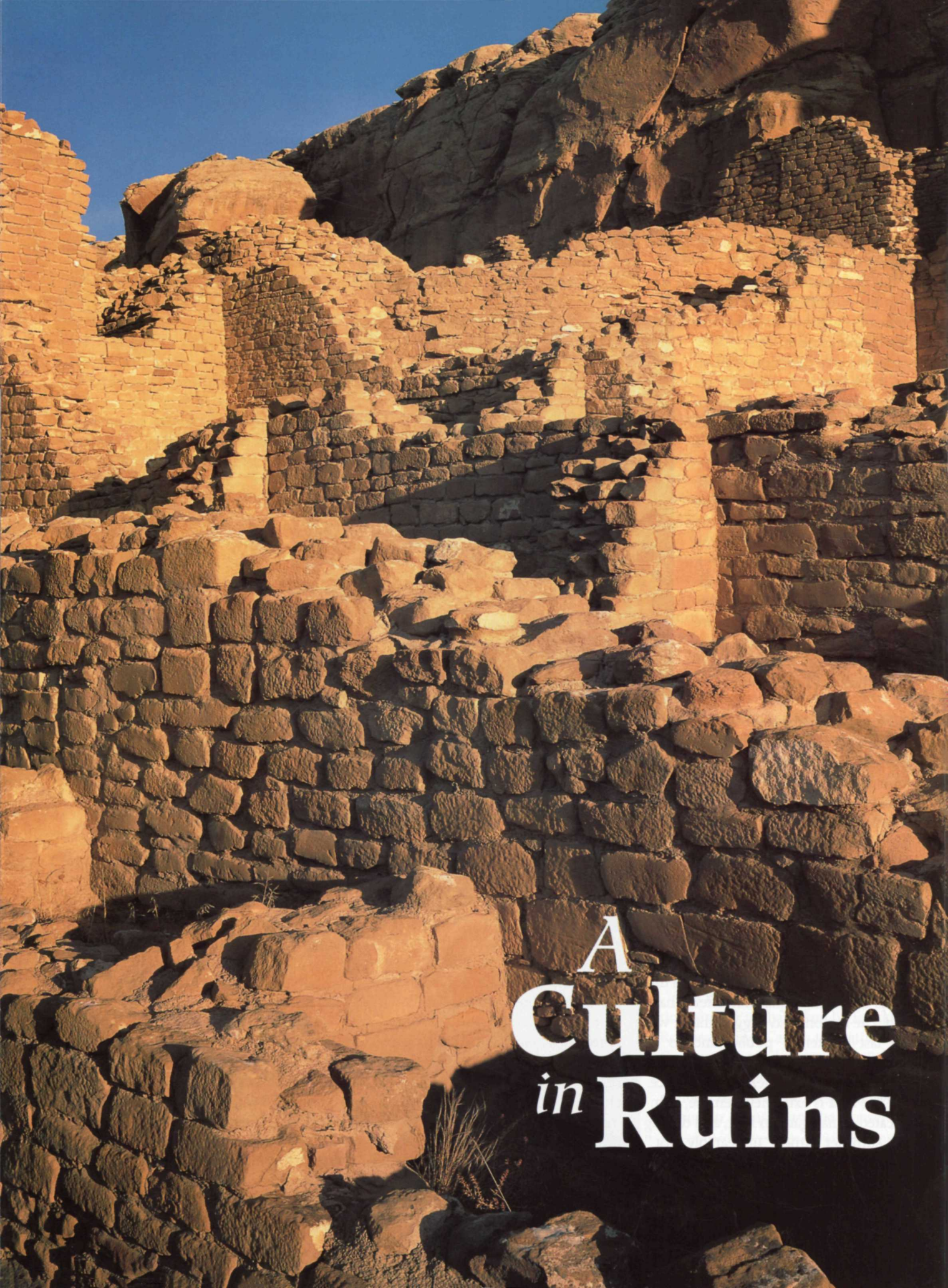
In his speech announcing the designation, Clinton said: "While the Grand Staircase-Escalante will be open for many activities, I am concerned about a large coal mine proposed for the area. Mining jobs are good jobs, and mining is important to our national economy and to our national security. But we can't have mines everywhere, and we shouldn't have mines that threaten our national treasures."

The proposed coal mine is owned by the Netherlands-based Andalex Resources. If it had opened, environmentalists feared the effects of a steady stream of 65-ton, 42-wheel tractor-trailer trucks rumbling through the monument, to say nothing of the mining process itself.

Even though Andalex and PacifiCorp, the two largest companies with interests in the region, have tentatively agreed to trade their leases for federal coal reserves elsewhere, the number of claims could present a problem. In February, Conoco officials announced that the company planned to develop two exploratory wells for methane, a move that observers say was a bluff to lure the government into a costly buyout. Conoco holds valid leases on 140,000 acres of state and federal lands within the monument.

"You might say we won the battle but we still could lose the war," says Peterson. "This game of poker is not over. In a way, it's just beginning."

TODD WILKINSON *lives in Bozeman, Montana, and is a regular contributor to* National Parks. *He last wrote about reptile rustling.*



A Culture in Ruins

Across the nation, thousands of historic sites and objects are succumbing to inadequate funding and misplaced priorities. Two enterprising initiatives aim to remedy the situation.

BY CAROL ESTES

IT IS NOT NEWS that our great natural parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite are in trouble. They face a barrage of well-documented threats, from pollution to an excess of visitors. But our cultural treasures—thousands of archaeological and historical sites, many within the safekeeping of the National Park Service (NPS)—are in even greater trouble. And for most of us, that situation is news.

In the national parks of the Southwest, where many of our most important prehistoric treasures are concentrated, 1,000-year-old mortar is turning to dust; walls are crumbling and falling. But Park Service personnel cannot accurately describe the problems, let alone the solutions, because the sites have never been inventoried.

And by the Park Service's own assessment, 16 percent of the National Historic Landmarks across the country, public and private, are endangered or threatened. They include Alcatraz Island, part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in California, and the Shiloh Indian Mounds, within the Shiloh National Military Park in Tennessee. (Although some historic landmarks are within parks, the overwhelming majority are privately owned, such as the Empire State Building and George Washington's estate at Mount Vernon.)

Why have NPS preservation efforts fallen so far short of the mark? The easy answer would blame those villains we love to hate—politicians and flabby big government—for too much waste, too much regulation, too much red tape. And that answer might be partly right.

Many of our most important prehistoric treasures are found at Southwest parks such as Chaco Culture.

FRED HIRSCHMANN

But the more accurate and not-so-comfortable explanation has as much to do with us as with them. And this is not a story of too much but of too little for too long.

Politics and Priorities

In the last 30 years, the number of park sites under NPS administration has jumped from 259 to 374, and the number of visitors has doubled from 133 million to 269 million. Meanwhile, the NPS budget has lagged behind—even though the agency receives increases every year, they do not keep up with inflation—and at $1.3 billion, it still represents a minuscule fraction of the federal budget: .001 percent.

JOHN ELK III

Sixteen percent of historic landmarks are endangered or threatened, including Alcatraz.

The size of the Park Service's staff also has failed to keep pace with responsibilities. In fact, reorganization within the agency reduced the staff by about 10 percent. This summer there will be one ranger for each 80,000 park visitors.

Considering the size of the job it is asked to do, the Park Service is lean to the point of malnutrition. The shortage of personnel and money has created an overall maintenance backlog of between $5 billion and $8 billion. "Backlog is the polite term," says outgoing NPS director Roger Kennedy. "The direct terms are rot and decay."

Lack of money and staff is not the whole story, though, according to Loretta Neumann, president of Conservation, Environment and Historic Preservation, an advocacy group. An important element is the long history of misplaced priorities within the Park Service. At Casa Grande Ruins National Monument in New Mexico, for instance, a new interpretive center and maintenance building have been built, but little attention has been paid to the actual ruin, a massive four-story building constructed more than 600 years ago by Native Americans.

From the outset, NPS has been dominated by natural resources-oriented people, even though two-thirds of the national parks are primarily historical or contain historical resources.

Years ago, Neumann says, she worked with park managers who dreamed of tearing down the historical structures because they got in the way of the view. Although that attitude has changed in recent years, "preservation of cultural resources has never been given the priority it deserves," Neumann says.

Jerry Rogers, the gray-haired and personable superintendent of the Park Service's Southwest Support Office, agrees that priorities are sometimes askew. "I guess I could say that the people in Washington were too stupid to

recognize the priorities. But that was me." Rogers spent 20 of his 27 years in the Park Service in Washington, D.C., facing grim priority battles and impossible choices among clean drinking water, road repairs, wildlife management, new sewer systems, law enforcement, and historic preservation.

Now responsible for providing support to NPS properties in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Oklahoma, Rogers deals with the results of long-term low priority for historic preservation. "The difficulty is not bureaucracy, it's politics," he says. "It comes down to the will of the American people to pay for what they care about."

Vanishing Treasures Initiative

Although "big" government has been blamed for just about every social ill in America recently, critics sometimes forget that government is made up of people, many of whom care deeply about the resources under their purview. And some of those people are going to unusual lengths to improve things.

In Jerry Rogers' region, the Vanishing Treasures Initiative has caught fire. The initiative began, says Rogers, when Glenn Fulfer, the manager of Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument in New Mexico, got fed up with watching the deterioration of the place under his care. He met with the managers of Aztec Ruins National Monument and Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico, who also lamented the poor condition of the resources and their frustration at not being able to do anything about it. Then they decided to start something.

They enlisted the help of a summer employee in the Santa Fe office who had experience with video and produced *Vanishing Treasures: A Legacy in Ruins*. In the voices of native and Hispanic craftspeople, and with images of buckling adobe walls propped up with steel beams, disintegrating mortar, and rubble where walls used to be, the video lays out the problem.

And the problem is fourfold. First, preservation has received no significant funding for decades. As a result, preventive maintenance has been neglected, creating serious, widespread, and, in some cases, irreparable damage. Second, no database exists that identifies all the sites and describes their condition, or records the success or failure of earlier preservation work, for which consistent standards do not exist. Third, most of the people with the skills and knowledge to do these specialized repairs are Native American and Hispanic craftspeople past the age of 50. Many have lived near the parks and have worked for years as seasonal employees—for low wages and without security—and are now nearing retirement. Since no training program exists to replace them, their knowledge will soon be lost. And finally, public support is lacking.

With the help of the Santa Fe office, Fulfer and his cohorts drafted a strategic plan to restore cultural sites in the region to the point that cyclical maintenance will be enough to protect them. Among the solutions the plan proposes is an apprenticeship program bringing together Park Service craftspeople and academic experts so that they can teach one another, then pass along what they have learned to a new generation.

Forty-one parks have signed on to the initiative, and dozens of Park Service personnel have begun gathering data and documenting sites, from Anasazi Pueblos to Spanish colonial churches and historic forts and buildings. Rogers will seek funding for the first year of a ten-year program, and he will look for corporate sponsorships, grants, and partnerships with like-minded organizations.

NPCA has held meetings to discuss partnerships, conducted a workshop on the topic last year as part of its Southwest Regional Conference, and is organizing support to bolster funding for the initiative. "We need to put money where it belongs: taking care of resources directly," says David Simon, NPCA's Southwest regional director.

Why is this particular initiative building support and enthusiasm? Perhaps because it has stirred the hope that a few committed people really can move a mountain—or stabilize it.

JOHN ELK III

The Vanishing Treasures Initiative came about when managers at three parks, including Chaco Culture, above, got fed up with deterioration.

Languishing Landmarks

In Washington, D.C., Susan Escherich faces her own mountain. From her one-woman office, she coordinates NPS monitoring of National Historic Landmarks—2,196 buildings, structures, districts, objects, and sites, both prehistoric and historic, inside and outside of the National Park System. The Park Service acknowledges these places as "our nation's most important historic and cultural resources."

While landmarks are considered nationally significant, one of three criteria needed to become a national park, they are neither feasible nor suitable for the

Park Service to own or manage. Unfortunately to many people, the designation signifies places that were not important enough to be labeled parks. [And] "That's simply not true," Escherich says. "When the National Historic Sites Act was written in 1935, Congress thought of National Historic Landmarks as potential national parks. In 1966, Congress also authorized a program of direct grants to NHLs, but as far as I know, it was never funded."

And that, Escherich says, is a lost opportunity. Since deterioration is the main threat to landmarks, funding funneled directly to them would make a crucial difference.

JOHN FECTEAU/INSTOCK

A majority of parks contain historic resources, such as Canyonlands, home of the Holy Ghost mural.

Thirty-seven percent of the most endangered National Historic Landmarks are privately owned. The remainder belong to states, local or municipal governments, corporations, foundations, tribes, or a combination. Only about 14 percent belong to agencies of the federal government. Ninety-four landmarks are wholly or partly owned by the National Park Service, and of that number, 14 are "severely damaged" or "imminently threatened." Another 13 are "potentially threatened."

Escherich and preservation experts in seven regional offices work, through the National Historic Landmark Assistance Initiative, to help owners take care of their properties. Using workshops, publications, and the Internet, NPS offers advice and technical assistance to both public and private owners.

If the Park Service can educate the public about the importance of these landmarks and the problems they face, Escherich believes NPS can help recruit private funding sources. Escherich also is beginning to discuss with owners the possibility of forming a group that represents their interests in ways the Park Service cannot.

Although funding opportunities are hard to come by for both public and private historic landmarks, the Park Service is, in some ways, in a more difficult position than private owners. Often the landmarks it ends up with are the most difficult and expensive to keep up. "The Park Service tends to get properties that are already in trouble—like the *Thayer*, the *Balclutha*, and the *Wapama*, three landmark boats in extremis at the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. The total amount needed to restore the three ships to health is a minimum of $10.3 million," says Escherich. "If the owners can't afford the upkeep and the property is important, Congress tends to say, 'Give it to the Park Service.'"

In its annual evaluation of historic landmarks, the Park Service, assisted by state preservation offices, rates sites that are in trouble as priority one, "damaged," or priority two, "threatened." In 1996, 16 percent of all landmarks were rated priorities one and two. Five percent were listed as priority one, which means that their integrity has been, or is in immediate danger of being, seriously damaged and current protective strategies are inadequate.

The damage occurring at Seton Village, a privately owned national landmark outside Sante Fe, is typical of a priority one site. Built by conservationist Ernest Seton early in the century, Seton Village consists of a 45-room stucco residence called "the Castle," a Pueblo kiva, a Navajo hogan, and several simple adobe buildings.

Today, the Castle roof leaks badly, threatening interior walls and some of the remaining book and art collection. The kiva is in even worse shape, because it is partly below ground and vulnerable to moisture. Its stucco is cracked, discolored, and falling off in chunks. The hogan is in the worst shape. With the roof missing, its interior is now exposed to the weather.

Moment of Truth

It may already be too late for the kiva and hogan at Seton Village, but it is not too late for all of the sites. Our cultural resources include everything from the paintings and furniture in historic homes to Anasazi ruins to the Chrysler Building in New York City, a national landmark. Each historic site and landmark represents our country's common inheritance. We should be unwilling to let it disappear.

In the *Vanishing Treasures* video, Cecil Werito, the Navajo masonry foreman at Chaco tells the audience, "When I'm getting out of the service, it's going to be in bad shape, and this is real hard for me to take.... I did the best I can to preserve this place. I think it's your job to do something now."

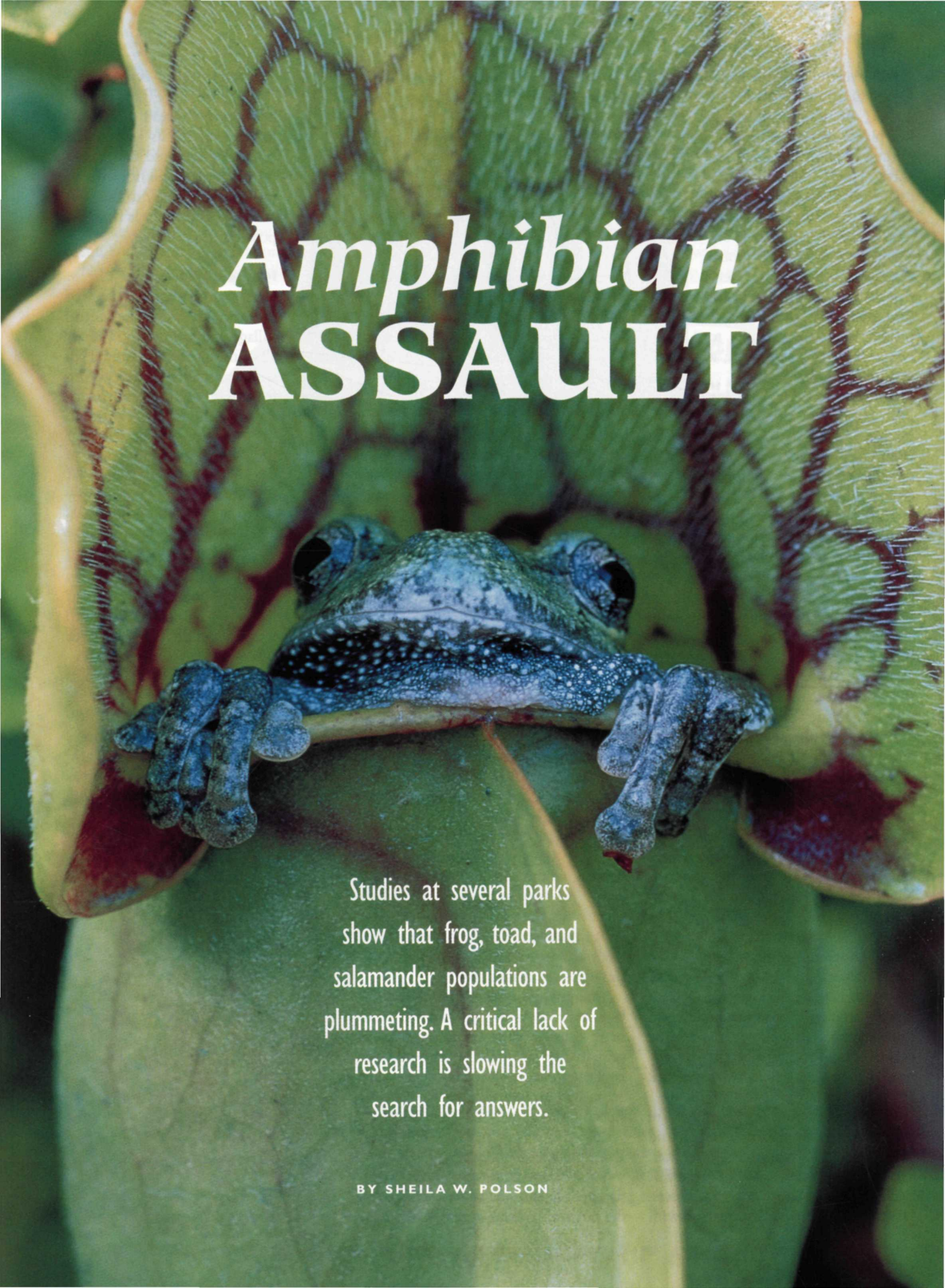
If we are ready to pay for the job we want done, Park Service employees such as Werito, Fulfer, Escherich, and many others are committed to doing it. "You won't see them quitting to sell life insurance," Rogers says.

CAROL ESTES *is a freelance writer who lives in Minnesota. She last wrote for* National Parks *about "free-market environmentalism."*

TAKE ACTION: NPCA and its allies are pushing for $3.5 million for the Vanishing Treasures Initiative in the FY 98 budget. Write to your local representatives in Congress.

Senator _____
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



Amphibian ASSAULT

Studies at several parks show that frog, toad, and salamander populations are plummeting. A critical lack of research is slowing the search for answers.

BY SHEILA W. POLSON

FIVE SUMMERS AGO, Gary Fellers and Charles Drost set out to retrace history. Heading for California's Sierra Nevada and Yosemite National Park, they planned to follow the trail of early-1900s zoologists Tracy Storer and Joseph Grinnell to see how many frogs and toads they could find.

Four months and 38 meticulously searched study sites later, Fellers and Drost had disturbing news to report. Of the seven species of frogs and toads that Grinnell and Storer found thriving in 1915, five had seriously declined. One, the foothill yellow-legged frog, had disappeared from large portions of this relatively undisturbed area.

Unfortunately, their findings are not unique. From the rainforests of South America and Australia to the mountains of Europe and North America, amphibians—frogs, toads, and salamanders—are disappearing, often at alarming rates. Although in some cases the culprit is obvious—a wetland filled, a river damned, a forest cleared—in others it is not.

Perhaps no one has combed the parks for amphibians more than Gary Fellers. A U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) research biologist with the Biological Resources Division and former NPS employee at Point Reyes National Seashore in California, Fellers has studied amphibians in Redwood, Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Lassen Volcanic national parks in California. And often what he has discovered is not good: a dramatic drop in the number of Cascades frogs in Lassen Volcanic, the loss of mountain yellow-legged frogs from large portions of Sequoia, and the serious losses at Yosemite.

The statistics at Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee are also disquieting—albeit ambiguous. James Petranka, an amphibian expert at the University of South Carolina at Asheville, has been focusing on two of the Great Smokies' species: the wood frog and the spotted salamander.

Since beginning his project five years ago, Petranka says he has seen more than a 50 percent decline in the number of wood frogs. In other areas, this species seems to be holding steady.

JOHN DITTLI

At least five species of frog and toad have seriously declined in Yosemite, despite what appears to be ideal amphibian habitat.

But, stresses Petranka, who will soon publish the book *Salamanders of the United States and Canada*, that paradox "doesn't necessarily mean anything." He says these fluctuations could be part of the amphibians' natural cycles, and it will take ten to 15 years to assess whether or not they are under stress.

Critical Links

Although it is too soon to sound the alarm over amphibian declines in the Great Smokies, overall population reductions could provide a warning to humans. Because amphibians mate and reproduce in ponds and wetlands and spend their adult lives on land, frogs, toads, and salamanders are an integral part of both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Sometimes predators and sometimes prey—they eat insects, yet are food for birds and mammals—amphibians are a critical link in many a food chain. And their moist, permeable skin makes them particularly sensitive to environmental pollutants. If a frog or toad population is hurting, say scientists, the chances are good that some other living thing or natural system is also askew.

Some reasons for reductions seem obvious. At Yosemite, Fellers suspects that introduced predatory fish, the loss of habitat because of a five-year drought, and perhaps agricultural pesticides drifting into the area from the San Joaquin Valley could have affected frogs and toads. Still, Fellers says "there remains a frustrating lack of clear answers."

Stocked fish are also a problem in some lakes at Mount Rainier and North Cascades national parks in Washington—according to studies conducted by USGS scientist Gary Larson. And logging without adequate streamside protection has had an effect on many populations of the tailed frog and torrent salamander throughout the Pacific Northwest.

But the larger question, Petranka emphasizes, is whether declines in parks or wilderness areas are due to "something more global in nature." Could it be acid precipitation or ultraviolet radiation? What about global warming? No one knows for sure. "That's the real mystery," he says.

Global Threats

Like several other species, including the western toad and tiger salamander, the boreal toad has seriously declined throughout the Rockies since the 1980s. "Lots of amphibian declines in

A gray tree frog peeps out of a pitcher plant. The decline of many amphibian species has scientists looking for answers.

GARY MESZAROS/DEMBINSKY PHOTO ASSOC.

the West can be attributed to habitat destruction—from agriculture, water projects, altered wetlands," says scientist Steve Corn, "but these are national park areas with no obvious negative impacts."

Corn, who like Fellers, is now with the Biological Resources Division of the USGS, formerly the National Biological Survey, hypothesizes that something could be compromising the toads' immune systems, preventing them from being able to fight off disease. But exactly what, he does not know. He plans to study further the possible effects of ultraviolet radiation.

Studies by Andrew Blaustein, a professor at Oregon State University, have shown that increased ultraviolet radiation, allowed into the atmosphere because of a depleted ozone layer, can be harmful to amphibian embryos. While Corn does not believe ultraviolet radiation is the sole cause of declines, he suspects it could be working with something else, perhaps a fungus.

Another suspected global factor, which has gotten particular attention in the East, is acid precipitation. Extensive studies by Dr. William Dunson at Pennsylvania State University show that amphibians' survival is definitely affected by pH or acidity levels in the temporary spring ponds or wetlands in which they breed. Not only can highly acidic waters kill embryos and slow larval growth and development, acid precipitation also damages zooplankton and algae, robbing ponds of nutrients. And because some toxic metals become more soluble in waters with low pH, they could also play a role in amphibian mortality.

Bruce Connery, a biologist at Acadia National Park in Maine, says long-term effects of acid precipitation on amphibians are still up for review. "Until we fully understand the natural fluctuations in amphibian populations, it is premature to point any fingers." And, he adds, though others have suggested that amphibians might serve as monitors of air toxins such as power plant emissions, not enough convincing evidence exists yet to back that up.

Mutations on the Rise

AS SCIENTISTS RACE to crack the disappearing amphibian case, they also face another mystery: What is causing malformations in amphibians across the United States?

Deformed frogs, toads, and salamanders have been documented in at least eight states—from Vermont to California—and Canada.

And it is not just one, but at least ten species that are suffering. Northern leopard frogs, American toads, spring peepers, long-toed salamanders, red-legged frogs—all are appearing with everything from one leg, to three legs, to no eyes. Not only are these abnormalities disturbing for the animals' sake—scientists believe it is unlikely any will survive to maturity—they also raise a more ominous question: Could there be a link between the amphibians' plight and human health?

It is a question that has triggered a tidal wave of public concern in the last year. And, it has scientists everywhere scrambling to find some answers. Although some deformities have occurred in amphibians for many years, the scope of the current problem first drew national attention in 1995 after a group of students from Le Sueur, Minnesota, discovered a significant number of frogs with extra limbs.

Though the exact cause of the deformities remains unknown, several plausible theories are being discussed:

▲ Synthetic chemicals: Most scientists agree further research should focus on chemicals, such as pesticides, but say it is too early to pinpoint specific ones.

▲ Ultraviolet radiation: Known to be increasing because of the depletion of the ozone layer, ultraviolet radiation can photoactivate—or transform—chemicals from nontoxic to a toxic form; it could be working in combination with certain chemicals to affect amphibian development.

▲ Parasites: Past studies at a site in California have shown that the cyst of trematode parasites, for example, can cause limb deformities in amphibians.

▲ Combination of factors: It is possible that the malformations could be caused by the complex interaction of several different factors; experts, therefore, caution against making the focus of research too narrow.

According to Mike Lannoo, associate professor at the Muncie Center for Medical Education in Indiana and coordinator of the Declining Amphibian Population Task Force in the United States, no evidence exists to show that the amphibian deformities and overall population declines are linked; however, he says, "both are probably symptomatic of an unhealthy environment."

So far, large numbers of malformed frogs or toads have not been documented in national parks, but no intensive research focusing specifically on deformities has occurred there. Bruce Bury, a U.S. Geological Survey researcher, notes, however, that surveys have been started in many Western national parks.

In April, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) chose Shenandoah National Park in Virginia as the site for a conference during which experts from throughout the country will determine how to proceed with research on amphibian malformations. According to conference leader Joseph Tietge, an EPA research biologist in Duluth, Minnesota, the participants also plan to work on establishing a national reporting center to collect and analyze data on deformed amphibians.

A collaborative project of the EPA and the USGS, Biological Resources Division, the reporting center will be based at the Northern Prairie Science Center in Jamestown, North Dakota. According to Tietge, citizens and state agencies have played an important role in determining the extent of the amphibian problem. Now, he says, it is critical that work by states, universities, and federal agencies be coordinated at the national level.

—SWP

GARY MESZAROS/DEMBINSKY PHOTO ASSOC.

RANDI HIRSCHMANN

DOUG LOCKE/DEMBINSKY PHOTO ASSOC.

FRED HIRSCHMANN

TOP TO BOTTOM: Red-backed salamander, mountain yellow-legged frog, wood frog, California newt. National parks provide ideal places to gather data on amphibians. And because parks are protected, they also provide ideal control sites for researchers.

Parks as Laboratories

Researchers such as Petranka agree that they need more information. And among the best places to get it is national parks. From Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah to Olympic and Yosemite, scientists are combing as many as 30 parks for answers.

Not only are parks ideal places to gather baseline data on amphibians in their natural habitat—information which in many cases has never before been gathered—but they are also protected sites where researchers can return later to monitor any changes. Although certain areas within parks may not fit the "pristine" category because of buildings and other facilities built to serve visitors, the parks can be valuable control sites for comparison with areas outside their boundaries.

In an area known to suffer from some of the worst ozone pollution in the Northeast, Acadia National Park in Maine has been a national monitoring site for acid precipitation since the 1980s. Prevailing westerly winds blow much of the ozone in from elsewhere. (Unlike the ozone layer, which encircles the Earth in the upper atmosphere and protects it from harmful ultraviolet rays, ozone pollution is a byproduct of combustion, a key component of smog, and a contributing factor to acid precipitation.)

In fact, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have just begun working on an interagency agreement to launch an amphibian research program in several national parks. According to John Karish, NPS regional chief scientist based at Pennsylvania State University, they have yet to decide which of the national parks to focus on, but the agreement may represent the largest commitment by the Park Service to amphibian research.

Last summer, park biologist Connery joined with Dr. Steve Ressel, a professor at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, to launch another, volunteer, amphibian monitoring program at Acadia. For five months, more than 30 residents spent most evenings listening for calling frogs at designated spots around the park. Although such a survey would not work as well in the West, where not as many species call, it was very successful at Acadia; Connery says he plans to expand the pilot program this year.

As for federal support of research, various agencies have funded projects, but much more research could be done. "Most research has tended to go toward birds and mammals," says Bruce Bury, a USGS researcher in Cornwalis, Oregon, "but in biomass and numbers, there are more amphibians than birds and mammals put together in forest ecosystems."

Ten amphibians, including the desert slender salamander and the Houston toad, already have a spot on the Endangered Species List, and Bury says many other amphibian species are "in really bad shape" and worthy of federal listing or some other protective measures.

Everyone concerned about amphibians also agrees that it is important to support federal legislation such as the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act—all of which are up for reauthorization this year.

Although Bury has particular praise for the Park Service, which is funding his and many other studies, he stresses the need for increased coordination of research and monitoring at the regional and national levels. More research should mean more answers—and a greater chance of keeping frogs, toads, and salamanders in the forests and wetlands where they belong.

SHEILA W. POLSON *is a freelance writer who lives in Lincolnville, Maine.*

Banks Holiday

Although the Outer Banks is an increasingly popular tourist attraction, the barrier islands maintain an atmosphere of solitude.

BY KIM A. O'CONNELL

The Outer Banks of North Carolina—a slim strand of barrier islands stretched between Pamlico and Albermarle sounds and the Atlantic Ocean—is all about soaring. Children run along stretches of unspoiled beach pulling colorful kites high above their heads. Scores of birds—gulls, herons, terns, ibises—fly from shore to sound and back. Dolphins leap from the ocean, suspended for a brief, shining moment before submerging again.

A pair of inventive brothers also soared here, flying above the ground—for a few moments, at least—in the first heavier-than-air machine. And this, too, is where hopes soared, when brave colonists from the Old World tried to establish themselves in the New.

A vacation at Cape Hatteras National Seashore is full of contrasting sensations and sights: burning feet on hot sand; a cold outdoor shower to wash off the sea salt; cool evening breezes caressing sunburned skin; and hundreds of sand crabs diving for cover as beachcombers stroll past seaching for the sea's treasures.

Hatteras offers a wealth of shells, ranging from metallic jingle shells to scallops of charcoal and coral and indigo mussels. Be sure to bring a field guide to aid in their identification.

In summer, the dried, snake-like egg cases of whelks—a string of small disks, vertebrae from the sea—can be found among the seaweed and other debris at water's edge. An open disk reveals a handful of tiny whelk shells, two millimeters long, pure white and perfectly formed.

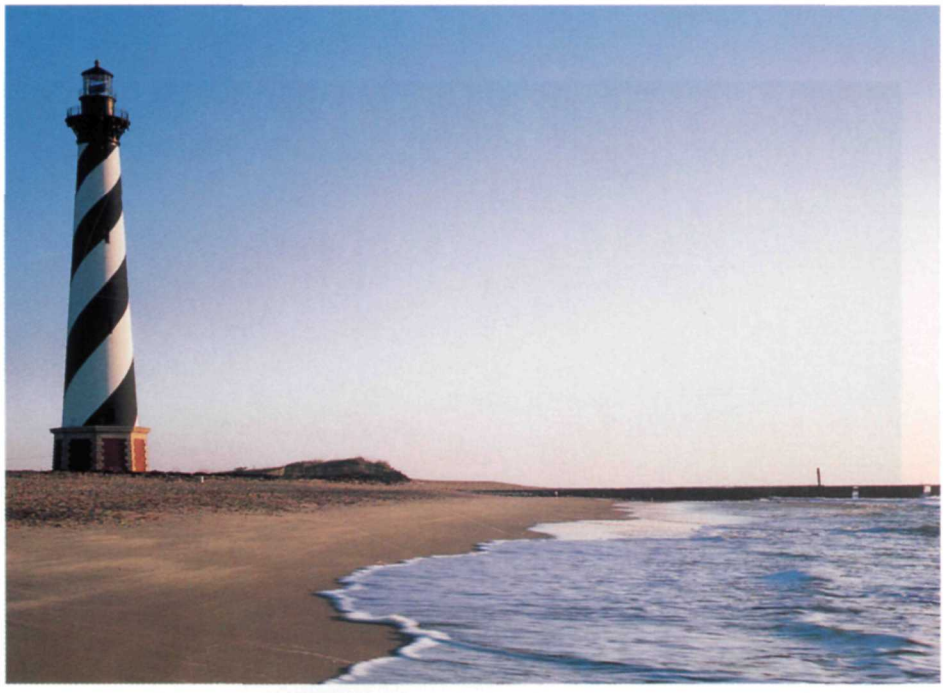
Unlike big resort beaches, Hatteras Island beaches provide ample solitude—where a group of sandpipers or a picnicking family are the only crowds. Near the town of Salvo, part of

SCOTT T. SMITH

MIKE BOOHER/TRANSPARENCIES

North Carolina's Outer Banks today draws vacationers for its sandy beaches and abundant wildlife, including laughing gulls, above.

KIM A. O'CONNELL, former news editor of National Parks *magazine, is a writer and editor living in Arlington, Virginia.*



TOM TILL

ABOVE: The Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, at 208 feet, is the tallest one in North America.

an old shipwreck juts out of the water, itself the picture of solitude, a lone marker of the Graveyard of the Atlantic, the stretch of shoals just off shore that have claimed hundreds of ships. The wreck appears close, as if you could swim right up to it and unlock its secrets.

Farther south, where Hatteras Island bends like an arm reaching for the mainland, the renowned Cape Hatteras Lighthouse is of singular interest. It is a towering structure—at 208 feet, the tallest lighthouse in North America—standing astonishingly close to the sea, but its imposing height is tempered by its cheerful barber-pole striping.

Just a few more miles to the south is the ferry to Ocracoke, the southernmost island of the national seashore. The 40-minute ferry ride is the only way to get from Hatteras to Ocracoke, and each boat has a distinctive name. By the end of a week-long vacation, beachgoers will be able to challenge one another to remember all of the ferries.

Ocracoke Island, with its historic fishing village, is somehow more "southern" than the other islands of the Outer Banks. Residents have lived here a long time. The pace is slower, the water warmer, the beaches even more secluded. The sun seems closer somehow. Island restaurants offer platefuls of steamed clams and friendly earfuls of island lore. One can understand the pirate Blackbeard's legendary affection for this place. Stop to query a local fisherman or shopkeeper, and he or she will tell you how Blackbeard was killed in a fierce Ocracoke Inlet battle, but only after sustaining 25 wounds.

If the southern end of Hatteras has its legends, so do the islands to the north. A trip over the causeway from Bodie Island to Roanoke Island is like traveling through time. The island is historically rich and resplendent in tall, slim Carolina pines. At the northern end is the town of Manteo, best known for Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, where a hapless band of English men and women became known as the "Lost Colony."

Fort Raleigh is a feast for the senses. Stroll its pine-needle-covered walkways to the old star fort while cicadas shriek overhead, and let your mind wander to the 1580s. More than four centuries ago, Sir Walter Raleigh, an Elizabethan visionary, sent three expeditions of colonists to this new world, a land they named Virginia decades before ships anchored at Jamestown.

After a few desperate years, Raleigh's colonists failed—because of fighting with local Indians, or starvation, or a combination of other hardships. Before disappearing into the history books, however, the colonists left a single clue—the word "Croatoan" carved on a tree. Was this a destination? A warning? No one knows for sure, and the mystery of the "Lost Colony" persists until this day.

Three centuries later two other vi-

sionaries were, like Raleigh, drawn to the oat-covered dunes of the Outer Banks and the new world they promised just beyond. Wilbur and Orville Wright, caught up in the Industrial Age, believed they would open this century by taking humankind higher than it ever had been. After conducting several experiments with kites and gliders, the Wright brothers, on December 17, 1903, succeeded in flying the first heavier-than-air machine—120 feet in 12 seconds.

Today, visitors to Wright Brothers National Memorial will be treated to the same feeling of expectation the Wright brothers felt that December day. Stand at the top of Big Kill Devil Hill, and remember that the 20th century might not have known many of its greatest heroes—from Charles Lindbergh to Neil Armstrong to Sally Ride—had these two brothers not stood here with their flying machine nearly ten decades ago. Many a child has run down that hill with arms extended, re-enacting that fateful day. Adults will be tempted to do the same.

Even if you do not run down the hill, even if you just lie on your beach towel, gazing at the whitecaps, you will undoubtedly be filled with the sense of wonder and wildness, of peace and possibility, of legends and lore, that only the Outer Banks can provide.

KELLY CULPEPPER/TRANSPARENCIES

Ships wrecked so often along the Outer Banks that the shoals and sea became known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic.

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JOHN ELK III

The Wright brothers flew in the first successful heavier-than-air machine at what is now Wright Brothers National Memorial on the Outer Banks.

Cape Hatteras

Cape Hatteras National Seashore has four campgrounds—at Oregon Inlet, Cape Point, Ocracoke, and Frisco—which allow tents, trailers, and motor homes. Campers are required to make reservations and pay fees. Rest rooms, potable water, cold-water showers, grills, and picnic tables are provided.

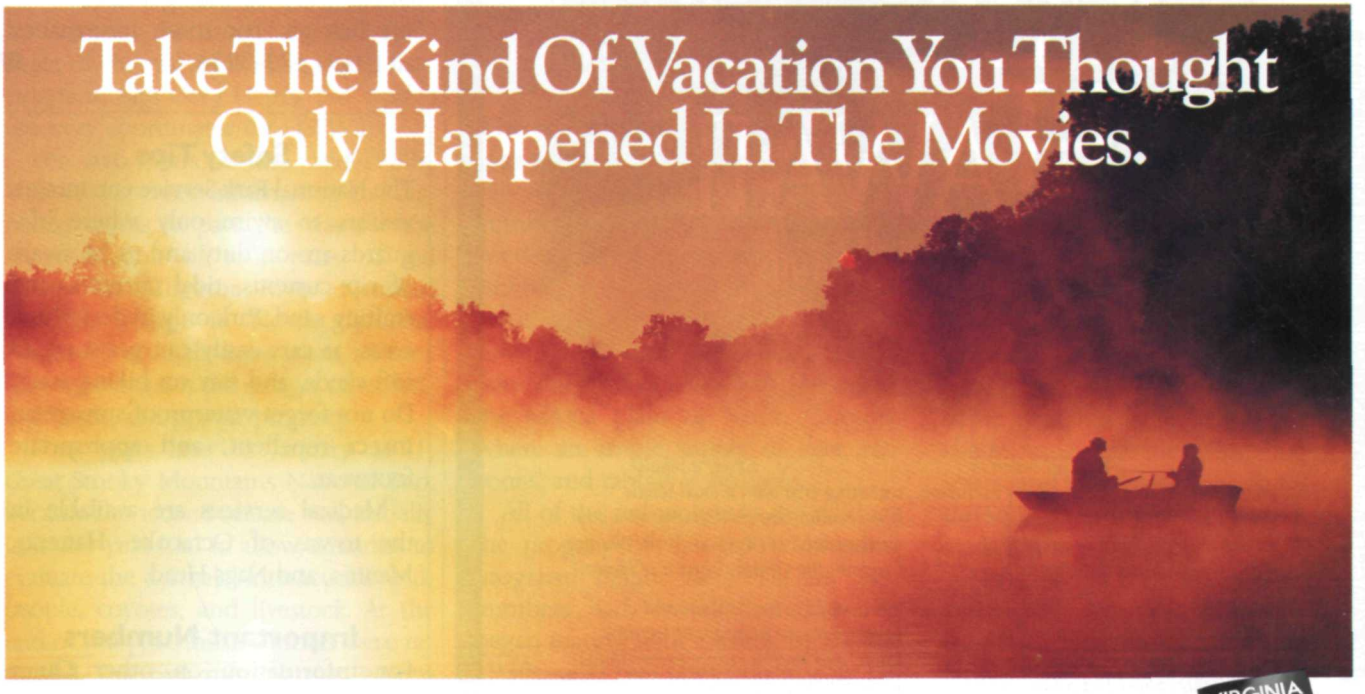
About a dozen private campgrounds are also located at various points along the seashore. Motels, hotels, and cottages, as well as restaurants and stores, are in ample supply in all villages along the seashore. For more information, call the park at (919) 473-2111.

The seashore also encompasses Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, a 6,000-acre wildland that is home to more than 265 species of birds. Call (919) 473-1131.

Wright Brothers

The Wright Brothers National Memorial visitor center includes a full-scale reproduction of the 1902 glider and the 1903 flying machine developed by the brothers. The memorial is located in Kill Devil Hills, near the popular resort areas of Nags Head and Kitty Hawk. Many accommodations, restaurants, stores, and amusements can be found along Highway 12. For more information, call the park at (919) 441-7430.

Not far from the memorial is Jock-



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ey's Ridge State Park, which boasts the largest natural sand dune on the East Coast. Hang gliding, kite flying, and climbing to the summit (as well as tumbling down it) are popular activities. For more information, call (919) 441-7132.

Fort Raleigh

Fort Raleigh often hosts exhibits, live drama, and talks by park interpreters. Lodging of all kinds, including a private campground, can be found in Roanoke Island's two towns, Manteo and Wanchese. Restaurants and stores also line the island and the causeway. For more information, call the park at (919) 473-5772.

Visitors should make time to see two other famous Roanoke Island attractions: *The Lost Colony* outdoor drama and the Elizabethan Gardens. *The Lost Colony* has been running each summer since 1937 and is entertaining for all ages, but be sure to bring insect repellent. Call (919) 473-3414 for details. The Elizabethan Gardens, a living memorial to the lost colonists, is a 16th-century formal garden next to Fort Raleigh. For more information, call (919) 473-3234.

Safety Tips

The National Park Service encourages visitors to swim only where lifeguards are on duty and to be aware of rip currents, tidal currents, and shifting sand. Park only in designated areas, as cars easily can get stuck in soft sands, and stay on hiking trails. Do not forget waterproof sunscreen, insect repellent, and appropriate footwear.

Medical services are available in the towns of Ocracoke, Hatteras, Manteo, and Nags Head.

Important Numbers

For information on other Outer Banks activities and accommodations, call the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce at (919) 441-8144 or the Dare County Tourism Bureau at (800) 446-6262.

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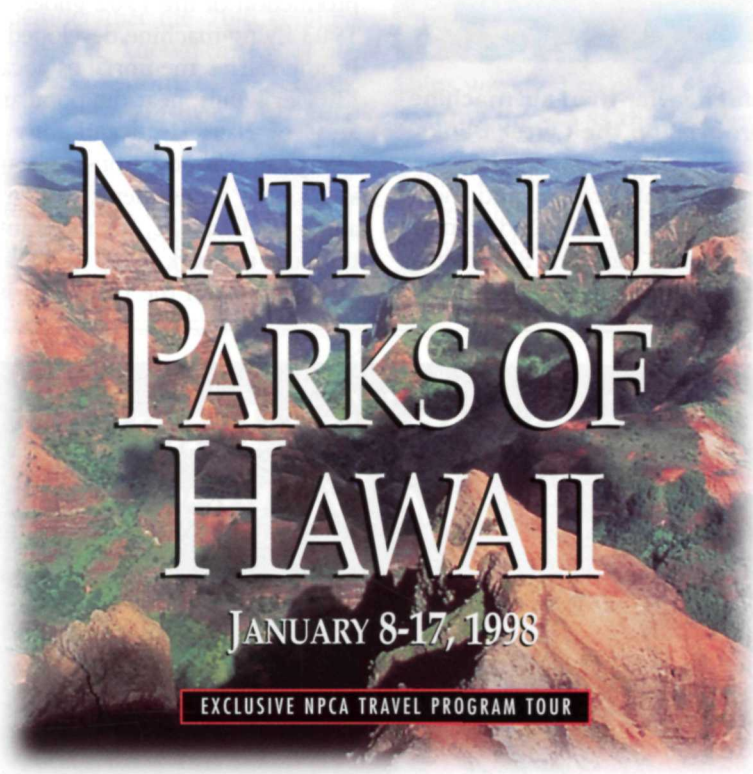

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Red Wolf Redux

Thanks to a captive breeding program, the red wolf population has grown from 17 to 300 animals.

BY LINDA M. RANCOURT

THE WORD "WOLF" frequently carries a negative connotation—"being thrown to the wolves" or "a wolf in sheep's clothing." Our language reflects a tremendous prejudice toward this top-level predator, and one that provided a challenge for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to surmount before *Canis rufus* could be returned to the wild seven years after the last wolf was taken into captivity.

Overcoming the negative perception and gaining the support of people who live near release sites have been among the most successful aspects of the red wolf reintroduction program, says Gary Henry, red wolf recovery coordinator for USFWS.

For two years in the mid-1980s, USFWS dispensed information and dispelled myths to pave the way for the reintroduction of four pairs of red wolves at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. About 60 animals now roam an area that encompasses the refuge, other federal lands, and private property.

Four years later in January 1991, Great Smoky Mountains National Park became the second release site, initially in a one-year trial to allow scientists to evaluate the animals' interactions with people, coyotes, and livestock. At the end of the year, those animals were removed, but two more family groups were released the following year. USFWS estimates that between four and 26 wolves live in the park. The numbers vary because officials have not yet determined how many young have survived from the last breeding season.

MARK NEWMAN/TOM STACK & ASSOC.

The red wolf has long ears and legs and reddish coloring.

Although biologists had hopes for Great Smokies, its mountainous terrain does not host as many prey species as the coastal plain of North Carolina, where an ample supply of deer, raccoons, and rabbits is available.

All of the red wolves in the wild are the progeny of the captive breeding program, begun in 1973. As their numbers had dwindled, red wolves began mating with coyotes. By the late 1930s, only two populations were believed to exist: One in the mountain region of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri, and the other in southern Louisiana and southeastern Texas.

Through the captive breeding program, USFWS removed more than 400 animals from the wild. Only 17 of them were proven to be true red wolves. The population since has grown to an impressive 300. Primarily confined today to 37 captive breeding centers and the two sites in North Carolina and Tennessee, red wolves once roamed the continent from Pennsylvania to central Texas.

The animal, whose most distinguishing features are its long legs and ears, is named for its reddish coloring, although this can range from light tan to black. Weighing 45 to 80 pounds, the red wolf is smaller than its gray cousin and larger than the coyote. The animals pair with life-long mates in the wild and reach breeding maturity in their second or third year. They breed in February or March, and two months later, the female gives birth to two to six pups. Their hunting "packs" consist of an adult breeding pair, young of the year, and young of the previous year.

Their hunting ability is what originally got them into trouble with *Homo sapiens*. Ranchers believed wolves of any shade caused widespread livestock losses, and red wolves were slaughtered through government-sanctioned predator-control programs.

For those rare occasions when red wolves kill livestock, USFWS established an endemnity fund to repay farmers, and NPCA donated $7,500 toward a similar fund at Great Smokies.

"The key to wolf reintroduction," says Gary Henry, "has been getting out and working with people and telling them what a wolf really is rather than letting their fears take over."

LINDA M. RANCOURT *is managing editor of* National Parks *magazine.*

Taking Responsibility

Creativity is the key to resolving private property issues near national parks.

BY JIM DISNEY

I GREW UP IN Loveland, Colorado, where most of the neighbors helped one another, watched out for one another's children, and shared in the fortunes and misfortunes of day-to-day life. At the time, I did not think much about the responsibility of being a good neighbor. Fifty years ago, it seemed like the normal way of life.

With the problems confronting our communities today, many of us look back on the values and attitudes of those days with longing.

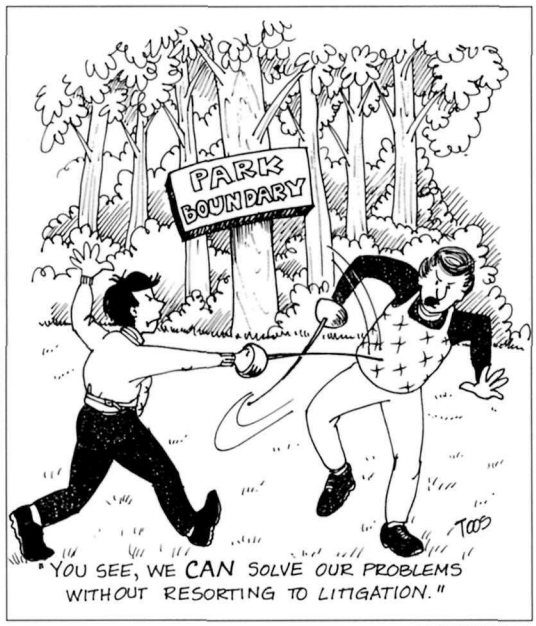
As the institutions of family, neighborhood, and community seem less able to address the challenges facing us today, many see as the root of the problem a gradual shift in our societal values. What happens when self discipline, self sacrifice, and concern for the common good give way to self indulgence, instant gratification, and "what's in it for me"?

Do we as a society have the desire and the will to reverse these trends? Is it possible to rekindle values of concern for the common good as well as shared responsibility for one another, or are these unfortunate trends our destiny?

A good test case can be made of those people who promote community values and those who promote private property rights.

Community values are embodied in the traditional role of government: "to protect the general health, safety, and welfare" by actions such as providing transportation systems and law enforcement as well as protecting air and water quality, protecting wildlife, and preserving open space and scenic views.

Private property rights center on the constitutional guarantee that property cannot be taken for public use without due process and fair compensation. Exactly what constitutes "taken for public use" is central to the debate around the issue of "takings." Property rights advocates argue that devaluing property through a zoning change is a taking; and therefore, the property owner must be compensated. But case law has affirmed that if an owner is left with a "reasonable use" of his or her property under the new zoning classification, a taking has not occurred.



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In recent years, this issue has moved from the courts to legislative bodies at the local, state, and national levels. If takings law were expanded by legislative action to include this broader devaluation-through-zoning definition, the resulting financial impacts could have a chilling effect on local governments' ability to address potentially inappropriate land uses adjacent to national parks.

Instead of choosing a side in this "us against them" debate, I suggest a new course of action. This alternative shuns the legal and legislative battles and moves instead toward the old-fashioned neighborhood approach of problem-solving. This alternative calls for a civil discussion among the affected interests; asks what is fair to the competing interests; and expects a willingness to compromise in finding a solution.

We must invent new tools that will enable us to find solutions that benefit everyone. Leaders in Larimer County and the town of Estes Park, Colorado, for instance, have devised a system that will encourage creative solutions. Officials with both jurisdictions—which abut Rocky Mountain National Park along its eastern boundary—convinced the Colorado state legislature to enact a statute that would allow an intergovernmental agreement between the town and

continued on page 50

JIM DISNEY *is serving his second term as Larimer County Commissioner in Colorado. He received the Environmental Stewardship Award from Rocky Mountain National Park in 1996.*

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county. The agreement allows the officials of both entities to appoint a land-use commission to hear applications for land-use development in Estes Valley. This will bring a greater sensitivity to the needs of Rocky Mountain National Park on local land-use decisions.

One of the commission's first tasks will be to move the town and county away from strict zoning codes toward growth-managing performance standards, as called for in the master plan.

Without doubt, it will be a difficult course because it necessitates a substantial departure from the increasingly litigious way our society approaches problems. (But, who knows, we might even save a few tax dollars if we learn to solve our problems on our own instead of running to the courts for a solution.)

Discussion from the public perspective must honestly answer the question of whether it is fundamentally fair for one or a few property owners to bear the financial burden of an action made in the public interest. An owner of a property zoned a certain way holds certain expectations of return on investment, and there is an accumulating body of resentment toward government when it is perceived to be acting insensitively toward the individual. It is important to remember this country was founded on the basic, if not sacred, premise of individual rights. Compassion and empathy for property owners will be necessary to produce solutions that are truly fair.

Property owners should remember that the existence of a publicly enforced zoning system protects against diminution of value from an incompatible use on an adjacent parcel.

At the same time, they must consider how their property benefits from public investments such as police and fire protection, roads, public utilities, and amenities such as national parks.

Let us explore the concept of "givings." Simply stated, if a government action reduces the monetary value of a property and requires compensation to the property owner, this action is considered a "taking." Then when a government action increases the monetary value of privately held property, should the community as a whole expect a reciprocal "giving" from the benefitting landowner? For instance, if a parcel is rezoned to allow dense development (which allows a greater profit to the landowner), should the developer be required to buy the development rights to another piece of land that then could be turned into open space?

I have faith in our ingenuity to invent equitable solutions. Solutions should come from the people closest to the problems. They should be developed and implemented at the local level where accountability is greatest and necessary modifications can be implemented most effectively. When appropriate, state and federal governments could play a role by suggesting guidelines or minimum standards, but they should avoid imposing their traditional "one-size-fits-all" solutions.

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NPCA Notes

BY KATURAH MACKAY

Women's Rights

▶ A key historic feature at Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York, is now preserved, thanks to a recent land donation to the National Park Service (NPS) from the National Park Trust (NPT). The land was the last privately owned parcel histori-cally linked to renowned feminist and social reformer Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The acquisition allows NPS to remove nonhistoric buildings in the area and reconstruct the lot to its mid-1800s configuration when the Stantons resided there.

"In this era of tight federal budgets, when the National Park Service has insufficient funds to preserve America's parklands, we are pleased to be able to make this donation to help restore the landscape of Women's Rights National Historic Park to its historic appearance," says Bruce Craig, the trust's executive director.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton arrived in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1847 with her husband and three sons. The park tells the story of her efforts to plan the Women's Rights Convention in 1848, which drew more than 300 women and men to Seneca Falls.

NPCA established the National Park Trust in 1983 as a nonprofit land conservancy that is funded through individual and in stitutional contributions and grants.

Fashion Affiliation

▶ The association has launched a new line of NPCA-brand apparel and outerware with the Japanese corporation Sumikin Bussan. The men's, women's, and children's clothing appears in 80 Justco department stores across Japan and features NPCA's well-known logo with three park bears. Proceeds from this program will support NPCA's conservation efforts.

Online Live with Arnberger

▶ America Online members recently conversed live through an electronic chat with NPCA's president Paul C. Pritchard and Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Robert Arnberger. Participants asked questions and made comments directly, covering issues on the Grand Canyon such as transportation, crowding, overflights, air quality, and fee hikes.

"We always need staunch and reasonable defenders," Arnberger said. "We need NPCA to continue to emphasize each citizen's role in taking personal responsibility to protect places like this and others."

For a schedule of upcoming live chats with other park superintendents and experts, visit our AOL site using keyword: PARKS.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye . . .

▶ Speaking before a Senate subcommittee recently, NPCA President Paul C. Pritchard and five other panelists advocated solid support from both the private sector and the federal government for major restructuring within America's national parks.

Principal ideas included a redirection of funds from unrequested construction projects to much-needed training programs and improved housing for park rangers; more research within the parks to assess resource depletion and damage and to determine protective measures; and innovative education programs to heighten enthusiasm and concern for the parks in America's classrooms.

Pritchard said that "by shifting our spending priorities from physical capital to intellectual and human capital," many of the park system's problems could be solved. "Let us invest in the employees of the National Park Service."

March for Parks

▶ NPCA's eighth annual March for Parks kicked off National Park Week, April 21–27, and was part of a nationwide effort to promote environmental awareness. NPCA would like to thank the many people who took part in the world's largest Earth Day event and recognize the following agencies and organizations for making the march a huge success: American Volkssport Association, Boy Scouts of America-National Capital Area, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Daughters of the American

Revolution, Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, National Council of Negro Women, National Park Rangers Association, National Park Service, and the National Recreation and Park Association.

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▶ Summer is here! Plan your next day trip or cross-country adventure with NPCA's regional guides to our national parks. The guides are designed to help visitors enhance their enjoyment while limiting their impact on natural areas. Each booklet includes the best park visitation times, fee and permit information, listings of campsites, hiking trails, tours, lodging and dining services, and directions to points of interest. The guides may be purchased for $8.95 each (plus $2.85 handling) or all eight for $65. To order, call 1-800-395-PARK, or send a check or money order payable to NPCA, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

In Memorium

▶ NPCA would like to remember Sean Southerland, an avid lover of the outdoors, a dedicated member of NPCA, and a seasonal Park Service employee. Gifts in Southerland's memory may be sent to: NPCA, Development Office, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

NPCA Online

▶ NPCA is in the process of designing a kids-only area on America Online with simple points of interest for youngsters, such as what a park ranger's job entails, how parks receive funds, and what resources are found in America's national parks. The area will be linked to other kids-only sites on AOL. Anyone with a childhood-development or education background interested in helping NPCA with this project can contact NPCA at natparks@aol.com.

◆ Get active! Sign up for NPCA's electronic activist list and receive the *ParkWatcherFlash* newsletter by sending a message to npca@npca.org.

◆ Trivia buff? Test your knowledge of national parks by participating in the trivia contest on NPCA's AOL site.

◆ Renew your membership with NPCA online—a quick and easy way to help us contribute a greater share of NPCA's resources to America's natural treasures.

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FRED HIRSCHMANN

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