THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION **SUMMER 2008**
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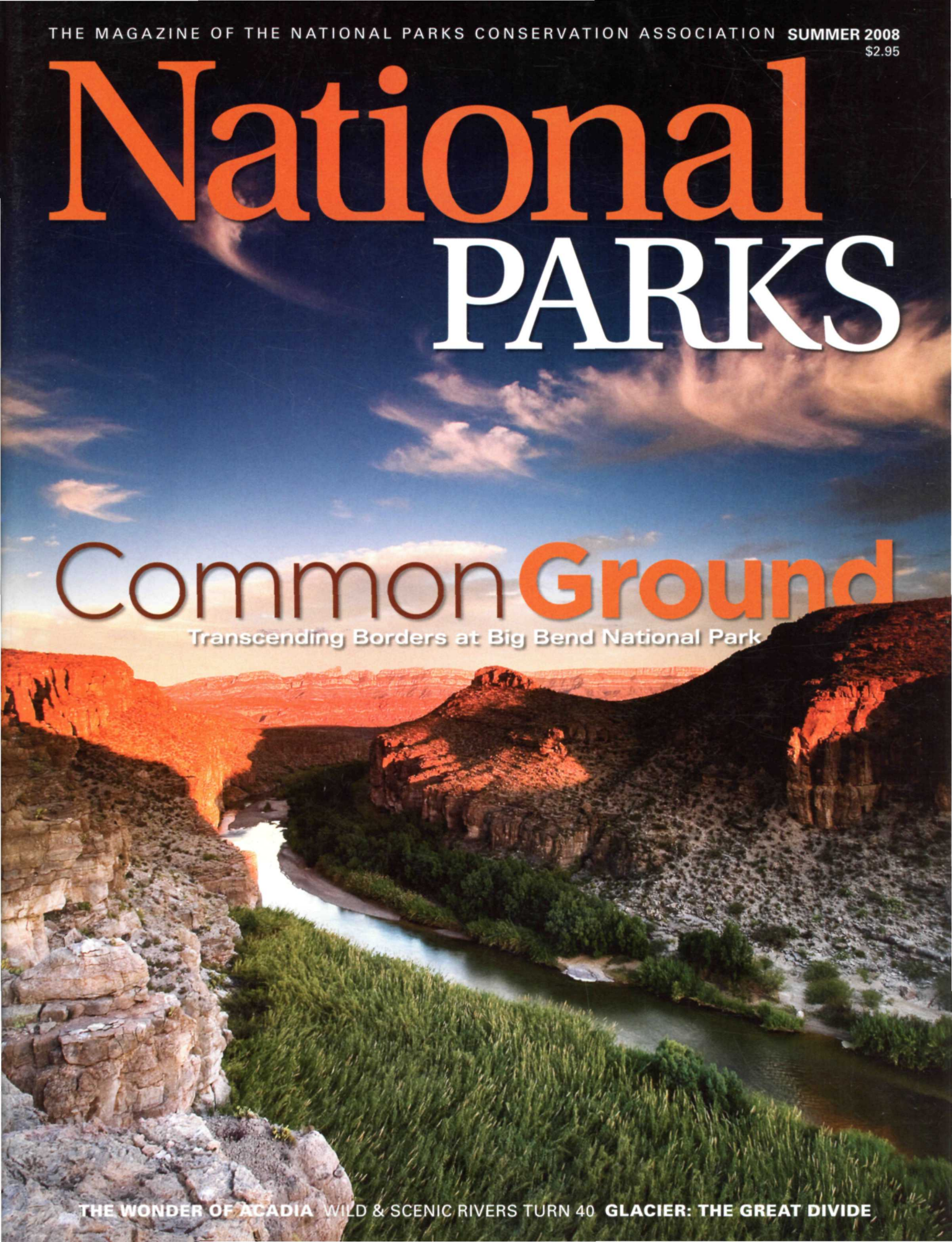
National PARKS

Common Ground

Transcending Borders at Big Bend National Park



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PARK BIOLOGIST RAYMOND SKILES in Big Bend National Park, Texas.
© IAN SHIVE/AURORA

COVER PHOTO: THE RIO GRANDE marks the international border between Big Bend National Park, Texas, and Mexico's Sierra del Carmen.
© IAN SHIVE/AURORA

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DR. EDWARD O. WILSON, shown here in his laboratory, envisions the national parks as major centers for scientific research.

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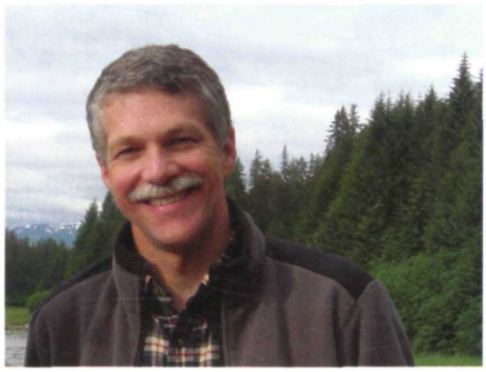
ON THE WEB

Get the latest updates on political maneuvers that would allow loaded guns in our national parks at www.npca.org/keep_parks_safe.

A Clouded Legacy


LAURA ATCHISON/NPCA

Every year, I try to get to Shenandoah National Park at least once. It's where I grew up, and it's a place that I always return to. I am drawn by my history with this national park, as well as its rolling hills, hiking trails, and the 105-mile Skyline Drive, a perfect place to ride a bicycle with family or on my own. It's an extraordinary gift to have a national park within such easy reach of the nation's capital.

But I am increasingly wary of riding my bike on long journeys in the park, especially during the summer months. Over the past four decades, the air in Shenandoah has become increasingly dense with smog, most of it generated by coal-fired power plants. There was a time when a visitor could stand on a high point along Skyline Drive and catch a glimpse of the Washington Monument, 70 miles away. Today, a summertime visitor is lucky to see 24 miles in any direction. On some days you may not even see the next mountain ridge.

Most of us agree that the national parks should be places where we can go to enjoy the views as well as the fresh air, but increasingly this is not the case. Just a few weeks ago, NPCA released a report entitled *Dark Horizons*, which suggests that one in three national park units has air-pollution levels that exceed health standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Clean Air Act is supposed to prevent major polluters from degrading air quality in the parks. Under the Act, EPA and the National Park Service are empowered to prevent states from permitting new power plants whose emissions would exceed park air-pollution limits, cause haze, or harm park wildlife. Yet, the EPA has proposed regulatory changes that will make it easier to build new coal-fired power plants close to national parks.

Eight new coal-fired power plants are under active development within a 186-mile radius of Shenandoah National Park, an area that already contains dozens of coal-fired plants. And Shenandoah is not alone. Throughout the country, more than 100 new coal-fired power plants are in various stages of planning and development. *Dark Horizons* highlights ten national parks most threatened by pollution from proposed coal-fired power plants, including Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Mammoth Cave National Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and Great Basin National Park. (For more details, turn to page 14 or visit www.npca.org/darkhorizons.)

The Bush Administration has staked a significant part of its environmental legacy on its stewardship of our national parks and historic monuments. The administration has recently supported significant increases in funding for the parks and has proposed an ambitious Centennial Initiative that would bring major new financial support to the National Park System by 2016. But even the best-funded national parks will not be showplaces if they suffer from haze, acid rain, and mercury-poisoned streams.

If you'd like to stop this short-sighted regulatory change and get engaged in our work to protect our national parks, visit www.npca.org/takeaction today and learn how you can help.

Thomas C. Kiernan

Drawing the Line

© JACK DYKINGA

Big Bend National Park

If asked about the status of conservation efforts affecting parks on our nation's borders, most people would guess that sites adjacent to Mexico are in more serious trouble, given the very real threat of a border fence being constructed in response to illegal immigration. And you'd probably assume that the progressive politics of our Canadian neighbors would guarantee the safety of our northernmost parks for years to come.

Not so fast.

Although the Canadian people have rightfully railed against proposals to mine the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, citing impacts to the broader ecosystem, their government officials have been entertaining proposals to drill in Canada's Flathead Valley, which would have dire consequences for nearby Glacier National Park in Montana. Meanwhile, more than a thousand miles away, a unique conservation effort is unfolding along the Rio Grande, where Park Service staff in Big Bend are working with ranchers and a corporation in Mexico to secure wildlife habitat crucial to animals on both sides of the border. This issue of *National Parks* introduces you to the players in both stories, which may have happy endings after all.

Readers of this magazine already know how hard it is conserving parkland within our own borders; it's even harder when actions unfolding in another country pose serious risks to parks that are miles away. Thankfully, conservation advocates in both regions have made significant strides in recent years, and people are starting to realize that a border isn't the only thing we have in common.

Scott Kirkwood
NPMAG@NPCA.ORG

National PARKS

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The Audit Bureau

National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association is America's only private, nonprofit advocacy 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 to resolve them.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The mission of NPCA is to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.

EDITORIAL MISSION

National Parks magazine fosters an appreciation of the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, educates readers about the need to preserve those resources, and illustrates how member contributions drive our organization's park-protection efforts. The magazine uses the power of imagery and language to forge a lasting bond between NPCA and its members, while inspiring new readers to join the cause.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Members can help defend America's natural and cultural heritage. 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. Please sign up to receive Park Lines, our biweekly e-mail newsletter. Go to www.npca.org to sign up.

HOW TO DONATE

To donate, please visit www.npca.org or call 800.628.7275. For information about bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 145 or 146.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about your membership, call Member Services at 800.628.7275. *National Parks* magazine is among a member's chief benefits. Of the $25 membership dues, $6 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

HOW TO REACH US

National Parks Conservation Association, 1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036; by phone: 1.800.NAT.PARK (628.7275); by e-mail: npca@npca.org; and www.npca.org.

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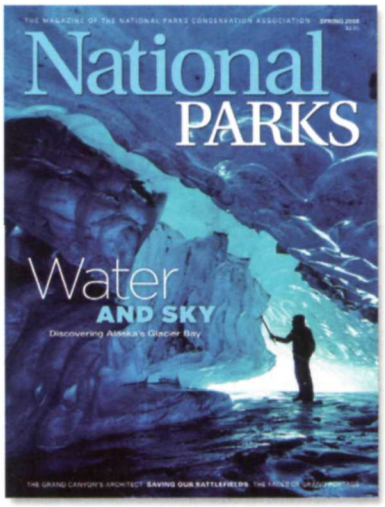


PAYING RESPECT

I just finished reading your account on Freeman Tilden [Spring 2008]. It was my privilege to have known Freeman in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when I was an instructor at the National Park Service's Mather Training Center in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. We were honored to have him as a guest speaker during our interpreters' courses.

Freeman was in his late 80s at the time, and I can still picture him wandering the halls at the center in his oversized sunglasses, dark suit (his trademark), and bola tie. Freeman had a quiet sense of humor, and once told my wife and me that he did not like to hang around with old people. Maybe that's what kept his thinking fresh. We used to refer to his book, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, as the "bible" of interpretation, handing it out to every trainee. He told me that someone would eventually write a better one; to my knowledge, no one has.

DR. JERRY SHIMODA
Volcano, HI

Thank you for reprinting Freeman Tilden's essay about describing Oregon's Crater Lake National Park to a blind man. The Crater Lake National Park Trust funds an education program that recently brought a group of 10- to 12-year-olds with disabilities to the park to learn about science at America's deepest and purest lake. Crater Lake's current interpretive rangers showed the same care and love of place that Tilden describes. Thank you for reminding us that this tradition of helping Americans of all backgrounds understand and love their home is more important today than ever before.

JEFF ALLEN
Executive Director,
Crater Lake National Park Trust
Crater Lake, OR

After reading the latest issue of *National Parks* magazine, I decided I couldn't possibly let my subscription lapse. My husband and I visited many of our national parks over the years, often with friends and family. It all started in 1981, when we took our son and his wife to visit Mt. Rushmore, Jackson, the Grand Tetons and, of course, Yellowstone. My husband fell in love with Yellowstone and we returned over the years, seven times. We went on to visit Arches, Mesa Verde, Sequoia, Death Valley and so many I'm sure I don't remember them all. My husband died three years ago and I really don't have a lot of money to spend, but after going through the magazine and shedding a tear or two at the memories, I have to help you out so that our wonderful national parks may continue for many generations to come.

AUDREY PORTER
Indiana, PA

A LASTING IMPRESSION

We were so delighted to see the article on an amazing architect ["Mary Jane Colter, Architect," Spring 2008]. Thank you for introducing her to your readers—this article alone makes it worth the subscription! When we visited the Grand Canyon several years ago, we were absolutely awestruck with her incredibly distinctive structures along the South Rim. Her imprint on the national parks is so subtle, yet so vital to its impact on visitors—the Watchtower and Hermit's Rest are not to be missed.

We're taking a copy of the magazine to show to my husband's 87-year-old mother, and we just directed a friend to your website to read the story before he leaves for a trip out West. (We had already described it to him, but lacked the detail and eloquence of your article.) Thanks again.

CHERIE & DAVE SOUHRADA
Denver, IA

OFF MESSAGE

We received a number of reader complaints about an advertorial in the Spring issue promoting a fishing lure that "could probably empty a lake" of its fish. The advertiser noted that one state had already banned its use.

Although we believe the advertiser was simply engaging in a bit of hyperbole, we can understand why some readers would be upset about the ad's content, and we recognize it was a mistake to include it in our pages. Rest assured the advertisement won't appear in future issues. We've already asked our ad sales team to present all new ads to us well before we go to press so we can avoid any similar problems in the future. —*Editors*

CORRECTIONS:

The historic photos appearing in "Mary Colter, Architect" [Spring 2008] should have been credited to the Grand Canyon National Museum Collection, a part of the National Park Service. Also, a passage in "When Nature and History Collide" referred to the National Environmental Protection Act; the proper title of the legislation is the National Environmental Policy Act. We regret the errors.

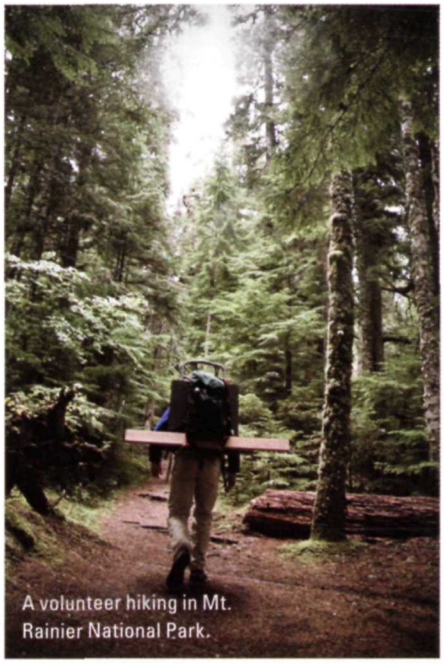
Send letters to National Parks Magazine, 1300 19th Street, NW #300, Washington, DC 20036
or e-mail npmag@npca.org. Include your name, city, and state.
Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

AFTER THE STORM

Eighteen months after storms pounded Mount Rainier, the recovery is nearly complete

Most residents of the Northwest are used to the occasional downpour now and then. But after Mount Rainier experienced 18 inches of rain in a 36-hour period in the fall of 2006, locals and long-distance travelers alike faced the unlikely prospect of "CLOSED" signs posted at every park entrance. Downed trees blocked hiking routes, campgrounds were washed away, and all 93 miles of Wonderland Trail, which encircles the mountain, were off limits.

Fortunately, a coalition of conservation groups quickly rallied to do something about it, thanks largely to generous financial assistance from outdoor retailer REI. NPCA joined with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), Washington Trails Association, The Mountaineers, and Washington's National Park Fund to undo what Mother Nature had done. By the end of 2007, the Northwest Storm Recovery Coalition deployed more than 1,700 volunteers who donated 84,000 hours of service at Mount Rainier. While SCA oversaw most of the work on the ground, NPCA communicated with members of Congress including Norm Dicks (D-WA) and Dave Reichert (R-WA), securing $45 million for Park Service repair efforts. Last spring, NPCA's visitor information center and art gallery in downtown Seattle hosted a show focusing on the storm damage, raising more awareness and rallying even more volunteers.



A volunteer hiking in Mt. Rainier National Park.

© DJ BRADLEY

In April, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne presented the coalition with a Cooperative Conservation Award, which recognizes achievements in conservation through collaboration. More importantly, thanks to their work, some of the final "CLOSED" signs have come down in recent months, and summertime visitors can expect to find a park that has returned to "business as usual."

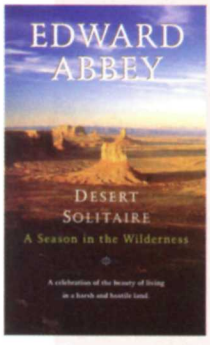
"Some people were surprised at the response of all the volunteers who wanted to pitch in and help Mount Rainier recover, but I wasn't," says Shane Farnor, senior program coordinator in NPCA's Northwest office. "I know how much people love that park and what an icon 'The Mountain' is. You really got the sense that this storm event had damaged *their* park and they were going to do whatever they could to help the park recover. Once you're out on a trail tangibly making a difference, that connection grows even more. Although the storm itself was destructive, in the end, it really pulled people together."

—Scott Kirkwood

THE LIST

Whether you're planning to visit a park this summer or just hoping to escape to one in the pages of a book, here are some of the best titles with national parks as their backdrops, selected by our staff and current and former Park Service employees.

As Far As the Eye Can See: Reflections of an Appalachian Trail Hiker (1990)
by David Brill
Appalachian National Scenic Trail, ME to GA



Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness (1968)
by Edward Abbey
Arches National Park, UT

The Last Season (2006)
by Eric Blehm
Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks, CA

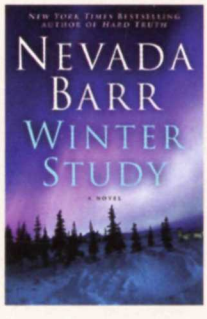
The Measure of a Mountain (1997)
by Bruce Barcott
Mount Rainier National Park, WA

Strangers in High Places: The Story of the Great Smoky Mountains (1966)
by Michael Frome
Great Smoky Mountains, NC and TN

The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise (2006)
by Michael Grunwald
Everglades National Park, FL

Travels In Alaska (1915)
by John Muir
Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, AK

Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West (1996)
by Stephen Ambrose
Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail, IL to WA

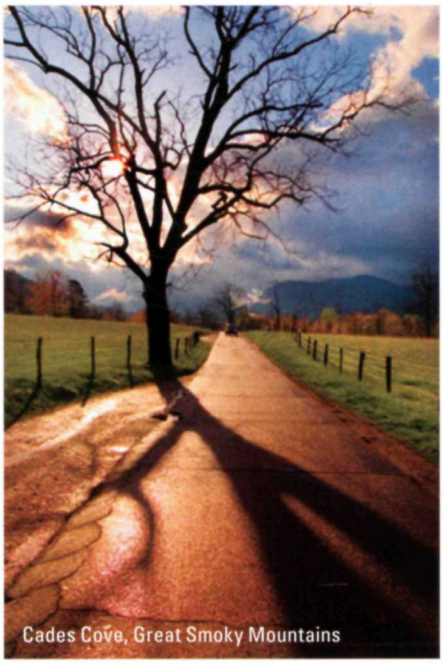


Winter Study (Fiction; 2008)
by Nevada Barr
Isle Royale National Park, MI

MOVING STORIES

Smoky Mountain shuttle enlightens visitors while taking a few cars off the road

Most summer days in Great Smoky Mountains National Park you'll find at least 3,000 cars jamming the 11-mile loop through Cades Cove, where deer, wild turkey, and black bears might wander among 19th-century barns, churches, and log homes. If park visitors seem content to sit in such traffic, it's probably because they've simply learned to lower their expectations.



Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains

© LYNN FREEN/ALAMY

But this summer, a task force coordinated by NPCA is hoping to raise those expectations by rolling out a new educational tour that tells the history of the region while taking a few tailpipes out of the picture.

The National Park Service has been struggling to deal with gridlock in the Cove since the 1970s—but the shuttle idea was deemed either too expensive, unsafe for curvy terrain, or a turnoff to visitors attached to their cars. So the task force—which includes local businesses and community members and is led by the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center—focused on ways to make a shuttle so appealing that people would rather leave their cars behind. By creating an experience that is engaging and educational, Cades Cove Heritage Tours won the local support and funding needed to start a pilot project. It's a story that's already played out in Acadia and Zion, but too few places in between.

The new gasoline-powered shuttle features special technology that cuts down on both air- and noise-pollution when the shuttle is idling while stuck in traffic. And it *will* get stuck in traffic, says Alissa McMahon, senior program coordinator for NPCA's Southeast regional office. One full shuttle means five fewer cars—a tiny drop in a sea of traffic.

"Air pollution in the area is so bad that even a small difference is an improvement," McMahon says. "Besides, if you're stuck in traffic, wouldn't you rather have someone else driving? Now visitors can hear about what they're seeing, and look out at these beautiful mountains while learning about the stories of early settlers and the nature all around them."

–Amy Leinbach Marquis

41 **MILES OF NEW PATHWAYS** to be constructed in Grand Teton National Park. After a six-year push to create a safer and more accessible park experience for pedestrians and cyclists, NPCA garnered enough support—9.7 million federal dollars' worth—to allow construction to begin in May. The first eight miles, from Moose, Wyoming, to South Jenny Lake Junction, will take two seasons to build—but will bring Grand Teton one step closer to relieving traffic congestion and emissions, preserving the park's air quality and natural resources.

ECHOES

© FRANS LANTING

If the current rate of development continues… [it] will fragment sensitive habitat for large carnivores such as bobcats, coyotes, and mountain lions, whose survival in the park is already in jeopardy.

***RON SUNDERGILL**, director of NPCA's Pacific regional office, quoted in the* Santa Monica Daily Press *about 25,000 acres of private land in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area that remain in private hands due to funding shortfalls affecting dozens of parks (see www.npca.org/landforsale to learn more).*

Scientists carefully explained what needed to be done to protect the plants and wildlife, and the Bush administration completely ignored the science, and decided, [instead, to] protect industry.

***MARK WENZLER**, director of NPCA's Clean Air and Climate Programs, quoted by Reuters News Service in response to a Bush administration decision to weaken U.S. standards for smog-forming ozone. (For more, see the story on page 14.)*

They're creating two centers of gravity within the park, and that's not going to be in the best interests of visitors.

***CINDA WALDBUESSER**, NPCA's Pennsylvania program manager, quoted by the Associated Press on a proposal for a sprawling museum, conference center, and hotel on private land within Valley Forge National Historical Park, where the Continental Army was encamped during the winter of 1777-78.*

© THOMAS D. MANGELSEN

GRAY WOLVES in the Northern Rockies have made a startling recovery, but is it complete?

OFF THE LIST

Gray wolves have made a remarkable comeback in the Northern Rockies. But is the celebration premature?

By the 1930s, gray wolves had vanished from the Northern Rockies, after decades of being trapped, shot, and poisoned with a vigor generally reserved for the last few pages of a fairy tale. One year after the passage of the Endangered Species Act in 1973, wolves were added to the list of protected animals, though there was obviously very little to protect at the time. Finally, in April 1995, 14 grey wolves from Canada were released in Yellowstone National Park, launching one of the most significant and contentious reintroduction efforts in the country's history. At the time, U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists pegged the recovery goals at a minimum of 30 breeding pairs and at least 300 wolves in the region for three consecutive years. That goal was achieved in 2002, but the delisting couldn't proceed until the federal government approved management plans from all three states, which finally happened in March of this year. Of course, wolves in Yellowstone will always be safe, but when animals wander beyond the park's boundaries, their fate is in the hands of the states' game wardens. And some people think that's a mistake.

Today, more than 1,500 wolves occupy the Northern Rockies, so there's no question the reintroduction was an unqualified biological success. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people trek to the park to view wolves and other wildlife, pouring more than $82 million into the region's economy, according to the most recent data. Over time, people have watched pups reared, seen packs split in two, and witnessed alpha wolves rising to positions of power, all through the lenses of so many high-powered telescopes. Although most wildlife biologists would dismiss the fate of an individual animal as it relates to the species' health, it should come as no surprise that the death of wolf 253M the day after the delisting enraged many wolf watchers.

"More than 1,500 wolves occupy the Northern Rockies, so there's no question the reintroduction was an unqualified biological success."

"Limpy," as he was known, was shot and killed in Wyoming, the state with the most liberal management plan, and one that has drawn the most concerns. In about 90 percent of the state, wolves are designated as predators that can be shot on sight without reason.

Each state has promised to maintain populations of 15 breeding pairs and 150 wolves within their borders, which ensures a population of 450 wolves, just above the delisting criteria. But in light of more recent scientific evidence that suggests this number may be inadequate, a dozen environmental groups sued the federal government in April, asking for grey wolves to be returned to the list immediately. The case could be in courts for years, but for now, many with a stake in the outcome believe wolves will do just fine.

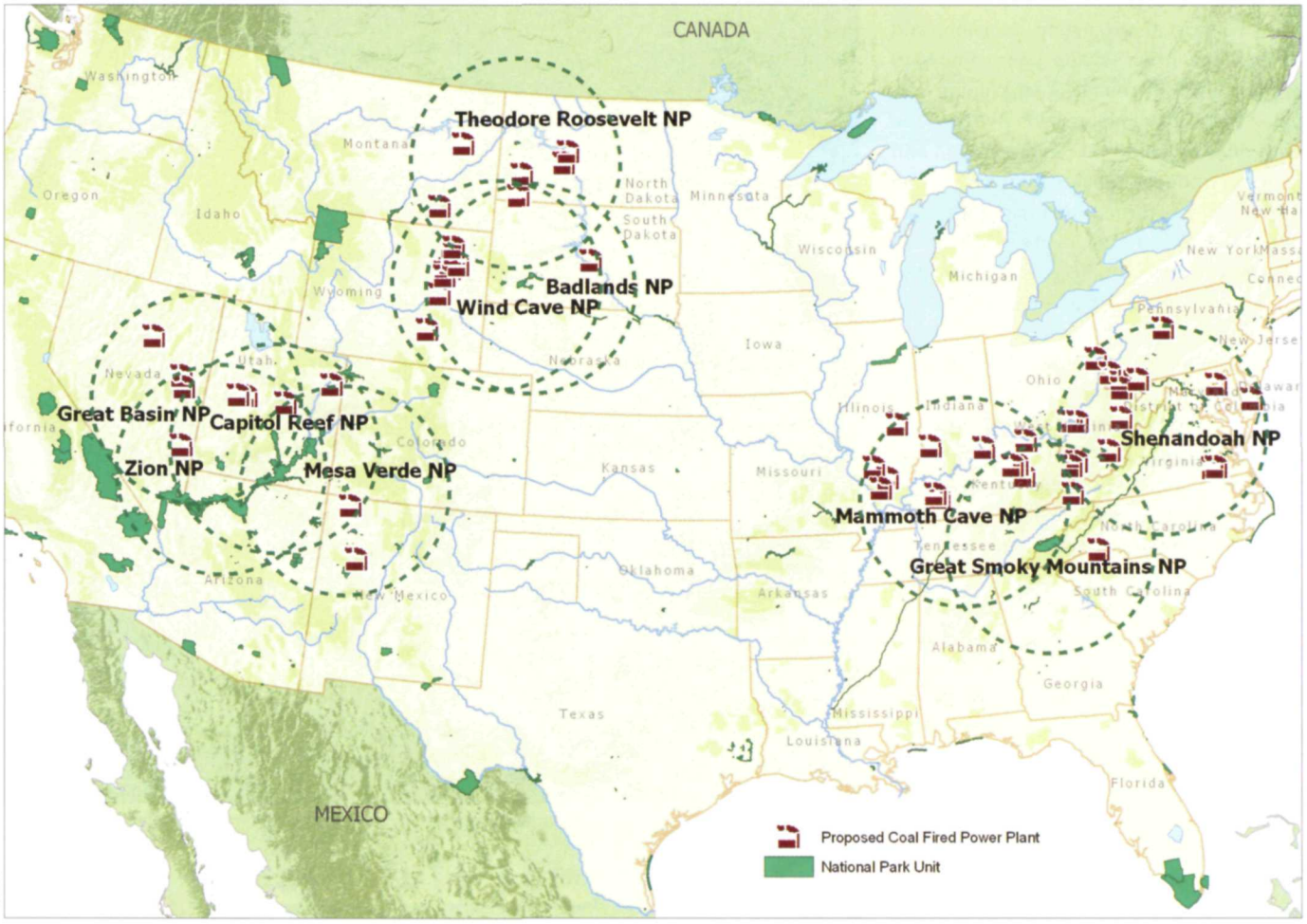
"I support the delisting decision, and believe the process has been managed appropriately by the Fish and Wildlife Service," says Mike Phillips, who oversaw the wolf-reintroduction at Yellowstone, and now reintroduces species across the globe as head of the Turner Endangered Species Fund. "But the groups involved in the lawsuit make an important point: They're going to go before a judge and indicate that Yellowstone remains isolated, and that given enough time this isolation could create genetic problems that would eventually manifest itself as a declining and susceptible population. And there's no question you need that genetic exchange to ensure that everybody's got four legs, two ears, and a tail and the ability to kill an elk."

Phillips also points out that the delisting process for all species is still in its infancy, and the debate is an important one, because any decision regarding Yellowstone's wolves could have a dramatic impact on baselines established for wolf reintroductions in other parts of the country, not to mention dozens of other species.

Regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit, biologists with the federal government will monitor the wolf population closely for the next five years. And the Park Service will continue to oversee the population within Yellowstone's boundaries, where hunting is illegal. Barring a systematic campaign of killing like the one unleashed nearly 100 years ago, the prospect for wolves is still positive.

"Wolves in Yellowstone have proven to be very adaptable, and have flourished here despite significant challenges," says Tim Stevens, program manager in NPCA's Yellowstone field office. "With the abundant prey base in the region, wolves will continue to do well, as long as the states honor their obligation to sustain a healthy, well-distributed wolf population as directed by science, not politics. And if the states fail to fulfill that promise, NPCA will work to relist wolves and return management authority to federal wildlife managers, so that wolves are managed in a way that provides an abundant population for generations to come."

—Scott Kirkwood



DARK HORIZONS

EPA's potential rule change threatens our national parks.

America's most iconic park views of ridgeline upon ridgeline, stacked and layered for miles into the horizon, might soon be cloaked in haze if the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has its way. "The legacy that the Bush Administration is building by securing new funding for our national parks will be forever tarnished if it opens to the door to new air pollution," says Mark Wenzler, director of NPCA's Clean Air and Climate Programs.

Despite serious internal discord, top EPA officials are pushing for a rule-change that would make it easier to build new coal-fired power plants near national parks by relaxing restrictions on pollution spikes near natural areas. The result would so badly degrade the parks that the National Park Service and every EPA regional office in the country ardently opposes it. More than 23,000 NPCA members and supporters wrote to EPA last year opposing the rule change, but the comment period has since closed, and EPA could adopt the rule change at any time.

NPCA's latest report, *Dark Horizons*, focuses on the 10 most threatened national parks (shown above), each situated within a 186-mile radius of proposed power plants. Parks like Mammoth Cave, Shenandoah, and Zion might soon be better known for hazy views, an increase in chemicals linked to sick and dying trees, mercury-laden fish, and breathing hazards for hikers.

NPCA's research has shown that as things stand, one in three national parks fails to meet basic healthy air standards set by the EPA. "Americans expect and deserve clean air when they visit our national parks," Wenzler says. "Instead of opening the door to more pollution in national parks, the Bush Administration should be working to secure a legacy that preserve America's national treasures for our children and grandchildren."

—Amy Marquis

ON THE WEB

To see the report and view an interactive map showing current coal-fired power plants and the proposed plants near these national parks, visit www.npca.org/darkhorizons.

NPCA PARK PAGES

Planning a park trip?

We've got a destination to add to your list.

NPCA's website now has comprehensive information on more than 75 national parks, and you can help us round out all 391 by offering your own stories. Visit the "Explore the Parks" section at www.npca.org/parks to add your two cents and learn more about the places you're helping to protect.

COURTESY OF THE DAILY ASTORIAN

STUDENTS LEARN about native plant reintroductions at Lewis & Clark National Historical Park in Oregon.

A NEW PROMISE

Park Service receives nearly $50 million in federal funds and private donations for innovative centennial projects.

Until now, the Centennial Initiative was just an idea. A *promising* idea, but an idea nonetheless.

That all started to change last fall, when Rep. Norm Dicks (D-WA) used his muscle as Chair of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure that the Park Service received nearly $25 million for dozens of centennial projects that will improve the visitor experience at national parks all over the country. NPCA was a strong proponent for the move, which kickstarts the federal investment in national parks in time for their 100th anniversary in 2016. In April, officials from the Department of Interior unveiled the initial list of approved projects, which uses federal funding to double the impact of nearly $25 million in private donations.

Projects range from a $4,000 program that will reintroduce trumpeter swans to the Buffalo National River to a $9 million landscaping project that will link one of Washington, D.C.'s most popular hiking and biking trails to the National Mall. Other programs will restore disturbed lands in Everglades National Park and ancient redwood forests in Redwood National Park; improve interpretive trails at San Antonio Missions, Valley Forge, and Point Reyes National Seashore; and expand efforts to record biodiversity in several national parks, engaging citizens, and especially young people, in the process.

In fact, youth education is a primary focus of the many of the first-round projects.

"Park rangers at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in Oregon will adopt the Class of 2016 and bring the students to the park for special programs and events until they graduate from high school," Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne noted at the official announcement. "It's a great way to engage young people and share with them the legacy and heritage of national parks."

Rangers at Lewis & Clark are already working with local educators to develop a curriculum for fourth graders as they grow older, so that students who follow in their wake will have a structured educational opportunity awaiting them.

"Traditionally kids have come here, learned about Lewis and Clark, dressed up in buckskin, and made candles, but we can do so much more here," says David Szymanski, the park's superintendent. "We have two of the biggest wetland-restoration projects along the Lewis & Clark River, a forest-restoration plan, and ongoing archaeology research, all in the park. These programs provide a great way to show kids how the world works."

The Yosemite National Institute, which operates in Olympic, Golden Gate, and its namesake, received $750,000 to fund scholarships for 10,000 students in underserved urban areas, turning the parks into classrooms in ways that textbooks and chalkboards just can't compete with.

"This announcement really catalyzed our donors," says Jason Morris, one of the institute's vice presidents. "It's one thing if you can donate $20,000 and affect 200 kids, but when it suddenly it turns into $40,000, your donation is affecting twice as many children."

"It's exciting to see this proposal become a reality, but it has to be more than a one-year program," says Tom Kiernan, NPCA's president. "We're now looking for Congress to pass the bipartisan National Park Centennial Fund Act, and authorize the full 10-year program to complete important projects across the park system in time for the 2016 centennial."

The Park Service has already lined up nearly $200 million dollars' worth of funding from other philanthropic organizations just waiting for the federal government's long-term commitment. Call 800.522.6721 to urge your Congressional representatives to support passage of the National Park Centennial Fund Act (S. 2817 and H.R. 3094). To learn more about centennial projects, visit www.nps.gov/2016.

—Scott Kirkwood

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E.O. WILSON sits in Harvard's Wheeler Ant Collection Room, which holds the largest collection of ants in the world.

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Q&A

THE EYES OF A VISIONARY

At age nine, E.O. Wilson was unraveling secrets of the natural world in Rock Creek Park. Nearly 70 years later, he's ensuring that today's nine-year-olds can follow his lead.

Dr. Edward O. Wilson's resume is already so full of accomplishments that we'd have to kill a few trees to print it all here, and that probably wouldn't make him very happy. A few highlights: Wilson has won two Pulitzer Prizes and spent 41 years teaching entomology and other courses at Harvard. He popularized the term "biodiversity," and discovered a new ant species, Pheidole harrisonfordi, *named in honor of a close friend. He's also published 20 books—most recently,* The Creation, *written as a letter to a Baptist minister, which moved a large number of evangelicals to rally behind the conservation cause.*

As Wilson enters his 80th year, he remains a vocal, innovative part of the conservation community. Among his latest creations is the cutting-edge database called the "Encyclopedia of Life" (www.eol.org), which provides scientific information to the public on every documented species in the world.

Last April, NPCA presented Dr. Wilson with the Robin W. Winks Award for Enhancing Public Understanding of National Parks at its annual gala in Washington, D.C. National Parks *assistant editor Amy Leinbach Marquis spoke with Wilson before the event.*

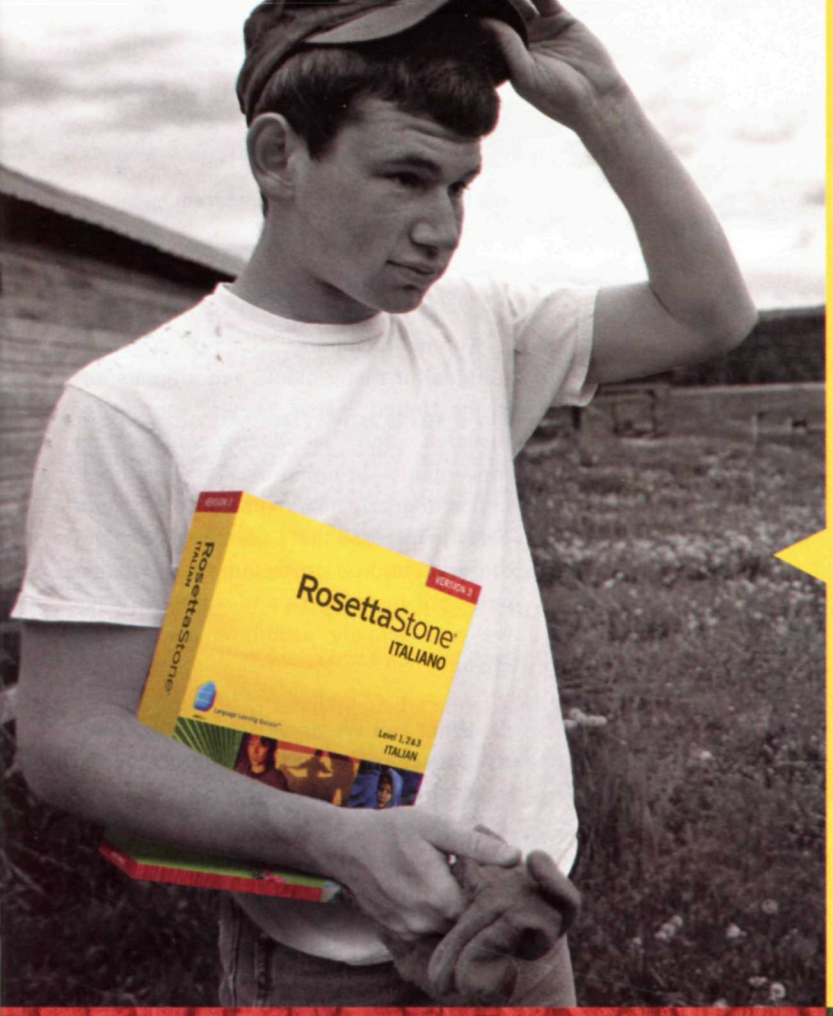
Q. Talk about your early experiences in Rock Creek Park and your interest in ants. Are they directly connected?

A. Yes, indeed. It's where I did my first entomology expedition. When I was nine years old my father, a government auditor, came up for a couple years' service. I went to a local school, where I did badly, but it didn't matter. Our apartment was within easy walking distance to Rock Creek Park, the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and the National Zoo—heaven on earth for a nine-year-old. And for some reason—probably from watching Frank Buck movies about adventures in the jungle, and reading *National Geographic* magazines—I got this urge to go on little expeditions.

So I went out to Rock Creek Park with bottles and collected insects, tried to preserve them in alcohol, and built up my first little collection. Then I would go to the National Zoo and walk around in a state of wonderment at all the creatures from all over the world. At the National History Museum I spent long periods of time pulling out drawers of butterflies, with guards watching me anxiously. I dreamed of someday being a curator, one of those demigods that lived up high in the National History Museum and spent all their time studying insects.

Q. You also focused part of your career on Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area in Massachusetts, right? Tell me more about their significance.

A. In 1967, I created the "Theory of Island Biogeography" with Robert MacArthur, a young professor from Princeton. It became a means of analyzing how many different



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WILSON HOLDS a tray of specimens from Harvard's ant collection.

kinds of plants or animals live on an island in a sustainable manner, and how they got there and continue to live there.

That's been important work in the new field of conservation science—and you can see why. In a less literal sense, all national parks are islands. So when Boston Harbor Islands were cleaned up with a very expensive waste disposal system (the harbor went from being ranked as the dirtiest in America to one of the cleaner ones), my colleague, Brian Farrell, and I began promoting the islands as a serious recreational area—made more serious by the Park Service acquiring most of it as a protected area. And that's where we introduced the idea to make national parks centers for research and education, which is going on full-blast now: Harvard has hired a resident entomologist to conduct surveys of the islands and lead tours for the park.

I foresee a time when all national parks become more serious centers for research—not just for archaeology, but for biodiversity and ecology too.

Q. Can you say more about the importance of conducting research in the parks?

A. Certainly. National parks are the best places in the world to host biodiversity studies, and they've already been successful in the Great Smoky Mountains. Biodiversity is one of the two fields of science, along with astronomy, in which citizens can actually do primary scientific research. The public can add specimens and photographs, consult with scientists, and join organized groups that actually hunt for new species and get evidence of endangered species... and scientists need this help and information. Science education is a big problem in this country, and this is a superb way to introduce the public—and kids, for that matter—to science in a way that has meaning, because they can actually see it being done and take part in it.

Q. Talk about the impact of the parks on the survival and recovery of species like the California condor in the Grand Canyon and the fishers that were just reintroduced to Olympic.

A. Species, on average, live for roughly a million years before they go extinct—and we've increased the rate of extinction by as much as 1,000 times. You don't see it happening every day, but it's happening. One percent of America's plant and animal species have gone extinct in the last century, and somewhere between 10 to 20 percent of the rest are known to be in some state of endangerment, or at the very least vulnerable to further impacts like climate change. I think America has lost more bird species in the last 100 years than any other country that we know about.

The national parks are among the best refuges for many plants and animals left in the United States. They're centers for research and last-ditch conservation movements—bringing back wolves, holding on to grizzly bears—and we need more parks to increase that coverage. We've got to get started on protecting these wildlife corridors, because it's one of the few ways we can actually accommodate climate change.

Q. What can we as citizens do to honor the parks and prepare for their centennial in 2016?

A. I think that aside from constantly increasing support for the National Park System, we must consider the vision of what is to come. We should think about the use of national parks in mitigating the effects of climate change, promoting science and science education, saving endangered species, and increasing the quality of life in America by growing the parks in number, in total area, and accessibility to the American people.

The National Park System needs a vision. And I don't want to seem like I'm underrating visions that have gone before—but I believe that right now, with the immense advantage that new technology offers for studying and understanding biological diversity, the National Park System can make huge advances in science and education. It can be done by increasing the budget for scientific research, and finding ever better ways for inviting the participation of scientists outside the system and outside government.

That's what we should be talking about—expanding the National Park System, not scrambling for crumbs to keep it going. It should be part of the national vision of what will make America great. **NP**

To learn more about science-education initiatives, see "A New Promise" on page 16. To read the entire interview with E.O. Wilson, visit www.npca.org/magazine.

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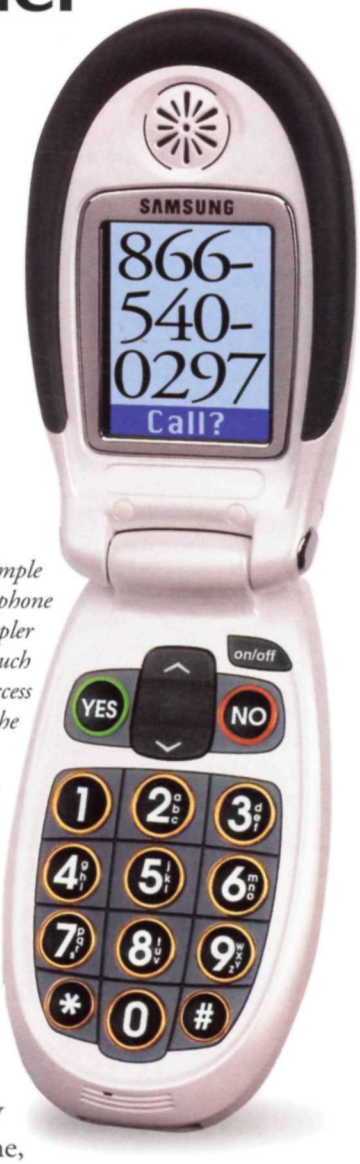

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By Jeff Rennicke

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STONE FIGURES CALLED "INUKSUIT" may have pointed travelers toward safety or revealed hazards to be avoided.

Stories in Stone

Ancient trail markers, caribou drivers, or artistic echoes of a nearly lost connection with the land? Alaska's Gates of the Arctic holds hundreds of mysteries set in stone.

Like an avalanche of mist, a fogbank spills off the hillside as we climb above the Killik River in Alaska's Gates of the Arctic National Park, cutting off our vision as surely as a shroud. Moments ago we could see for miles; now, it seems we have stepped into a cloud. Fogbound, we move cautiously and silently toward what appears to be simply a pile of rocks near the crest of a ridge. Only slowly, as slowly as the drifting fog, does it dawn on us that what lies ahead may be much more than a simple gathering of stones.

In a land where the open wings of vast horizons can leave a hiker reeling, Arctic travelers have for thousands of years used a complex and little understood series of rock markers collectively called *inuksuit* (inuksuk, singular) to guide them physically, and perhaps spiritually, across the open tundra. Some were simple waypoints or signposts; others a kind of message board that speaks of a connection to this landscape that few national park visitors can even imagine. "Inuksuit," says Norman Hallendy, research fellow with the Arctic Institute and author of *Inuksuit: Silent Messengers of the Arctic*, "are one of the most important features placed upon the landscape by human beings." They are, in short, stories in stone.

The stories told by inuksuit (in-NOOK-sue-eat) take many forms. A series of upturned rocks or even a single long rock turned on edge could mark the location of a cache, act as a compass point on a cross-country route, or show the way through a snow-free pass. These single rocks acted as a set point in the maze-like landscape—what Hallendy calls a "deconfuser." More elaborate structures, sometimes several meters high, were made by carefully balancing multiple rocks atop one another. Inuksuit

literally means "in the likeness of a human." Set on prominent ridges, these figures can be seen for miles on the open tundra or along the coast. Some had long, sharp rocks like compass needles pointing to a safe place to cross a river, or window-like openings that framed a dangerous place on the sea ice or a good place to camp. Even stones set at the base of an inuksuk (in-NOOK-shook) could have meaning: Three stones might mean a village is three days travel away, or that three people had passed this way.

Created from whatever rocks were at hand and as individual as the makers themselves, each inuksuk is an original artwork in rock. Because no two are alike, inuksuit may have guided travelers like the stars—land-bound constellations that let hunters and travelers navigate the vast ocean-like expanses by memorizing the sequence of stones in a story or a song.

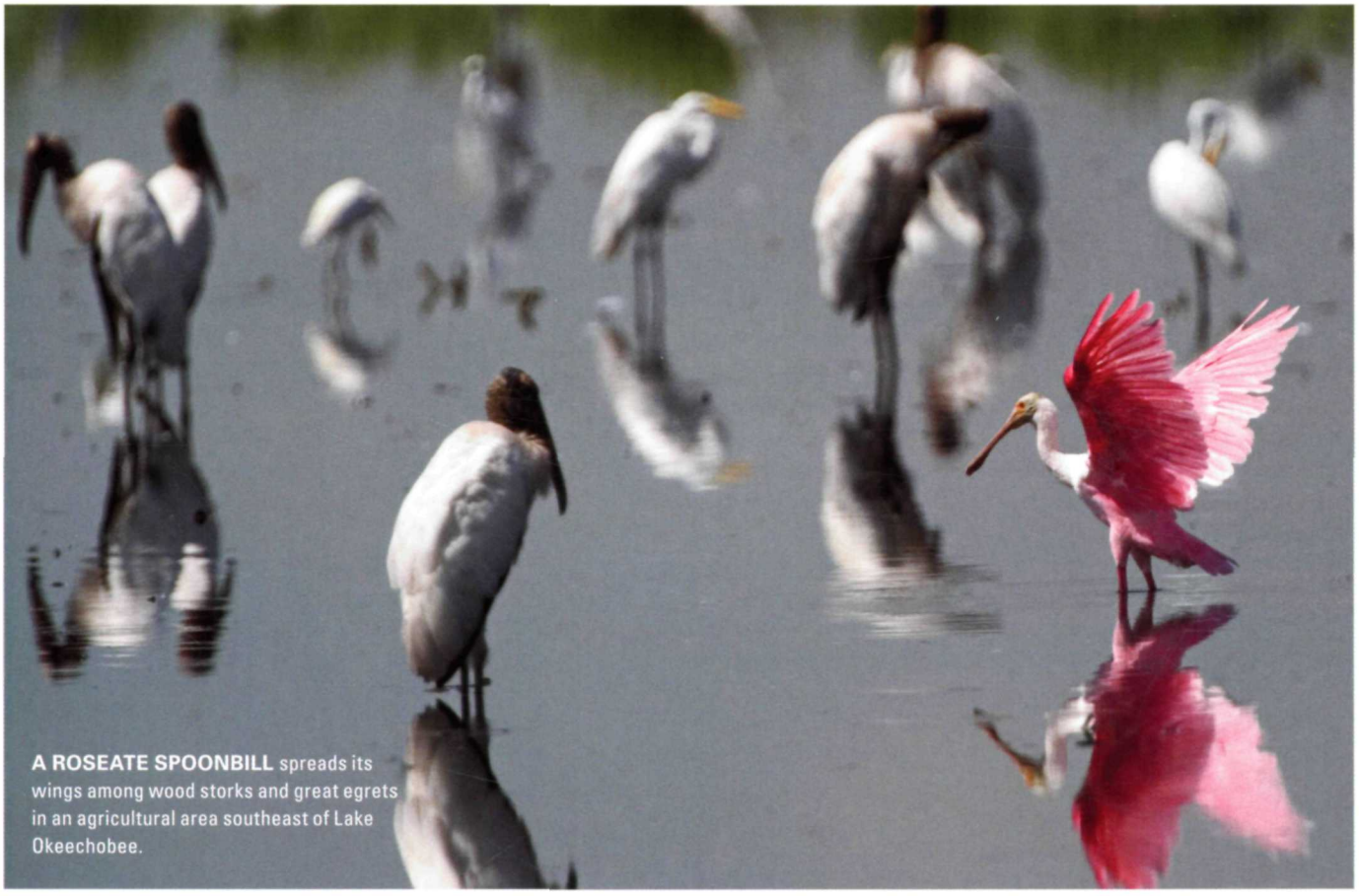
Perhaps the most well-researched function of inuksuit was as an aid in hunting. "One of the most effective ways of hunting caribou was to drive them into lakes or rivers, then spear them from kayaks," says Vera Weber, curator of the Simon Paneak Museum in Anaktuvuk Pass on the edge of Gates of the Arctic. To help funnel the herd, inuksuit resembling humans—some even with "hair" of willow leaves to rustle in the wind—were built on prominent ridges to frighten the caribou, "like stone scarecrows," driving them toward waiting hunters. Though many of the inuksuit still stand, hunters rarely rely on them anymore. "With all the modern hunting tools we have nowdays," says Weber, "few people use the inuksuk now, but we still value what we have and the old ways."

There are 114 documented inuksuit sites throughout Gates of the Arctic, the oldest dating as far back as 4,700 years. That number, however, may be just the beginning since less than 5 percent of the 7.2-million acre park has been thoroughly surveyed. "Gates is so big and so unexplored," says park archeologist Jeff Rasic, "that when people run across a rock cairn or structure it is almost certainly something that no archeologist has ever documented. It's like they are rediscovering it, perhaps for the first time since it was in use."

It is that sense of "rediscovery" that we are feeling as we wait out the fog on the nameless ridge. The inuksuk in front of us is dark with age, crusted with lichens. Frost, wind, and shifting ice have taken their toll, toppling rocks and scattering them like bones. Still, there is an undeniable presence to it. What hands lifted these rocks? How long ago were they here, and what was the reason for their handiwork? What story do they tell of this land of ice and space and time, and a life lived among such horizons? "When you look at an old inuksuk," Norman Hallendy has written, "you are seeing more than just a stack of stone. You are seeing the thoughts of another person left upon the land." **NP**

Jeff Rennicke is a frequent contributor to *National Parks* magazine and a teacher at Conserve School in Wisconsin's North Woods.

By Amy Leinbach Marquis



A ROSEATE SPOONBILL spreads its wings among wood storks and great egrets in an agricultural area southeast of Lake Okeechobee.

Code Pink

The decline of the roseate spoonbill, an Everglades icon, could signal an ecosystem collapse.

Few things in nature compare to the bright-pink glow of a roseate spoonbill against a Florida sky. It brought out the poet in famed birders like Robert Porter Allen, who likened the species to "orchids taking wing," and Roger Tory Peterson, who declared spoonbills "one of the most breathtaking of the world's weird birds."

But a spoonbill's beauty is more than feather-deep. Once you get to know them, says Jerry Lorenz, lead researcher in the Audubon of Florida Tavernier Science Center, it's hard not to feel connected. Every time a spoonbill flies overhead, it seems to turn and look right at you—like a nod from an old friend.

When spoonbills aren't busy guarding their chicks, nestled atop mangrove islands, they're wading patiently in the shallows, nipping at fish and snails with a long, rounded beak that gives them their name. In breeding season, their pink plumage blushes to shades of orange, earning the folk name "flamebird." But that fire is fading: Spoonbills are fleeing Florida Bay in droves. And that's not a good sign for Everglades National Park.

Florida Bay, a shallow body of water on the southernmost end of the park, was bustling with spoonbills until the late-1800s when the species was extirpated from the area after being hunted for plumage, a popular accessory in women's hats. In 1935, the Audubon Society launched a successful campaign to bring them back. By the mid-1970s, 1,250 nests were documented in Florida Bay.

But spoonbills lost much of their foraging habitat with Florida's development boom. Builders drained wetlands, set up flood-control systems, and rerouted freshwater sources to thirsty new residents throughout the state; by the 1980s, two-thirds of Florida Bay's freshwater source had been diverted to these new developments. It's thought that the increased salinity levels changed the habitat so drastically that spoonbills could no longer find enough food for their young.

So the spoonbill population plummeted again, and in the late 1980s, Audubon estimated that just 600 nests remained in Flori-

da Bay. In the 1990s that number fell to about 450, and this year, the count dropped to 260.

To make matters worse, many people who use the bay are unaware of their impact on its resources. Constant motorboat traffic generates significant noise that scares adult birds from their nests and leaves chicks vulnerable to predators.

"Crows hear the boats coming by, and it's like a dinner bell signaling them to swoop in for the kill," says Rob Clift, NPCA's senior marine outreach coordinator. "We lost almost every chick to this problem one year." (NPCA is launching a boater-education program this summer to help change that, posting signs that encourage better boating etiquette in critical spoonbill nesting habitat.)

For now, the devastation is isolated to Florida Bay. In fact, statewide, the roseate spoonbill population is actually growing as birds from Florida Bay move north to Tampa and other locations, where nesting conditions are more stable despite neighboring power plants and bustling suburbs.

Such adaptations are a good sign for the species, but a bad sign for the Everglades. Spoonbills, which Lorenz calls the "pink canary in the coalmine," rely on the same food and resources as bald eagles, great white herons, crocodiles, West Indian manatees, and game fish, among others. If spoonbills are struggling, the entire ecosystem is too.

"I think we're on the precipice of another catastrophic environmental turnover like we saw in the early nineties," Lorenz says. "The bay didn't die—biologically it was quite alive—it just turned into something it had never been and wasn't supposed to be. Instead of sea grasses and wildlife, it was dominated by micro-algae. All the fish left, all the birds left. And that's right where we are again."

In 2000, Congress passed the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan—the largest ecosystem restoration program ever undertaken in the world. It aims to fix the Everglades by restoring the flow of freshwater—although doing so is a complicated process. With the canal system currently in place, putting water back into Florida Bay on the cheap could flood farms and neighborhoods.

"The Everglades is seen as a test for how we can undo damage done by past generations," says Sara Fain, NPCA's Everglades Restoration program manager. "We need a sustained commitment from our state and federal governments to ensure restoration of the habitat that is critical to protecting the spoonbills."

The species could make a comeback in as few as five years if legislators choose to properly fund the restoration. If not, the park might very well lose an icon species.

"It breaks my heart to go into a spoonbill colony and see all these dead chicks falling out of nests," Lorenz says. "But there's not a day that I go out there and don't see something beautiful that stops me in my tracks. Sometimes it's subtle—like walking around a bend to see thirty royal terns sitting in a tree, which is just stunning. Those moments are a testament to how resilient the bay is." **NP**

Amy Leinbach Marquis is assistant editor at *National Parks* magazine.

BY AMY LEINBACH MARQUIS

MEXICO'S SIERRA DEL CARMEN range looms beyond the Rio Grande, which marks the southern border of Big Bend National Park.

Across the Rio Grande from Big Bend National Park, Mexico is taking a vastly different approach to land conservation—and we might just learn something from it.

pushing BOUNDARIES

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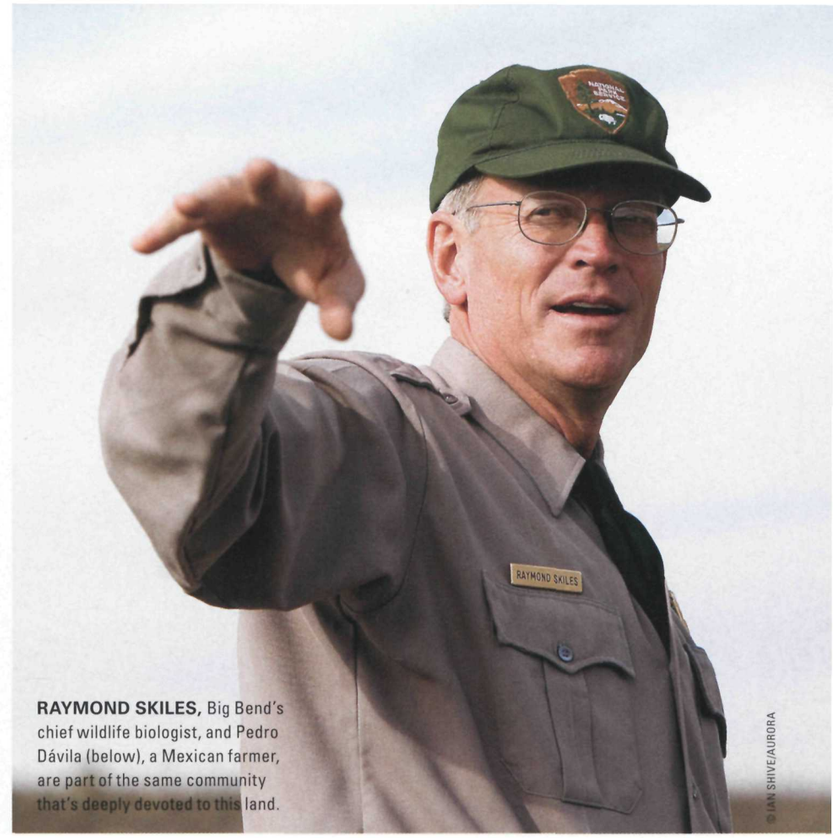

RAYMOND SKILES, Big Bend's chief wildlife biologist, and Pedro Dávila (below), a Mexican farmer, are part of the same community that's deeply devoted to this land.

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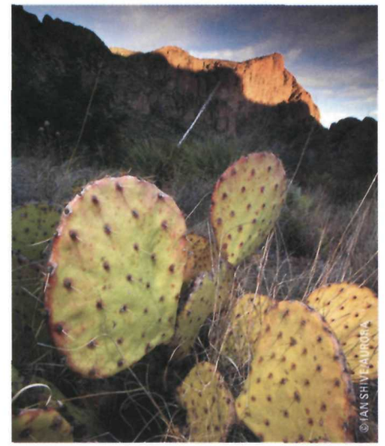

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Big Bend National Park is the pure definition of unexpected. As you drive south from Marathon, Texas, the Chihuahuan Desert suddenly swells into a cluster of giant peaks ahead in the distance. Twenty minutes later you're climbing into the Chisos Mountains, where woodlands sway with Emory oaks, weeping junipers, and pinyon pines. Mountain lions reveal themselves on a surprisingly regular basis. At dusk, tarantulas tiptoe across the asphalt in clusters of furry brown legs and eyes that reflect car headlights. Scorpions glow green under pocket-sized black lights that you can purchase from a nearby rafting outfitter.

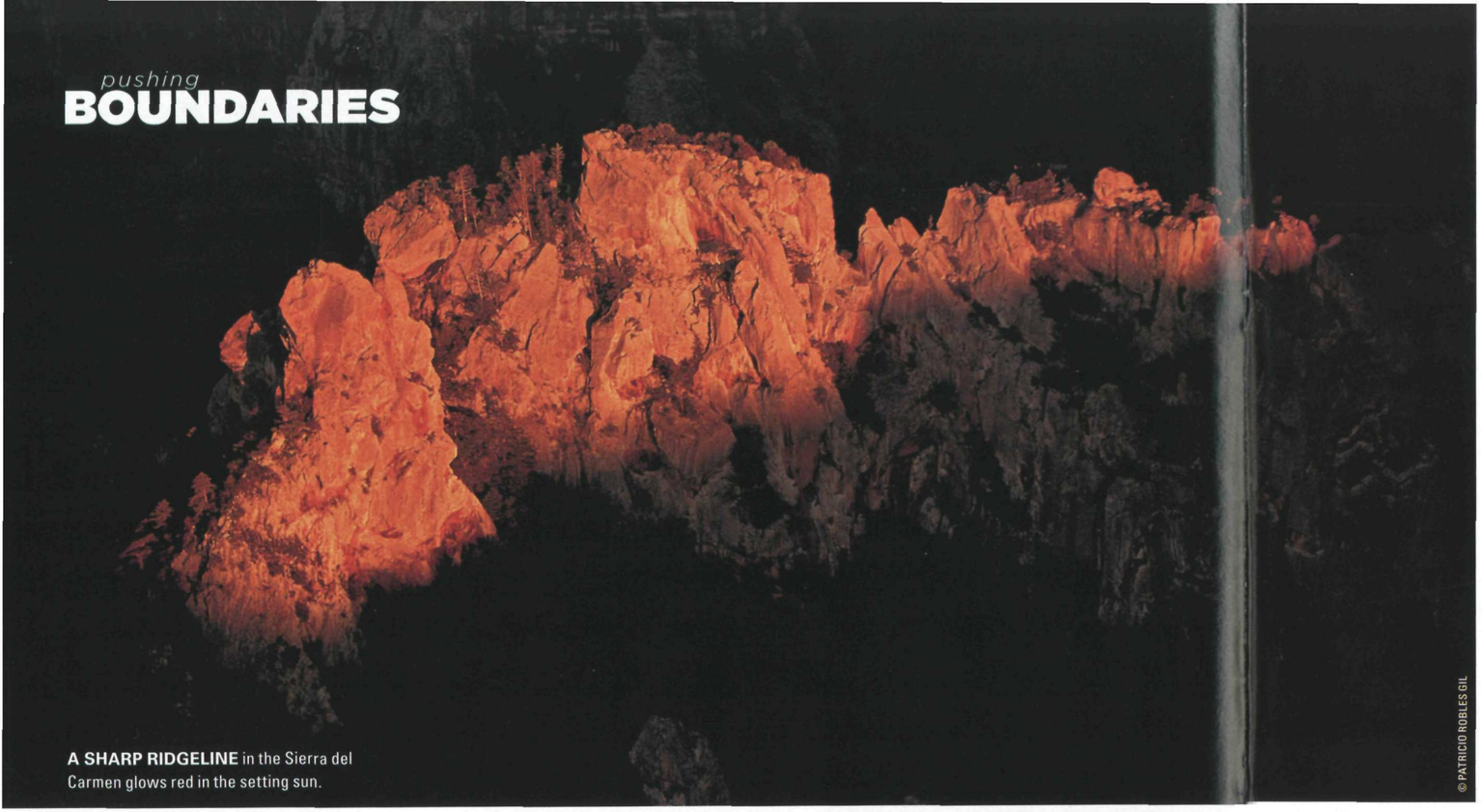
But at the base of Casa Grande Peak, mystery falls away to a familiar scene: A lodge. A restaurant. A parking lot. A trailhead. Rangers in full-brimmed hats. It's all part of a tidy little package we know as America's national park experience.

Even beyond the pavement, where the desert experience is entirely unscripted, visitors take comfort in these touchstones: People will always have access to this land. Congress will always provide some amount of funding. And federal law will always keep certain protections in place. This is the very definition of our national parks—a formula celebrated as our nation's best idea, and exported all over the world with great success.

But gaze across the river into Mexico, where the landscape mirrors—if not outshines—the Chisos Mountains, and you're witnessing the result of a dramatically different conservation model. Here, land is owned by those who live on it: wealthy ranchers, poor villagers, and Cemex—an international cement company with a conscience. Although these areas are protected by the federal government, Mexicans have never relied solely on state and federal conservation initiatives to protect the land.

"I've learned that our concept of a national park—federal funding, a good number of staff, and federal ownership of the land—is a product of our social system, governmental system, and economy," says Raymond Skiles, acting chief of science and resource management at Big Bend. "Just across the border, there isn't the same kind of history or context."

pushing
BOUNDARIES



A SHARP RIDGELINE in the Sierra del Carmen glows red in the setting sun.

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The Rio Grande, which marks the international border, separates the Chisos Mountains from the Sierra del Carmen—both known as "sky islands" for stunning pockets of biodiversity that rise up to 9,600 feet above sea level. Strung together with Santa Elena Canyon and Serranias del Burro, they provide a critical wildlife corridor for species like black bears, desert bighorn sheep, and a variety of migrating birds.

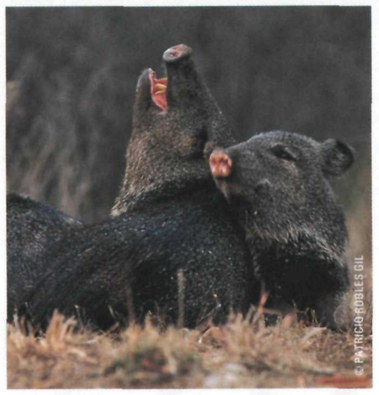
Despite these crown jewels, both Mexico and the United States have a history of being hard on the land. Heavy mining and logging practices in the early 1900s left their mark on the Sierra del Carmen, just as sheep did on the grasslands of the Chisos. Perhaps more detrimental, however, was Mexico's Robin Hood-like land reform that reached its height in the 1970s, as the government broke up the region's largest cattle ranches and converted them into communal land, or *ejidos*. Some poor city dwellers relocated to Coahuila to graze livestock, but without the knowledge or resources to practice sustainable ranching, they wiped out abundant game like mule deer and wild turkey, and lush native grasslands deteriorated into bare earth.

"Can you imagine a taxi driver from Mexico City moving to a place as harsh and wild as Coahuila?" asks Bonnie McKinney, a former wildlife diversity specialist at Black Gap Wildlife Management Area in Texas, east of Big Bend. "This is desert country, and these people had to make a living off the land. You can't blame them for using up resources when they were just trying to survive."

Guillermo Osuna, whose family history in northern Mexico dates back to World War II, was one of the ranchers who lost significant acreage to ejidos. "What belonged to all really belonged to nobody," he says. "No one took care of the land. No one protected it."

In the early 1990s, President Carlos Salinas recognized that the communal land model had failed, so he gave farmers the option to rent or sell their property. Most residents had already moved on to find better-paying jobs in the city, but the few that remained began forming larger, more economical ranches out of deserted ejidos. By reconnecting these barren plots, landowners opened the door for restoring the region.

Salinas' amendment introduced another positive change involving an unexpected



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PECCARIES *(top)* and wild desert tarantulas call the region home.

BONNIE MCKINNEY, a Cemex biologist, looks across the Rio Grande into Mexico.

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ally: Corporations were allowed to own agricultural land for the first time in Mexico's history. In 2000 a soft-spoken but persistent conservation photographer named Patricio Robles Gil used his images to convince Lorenzo Zambrano, CEO of Cemex, to help preserve Mexico's biodiversity. The corporation has since purchased 400,000 acres in the region, creating a private wildlife preserve—the first of its kind in Mexico.

To help get the project on its feet, McKinney and her husband—a former wildlife technician with Texas Parks and Wildlife—left Texas for El Carmen in 2001. They led a massive species inventory, black-bear tracking projects, and bighorn-sheep reintroductions with the help of local biologists, conservationists, and eight villagers that Cemex hired and trained as full-time staff.

"Eight or nine years ago, these guys were hunting year-round and using up the natural resources," McKinney says. "Now they've switched roles completely, helping to restore the land and wildlife. This is probably the first time they've had a steady paycheck."

At the same time, Osuna helped rally a group of ranchers in Coahuila to make conservation as important as cattle. The first step was simple: Learn to tolerate predators. Instead of shooting Mexican black bears, the ranchers put up with the occasional loss of calves. Their compassion paid off. After a 40-year absence, black bears were roaming north into Big Bend again.

Federal land protection in Mexico looks different than it does in the United States.

At the end of his term in 1994, President Salinas made one bold, final move: declaring Sierra del Carmen and Santa Elena federally protected areas. But federal protection in Mexico looks different than it does in the United States. Such designations play out more like conservation easements, where the government doesn't own the land but has some control over what happens on it. Private landowners must agree to restrict

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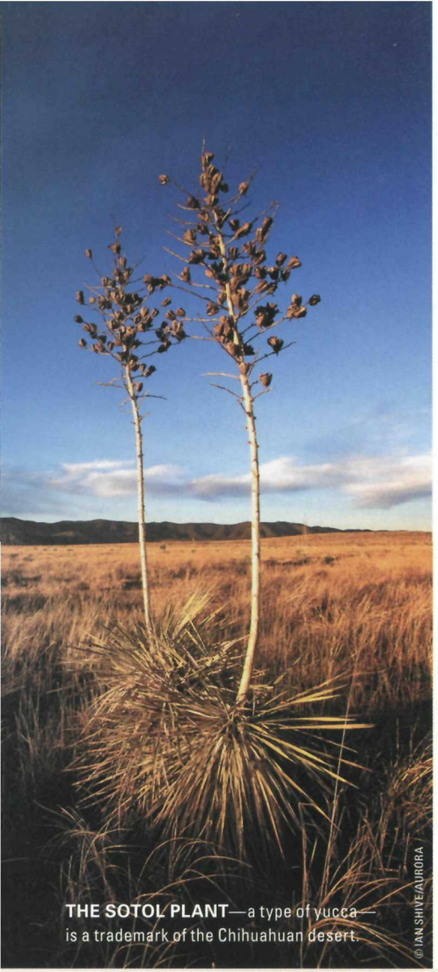

THE SOTOL PLANT—a type of yucca—is a trademark of the Chihuahuan desert.

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"We need to understand that we have our traditional concept, and Mexicans have theirs."

development and other activities that could harm the environment.

By American standards, this was a big step toward creating the international park President Franklin D. Roosevelt envisioned when he established Big Bend in 1944. But Mexicans reacted differently. Their government's conservation initiatives have a reputation for being too restrictive, overly bureaucratic, or just plain ineffective, so ranchers like Osuna are skeptical.

"My greatest fear is that we would return to socialist ideas that have proven disastrous for conservation and our resources," he says. "The best way to avoid this is to prove that well-managed private lands are good for conservation."

But how sustainable is that model without solid federal backing? Will the children of today's ranchers carry on their family's legacy, or will they abandon wilderness for city life? And despite support from northern Coahuila ranchers, will all of the region's landowners see the value in wildlife conservation?

Tyrus Fain, president of the Rio Grande Institute in Marathon, Texas, thinks the movement to keep the Carmens closed to the public is a mistake. "Without public support, all you have is elite ranchers hiding behind weak laws," he says. Ecotourism guided by conservation, he claims, is a viable solution—so Fain, along with Mexican ranchers and conservationists who share his view, has been working to restore and reopen an old mining bridge at La Linda, just outside Big Bend. This would replace the crossing that existed between the park and Boquillas before Homeland Security shut down the Mexican border in May 2002.

But some people fear that the bridge could open up convenient pathways for illegal immigrants and drug cartels or even develop into a busy international trade corridor, threatening what has so far been a relatively calm part of the border. The Park Service isn't opposed to reopening the border but would rather see it happen at Boquillas to avoid developing major roads that might encourage illegal activities.

"We need a system that will allow park visitors to get into Mexico and appreciate the resources in an environmentally friendly manner, without huge amounts of infrastructure," says David Elkowitz, Big Bend's chief of interpretation.

This is where conservation photographer Robles Gil offers an appealing solution for the Mexican side. His vision stems from successful ecotourism models in Iceland and South Africa's Kruger National Park, where visitors spend their days exploring the wilderness, and at night, tap into a system of local landowners who offer their homes as bed-and-breakfasts. Tourist dollars go directly into the hands of the private landowners who do their part to manage the land.

"It would be a different experience than Big Bend—maybe more exotic, maybe more expensive," Robles Gil says. "That kind of money could help these places." As long as money's flowing in, he says, landowners will be more inclined to make conservation a priority.

"I'm inspired by America's national parks," says Robles Gil, whose childhood memories include visits to Yellowstone and Yosemite. "You see a lot of wildlife, and that's amazing, especially when you're a kid. El Carmen can be that place. We brought back the desert sheep, black bear, and pronghorn. We can still bring back the wolf, grizzly, and jaguar. Imagine, eleven megafauna in one place, in Mexico."

From hikers itching for a Mexican adventure, to tourists craving a margarita in a charming border town, to die-hard wilderness advocates fighting development, people will always have their own vision for this place. But such complexities tend to fall away when you realize that both sides simply want to protect the land they love.

Big Bend's Raymond Skiles adds to that vision: Reopen the park's historic rowboat crossing at Boquillas with a Customs and Immigration presence and limited crossings. But he's careful not to weigh in too heavily. "At the border, there's a long history of powerful American interests getting in the driver's seat," he says. "So we need to understand that we have our traditional concept, and Mexicans have theirs. And we need to make sure that through our influence, help, and participation, Mexico has the liberty to develop something their people buy into and see as their own." **NP**

Amy Leinbach Marquis is assistant editor for *National Parks* magazine.

Border Crossings

Ask any "old-time" visitor or park ranger about what Big Bend was like before 9/11, and they'll launch into sentimental stories about the days when they could visit their Mexican neighbors with ease. There were baseball games in Mexico and cookouts in Big Bend. Park staff and Mexican villagers could enjoy a few beers together in Boquillas after a long, hard day. "When the border closed," says Tim Beck, a park firefighter, "it was like somebody just divided our town in half."

Without the influx of U.S. tourists to feed the border towns' economies, life south of the river crumbled. Many residents abandoned their homes for jobs in the city. Those who stayed behind struggle daily to make ends meet.

The Park Service is doing what it can to change that. With help from groups like the Rio Grande Institute and World Wildlife Fund, it's employing Mexican villagers in conservation projects like eradicating the invasive salt cedar and giant cane that are overtaking the river (special U.S. government-issued cards allow workers to cross into riparian areas on both sides of the river). Big Bend also hires and trains Mexican firefighters, called diablos, who enter the country with special permits to battle wildfires in Big Bend and on other public lands. An art co-op established in part by Martha King, wife of former park superintendent John King, imports local Boquillas crafts for sale in the park and gateway communities; the project, along with private donations, raised enough money to install a solar-powered generator and wind-powered well pump in Boquillas.

But these stories are increasingly drowned out in the noise of a post-9/11 world. Instead, Americans are flooded with questions about national security, especially on our borders. Construction of a giant steel fence in Texas threatens to cut through a school campus, bulldoze private homes, and cut off people and wildlife from their primary water source.

"When we get to the point where reason can prevail, a lot of these conservation initiatives we've been working toward are going to happen," says Big Bend's superintendent, Bill Wellman. "From just about every standpoint—from national security to protecting resources—you're better off having friends on the other side of the river rather than enemies."

A HIKER PAUSES near Boquillas Canyon in Big Bend to gaze into Mexico.

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moving mountains

BY STEVE THOMPSON

How do you protect a national park whose biggest threat comes from energy development in another country?

© FLORIAN SCHULZ

THE FLATHEAD RIVER VALLEY in Canada marks the headwaters of Glacier National Park. *Below,* author Steve Thompson at the Canadian border.

The sharp crack of splintering pine rouses me from a deep, restful sleep. Lifting out of my down sleeping bag, I watch Dan Weinberg take another swing of the axe. By the time I crawl out of my tent, the state senator from Montana has kindled a small blaze against the morning chill.

The sun hasn't yet risen in Canada's Flathead Valley, the headwaters of Glacier National Park. But Weinberg is looking chipper in the faint morning light beside our streamside camp, six miles north of the American border and far from any human neighbors. "I haven't dreamt that well in months," Weinberg says. "That creek told me stories all night."

In time, our companions are stirred to action by the acrid smell of coffee boiled in a fireside pot. Around the sputtering flames, Weinberg and I are joined by two legislators from British Columbia, a policy advisor to Montana's governor, and a couple of naturalists from Wildsight—a grassroots conservation group in British Columbia. We have all day to explore two spots on the Canadian side of this broad wilderness valley, where a couple of high-profile proposals have gained significant attention on both sides of the border. First, we'll hike into a part of British Columbia that Wildsight wants to secure as a new national park or wildlife sanctuary. Then we'll explore an adjacent area that international energy companies want to convert into open-pit coal mines and a network of coal-bed methane gas wells. As we munch huckleberry pancakes, we ponder the implications of these two wildly divergent options and how it all came to this.

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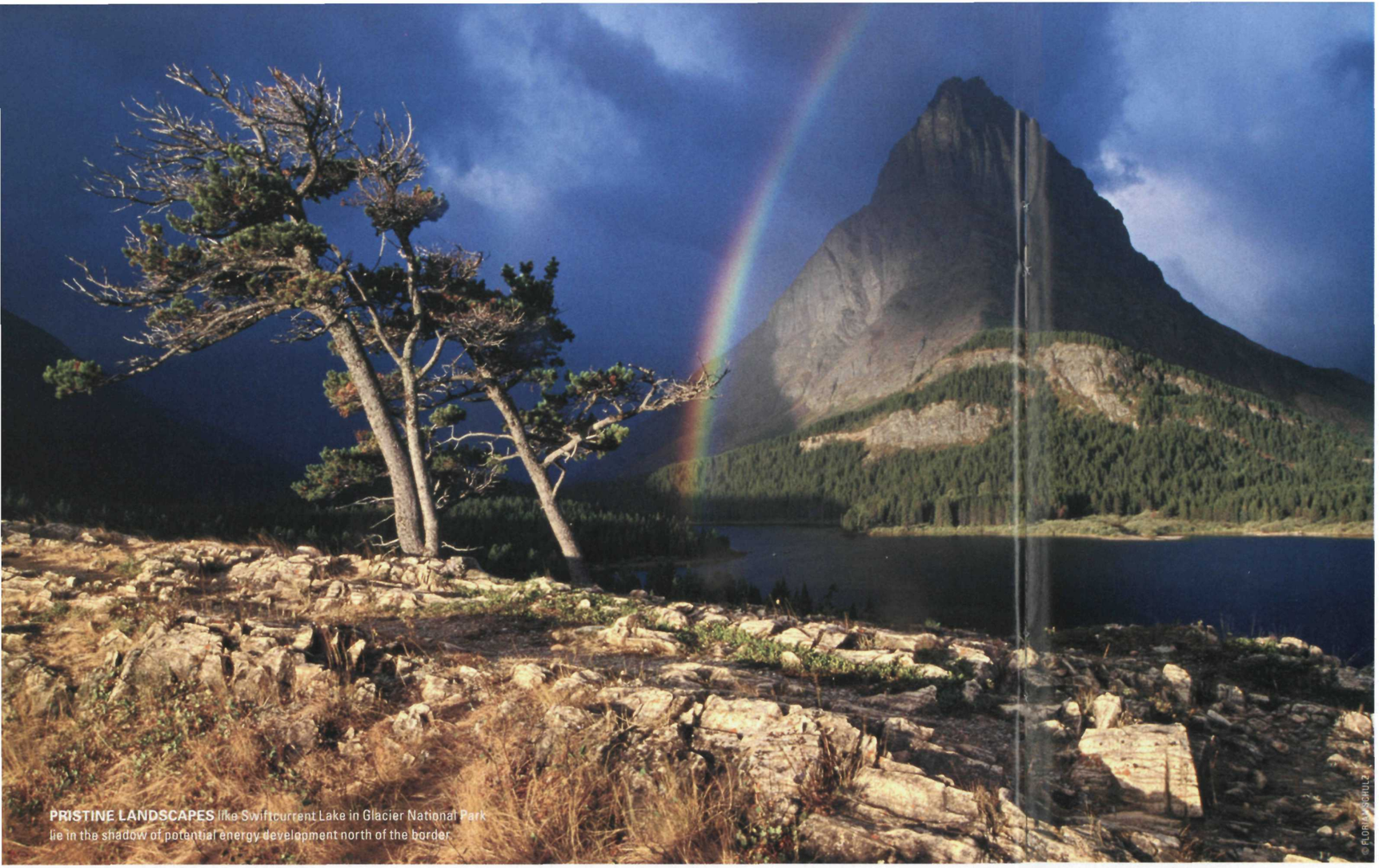
Although Montana and British Columbia are neighbors, we are mostly strangers to each other. So, too, are the nearby communities in southwestern Alberta, just east of the peaks looming above our camp. Socially and politically, borders are significant barriers, but to the wild animals that abound here, these boundaries mean nothing. If passports were required of critters, the grizzly bear, elk, mountain goats, and cutthroat trout of the Flathead would all hold dual citizenship.

Twice the size of Vermont, this cross-border region is a climatic mixing zone, where wet Pacific storms collide with Arctic blasts and more moderate thermals seep in from the south. Just a few miles east of ancient cedar rainforests in Glacier's McDonald Valley and British Columbia's Elk Valley, the mountains crash in waves across North America's greatest remaining expanse of native mixed-grass and fescue prairie, sticky with wild pink geraniums. In such diversity can be found the continent's highest concentration of



PRISTINE LANDSCAPES like Swiftcurrent Lake in Glacier National Park lie in the shadow of potential energy development north of the border.

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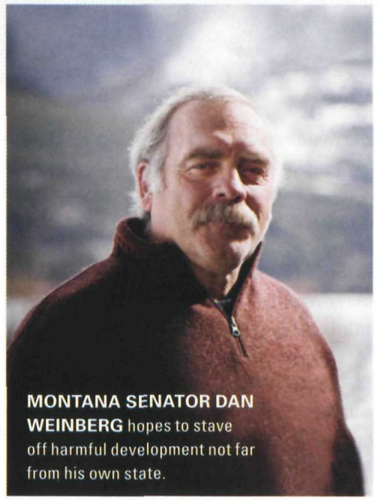
As prices for oil, gas, and coal have risen, energy extraction in the Canadian Flathead has become more feasible.

© KAREN MINOT

mammalian predators: 17 carnivores and a multitude of prey species that nourish them. At the core of this ecosystem beats the heart of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. Without the heart, the ecosystem would perish. But without the other vital organs and critical appendages, Glacier would wither. The challenge: preserving a sprawling ecosystem that contains more than 100,000 residents, hundreds of species, and millions in potential energy reserves, all of it straddling two countries with unsettled views on how it might best be managed.

At one point, protecting these lands unified the two countries. Canada established Waterton Lakes National Park in 1895, and the U.S. Congress established Glacier National Park in 1910, inspired by the writings of one of America's foremost conservation voices, George Bird Grinnell. In his writings, Grinell dubbed this region the "Crown of the Continent" and told of a single alpine peak that sheds its melting snow into three seas: the Pacific Ocean, Hudson Bay, and the Gulf of Mexico. Recognizing the flow of nature across the international border, Rotary Club members in Alberta and Montana envisioned a merging of the two parks. In 1932, these community leaders persuaded the U.S. Congress and Canadian Parliament to formally marry Waterton and Glacier as the world's first international peace park—a permanent commitment to peaceful relations and ecosystem preservation.

More than 70 years later, NPCA's State of the Parks assessment found that the peace park's long-term ecological health relies on its unbroken connection to adjacent forests and wildlands, but because of quirks of political history, it is missing a huge puzzle piece. And as you might guess, plenty of people have their eyes on that missing piece.



MONTANA SENATOR DAN WEINBERG hopes to stave off harmful development not far from his own state.

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Eating flapjacks around Dan Weinberg's campfire, our conversation veers between politics and biology, and how the gaps between the two were formed so many years ago. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, American and British negotiators agreed that their western territories should be separated by the watershed divide between the Missouri-Mississippi basin and the Hudson Bay basin. In such a remote, rugged region, however, it was easier to map the border from afar with a horizontal line. So in 1818, the countries agreed to divide themselves without regard to natural geography: the 49th Parallel.

This east-west border cuts across the broken ridges and peaks of the Continental Divide, which runs north and south and separates the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, creating an ecosystem with a jumble of powerful governing bodies. Glacier protects major watersheds on both sides of the Continental Divide in Montana. In Alberta, Waterton protects the east side of the mountains. But British Columbia is not included in the peace park.

For decades, British Columbia's Flathead Valley has been an unknown and rarely visited region separated from paved roads and small towns by rugged mountain passes. Until recently, this no-man's land was so wild and inaccessible that its fossil fuels were left untouched. But as prices for oil, gas, and coal have risen, energy extraction has become more feasible. The Canadian Flathead has emerged from obscurity into the glare of controversy.

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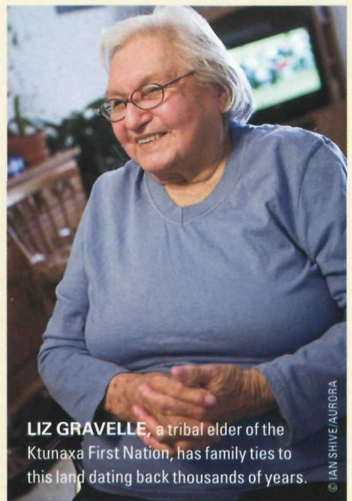
WATERTON-GLACIER is one of the last contiguous refuges for grizzlies, whitetail deer, and pika.

Generations Before the Borders

Most people think of Glacier National Park as a wilderness park—a natural area first and foremost. But the routes traveled by its waters and its wildlife have also been traversed by people for thousands of years, making the Crown of the Continent a cultural treasure trove. Just ask Liz Gravelle. A few miles south of her home in Grasmere, British Columbia, a border slashes across the traditional territory of her people. Gravelle is an honored elder of the Ktunaxa First Nation whose mother and father were tribal members from bands on either side of the border. In Montana, the Ksanka band of the Ktunaxa (ta-NA-hah), is also known as the Kootenai Tribe.

For millennia, Gravelle's people crossed three major mountain ranges to hunt bison on the prairie. The ancient Buffalo Cow Trail climbed east out of the glacier-carved Rocky Mountain Trench, where Eureka, Montana, nestles today. They forded the North Fork of the Flathead, where the best-preserved section of trail crosses the northwestern corner of Glacier National Park before crossing into British Columbia and over the mountains into Alberta and Waterton National Park.

Speaking in her tribe's own language, Gravelle, 85, will tell you about childhood years picking berries and catching fish, walking her people's ancient trails, and reaching the remote Flathead River, or "Coyote is Sitting There" as she would say. Gravelle and the Ktunaxa people still have a claim to these lands, and a treaty with the Canadian and British Columbian governments has yet to be settled. So the tribe still wields a big stick with regard to development proposals. Gravelle expresses a particular concern about plans to dig for coal and drill for gas where the coyote sits. "You go up there and the water will be bad," she forewarns. "Someday water will be more valuable than the gas, oil, and coal."



LIZ GRAVELLE, a tribal elder of the Ktunaxa First Nation, has family ties to this land dating back thousands of years.

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To watch a short a multimedia presentation with photos and audio of Gravelle telling a story in her native language, visit www.npca.org/magazine.

Today, Gravelle is one of about 50 people who still speak the tribe's language, an isolated tongue unrelated to any other in the world, as remote as the rugged landscape of her heritage. In recent years she has been recording her native language and stories in a race to protect both from extinction. "At the time of Creation, we were given our language and this territory to care for," says Gravelle. "Our language and the land go together." And if she's got anything to say about it, both of them will continue to thrive for generations to come.

GLACIER LILIES BLOOM at the base of Mt. Clements in Glacier National Park.

© DAVID MUENCH/MUENCH PHOTOGRAPHY

As we near the end of the carbon frontier, it's becoming clear that this land must be protected or it will be drilled.

Fortunately, a few people saw this coming. In 2002, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien called for Parks Canada to establish a backcountry wilderness that would become part of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park. But the provincial government had other ideas. British Columbia's 2003 land-management plan identifies mining and gas drilling as the top priority for the region. Fractured layers of coal infused with coalbed methane gas were simply too valuable to lock away forever; the expansion of the peace park was put on hold.

As our international contingent continued its hiking expedition, we saw the reasons up close, viewing an open alpine ridge that is targeted for wholesale removal by Cline Mining Corp., a Toronto-based coal company. We also passed over underground coalfields that companies like Chevron, Shell, and BP were scoping for methane drilling. Later, we would hike in the proposed park.

Although the Canadian Flathead has no legal protection, British Columbia's government has twice put the brakes on coalfield development in recent years. The coal found here is particularly well suited to furnaces used in steel mills, so Cline planned to ship it overseas to manufacturers in China, where booming demand has led to soaring steel prices. In 2004, however, the British Columbia government put a ten-year moratorium on mining along the border, prompted largely by strong local opposition and formal complaints from the U.S. State Department about impacts downstream.

But deep in the mountains farther north of the border, Cline proposed a third open-pit coal mine. And in the same area, BP (the world's third largest petroleum company, formerly known as British Petroleum) announced an accord with the British Columbia government, which provided exclusive rights to drill for methane gas in the Flathead and adjacent Elk River Valley. Montana and Glacier park officials protested, citing the negative effects of industrial infrastructure and pollution on the region's fish, wildlife, and sparkling waters. In February 2008, plans for methane drilling in the Flathead were temporarily halted, and the Canadian government has invited U.S. and Montana leaders to participate in a formal review of the energy proposals.

Each country has legitimate concerns about energy exploration in the other.

Strong American opposition to coal development in the headwaters of Glacier has clearly made a difference, but it has grated some of British Columbia's leaders. Still, many Canadians continue to encourage American engagement, noting that each country has legitimate concerns about energy exploration in the other. For example, the Canadian government has joined American conservation

MCDONALD LAKE in Glacier National Park

leaders who oppose oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge because of its impact on border-crossing caribou.

And what's good for the Canada goose has also been good for Montana's gander. In recognition of the region's wildlife and wilderness values, the U.S. Congress recently enacted a permanent ban on oil, gas, and mineral leasing along Montana's Rocky Mountain Front, immediately south of Glacier on the east side of the divide. Not to be outdone, a commission of governor-appointed citizens and local, state, and federal officials in Montana's lower Flathead basin called on Congress to do the same on the west side of the mountains. A similar consensus was emerging around the campfire as we gathered for a second starlit night after our explorations of the proposed park and coalfield developments. The hope is that residents and visitors will embrace the international significance of the land beneath their feet. It's a hope that may have been expressed best by Corky Evans, the long-time legislator from southeastern British Columbia: "If there's any place that our two nations should agree to protect, this has to be it." **NP**

Steve Thompson is a senior program manager in NPCA's Glacier Field Office in Whitefish, Montana, where he has worked for seven years, folllowing stints as a park ranger and firefighter in Isle Royale, North Cascades and Zion National Parks.

GEOTOURISM: Keeping Unique Places Unique

"What's special about your place, and what are you doing to keep it that way?" That's the question that NPCA recently posed to the residents of the Crown of the Continent as part of a unique partnership with National Geographic Society. The result is a "geotourism" map that tells the stories of an amazingly diverse ecosystem where the Rocky Mountains cross the international border.

Actually, the map is more like a guidebook on a single piece of paper that unfolds for days—each panel revealing more details about the region's environmental treasures, cultural heritage, local businesses, indigenous peoples, regional cuisine, and agriculture. NPCA's Glacier Field Office led the broad-based effort that engaged dozens of local partners, including business and conservation groups, historical societies, tribal elders, universities, Glacier and Waterton National Parks, and other public land and wildlife agencies.

FOR A FREE COPY
of the Crown of the Continent map guide, visit www.crownofthecontinent.net or call 800.847.4868.

The map and accompanying website (www.crownofthecontinent.net) revolve around the concept of "geotourism," pioneered by National Geographic a few years ago. It is an antidote to the unfortunate reality that many "authentic" or "unspoiled" places lose their distinctive cultural and environmental character once they've been discovered. Instead of chain restaurants and watered-down tours, geotourism partnerships aim to immerse travelers in the places, experiences, and stories that make a place unique. The goal is to sustain and enhance local character rather than homogenize the travel experience.

For Glacier National Park to be protected for future generations, it must remain naturally connected with surrounding lands and watersheds, and that requires the commitment of nearby communities and millions of annual visitors. Fortunately, long-term conservation of this region's nature and culture makes good economic sense. But for the growing numbers of residents and visitors, it's about more than that: It's about passing a shared international heritage on to our grandchildren and beyond.

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BY ETHAN GILSDORF

THE OTTER CLIFFS along Acadia's rocky shoreline contrast with the paper birch trees in the park's lush interior forests.

water MEETS wonder

If you judge a national park by acreage, Acadia may not meet your expectations. But by any other measure, it's sure to exceed them.

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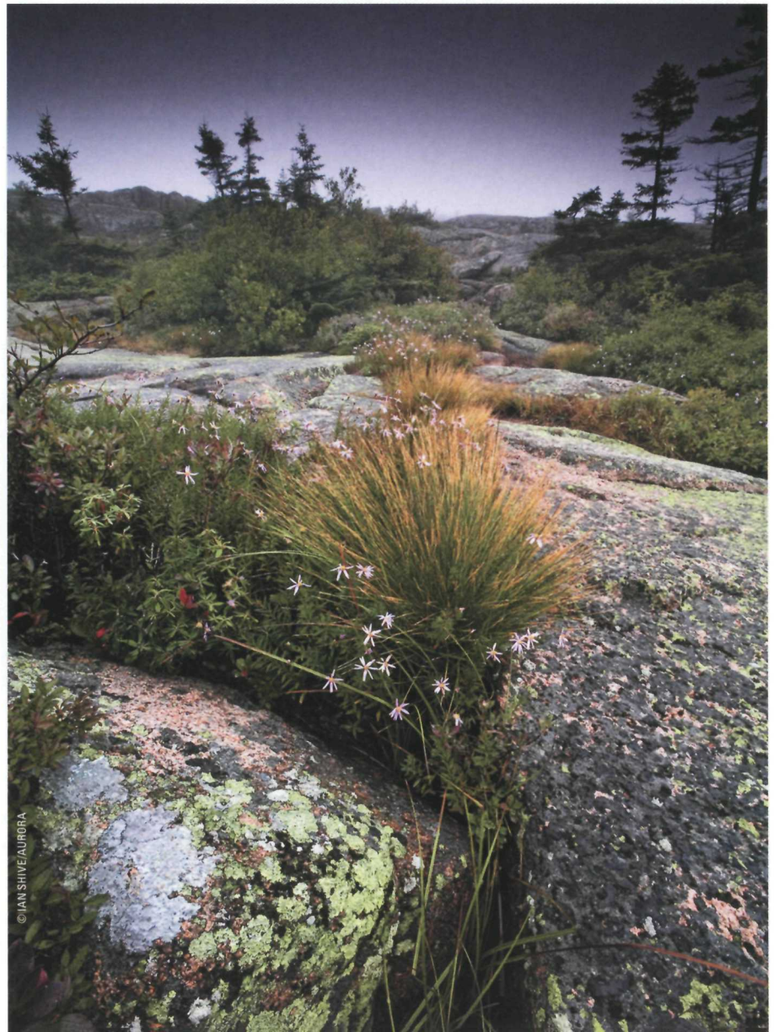
BAR HARBOR, Acadia's bustling gateway town *(left)*, is known for its charming shops and restaurants. To escape the urban scene, check out the Bass Harbor lighthouse and Cadillac Mountain *(below)*.



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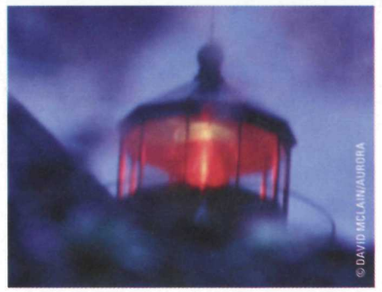
NO TOWERING PEAKS. No backcountry camping. No elk, grizzlies, or mountain lions to be seen. And, despite the name "Mount Desert Island," no driving through miles of arid lands to get there.

For visitors accustomed to more classically majestic national parks, Acadia National Park on the coast of Maine may come as a surprise. Its compact size—only 35,000 acres, or about one-twentieth the size of Yosemite and a sixtieth of Yellowstone—suggests it might be difficult to find any peace here. Cut into non-contiguous pieces, the park comprises half of Mount Desert Island's 108 square miles and shares the isle with several fishing villages and the tourist haven of Bar Harbor. This, plus the fact that the park also includes tiny Isle au Haut about seven miles offshore, and a chunk of Schoodic Peninsula back on the mainland, causes head-scratching among newcomers: "Where exactly is Acadia?"

"It's not like Western parks, where you go into the gates and you're there," says Wanda



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Moran, a ranger at Acadia for 17 years. "Sometimes people don't even know they're in the park."

But don't let its convoluted geography and tamer nature fool you. Acadia still boasts plenty of superlatives. Established in 1919 as the first national park east of the Mississippi, it's also the only national park in New England. At 1,530 feet, the park's centerpiece, the oft-climbed Cadillac Mountain (these days, also conquered by car), is the tallest mountain along North America's eastern shore; you'd have to go to Rio to find a higher peak on the Atlantic. Dividing the park in half, the glacial fjord-like Somes Sound is the only feature of its kind on the Atlantic Coast of the United States. Take that, Zion and Grand Canyon.

So forget Acadia's modest scale. When you take into account its mountains, woods, and ocean, it has the what-to-do diversity of three national parks put together. Whether you bike the historic carriage roads, scramble up the humped granite peaks, swim its freshwater ponds, or kayak along the miles of fractal-like shoreline, the way you spend your time in Acadia largely depends on what you like to do and how much time you have to spare.

A Quick Fix

The typical visitor stays for three to four days, but if day-trippers want to do a quick drive-through, it's still possible to get a fair idea of the park's highlights and natural features. From Route 3 south of Ellsworth, cross the bridge that first linked Mount Desert (pronounced "dez-ZERT") Island to the mainland in 1836. Drive to the east side of the island, toward the Hulls Cove Visitor Center. Just before Bar Harbor is the park entrance and, farther along, the turn for the one-way, 27-mile park loop road.

The ocean is the main attraction at Acadia, so as you drive the loop, be sure to stop and get out of the car. Walk the stone-strewn shores, gawk at the coastal forests, and explore sites like Sand Beach, Otter Point, and Thunder Hole (the last of these named for the booming waves entering fissures in the coastal rock). After the loop road turns inland, tea and popovers at Jordan Pond House beckon. The sole dining facility in the park, this reconstructed 19th-century farmhouse conjures visions of Hudson River School artists like Thomas Cole and Frederic Church and the summering Rockefellers, Morgans, Vanderbilts, and Carnegies who helped popular-

HIKERS ON CADILLAC MOUNTAIN, the tallest peak on North America's eastern shore.

© JUSTIN BAILIE/AURORA

ize the island. (In fact, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., donated some 11,000 acres to help establish the park, making it the first national park created entirely by land donated by private citizens.)

As you loop back to your starting point, a 3.5-mile side road twists off to the top of Cadillac Mountain. Views of the Porcupine Islands and Frenchman Bay await, and for early risers, ocean-drenched sunrises. While at the top, take a moment to explore the short Cadillac Summit Loop Trail (portions are wheelchair accessible) that winds through blueberry bushes, sheep laurel, and lichen-covered rocks. Because visitation in these areas has taken its toll on fragile vegetation, park rangers have fenced off areas to allow vegetation to come back. So here and elsewhere in the park, please stay on the path.

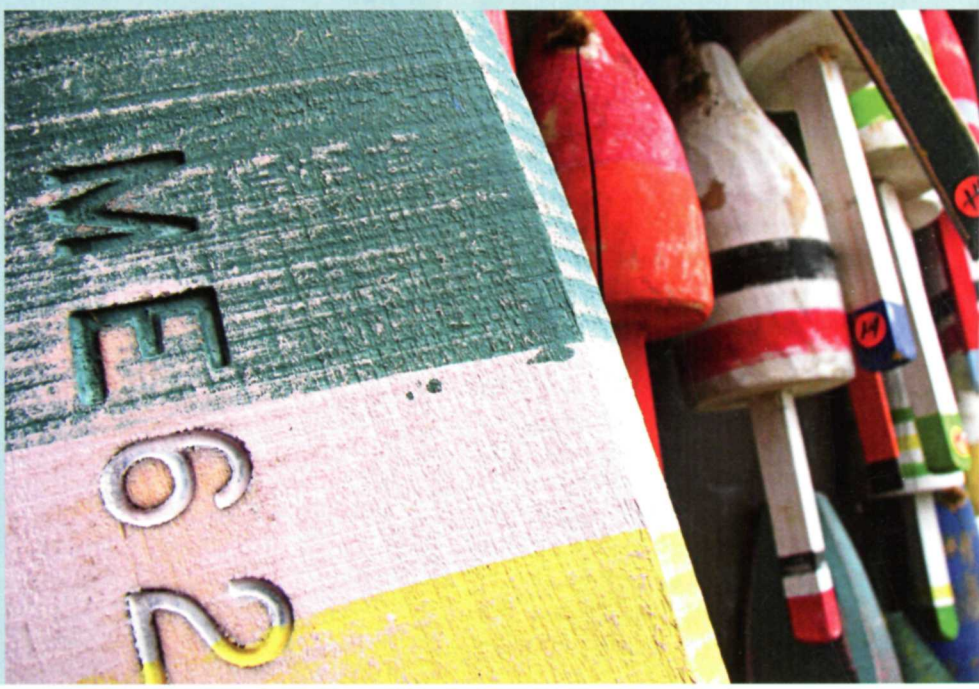
Make Yourself Comfortable

As is true with most parks, the longer your holiday, the deeper the experience. Stay for three or four days and you can tackle a range of day hikes. Some 125 miles of trails hug the shoreline and delve into glades of fir and birch, moss and fern. One easy stroll is the Jordan Pond Nature Trail, a one-mile loop through an evergreen forest, accessible from the Jordan Pond Parking Area. Departing from the same trailhead, the Jordan Pond Shore Trail is a more ambitious, 3.2-mile walk along the rocky water's edge.

More demanding hikes include the 7.4-mile Cadillac Mountain South Ridge Trail (trailhead near the Blackwoods Campground entrance), which leaves the forest to ascend the big peak's gradual slopes; be on the lookout for raptors at Eagles Crag. For the most daring in your party, both the Beehive Trail (near the Sand Beach

SIDETRIP: Route 1

A QUEST FOR THE PERFECT lobster roll, shopping bargain, or scenic view of the serrated Maine coast are all good reasons to take the slow road. Choose Route 1, north from Portland, and you can wend your way, improvisationally, up to Acadia, stopping at the many archetypical small towns that bespeak "Down East." Just outside Portland, it's hard to resist the shopping mecca of Freeport, home to dozens of outlet stores. The town is anchored by L.L. Bean, whose sprawling 90,000-square-foot store is open 24/7. Heading farther north, the quiet college town of Brunswick, home to Bowdoin College, is worth a gander for its brick and clapboard homes and the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum (North Pole explorer Admiral Peary was a Bowdoin alum). Shipbuilding center Bath is surprisingly endearing, despite the looming industrial cranes. More resort-like, Boothbay Harbor is set on a lovely protected harbor. The next worthwhile stop is Rockland, center of the state's lobster industry and home to the Farnsworth Museum and its collection of Wyeths. Both here and busy Camden are known for their fleet of windjammers (many can be hired for day- or week-long sailing trips). Hiking, camping, and views of Cadillac Mountain can be had at Camden Hills State Park; take the 45-minute trail from town. Farther north are Rockport (known for galleries and the Maine Photographic Workshops), well-preserved Belfast, and Ellsworth, last stop before Acadia. At any point on your town crawl, do succumb to detours off Route 1 and head down the thin peninsulas to the sea, whether at the Harpswell, Popham Beach, Pemaquid Point, or the Blue Hill peninsula, where old-timers mix with summering New York artists. Just beware: Route 1 can get snarled on busy weekends and holidays, so it's best to travel midweek.



parking area) and the Precipice Trail (Precipice parking area) may be short but deliver lasting thrills—to negotiate some sections, you need to grip iron rungs set into ledges on exposed cliffs.

Crisscrossing eastern Acadia's unspoiled heart, you'll find a 45-mile carriage road system, brainchild of philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. From 1913 to 1940, he had the carriage roads built, his salvo against autos that had begun to invade the island. The crushed stone roads are adorned with coping stone guard rails, gate lodges, and 16 granite bridges that span brooks and waterfalls and hug cliff sides. Today, these byways are still devoid of autos and ideal for mountain bikers and horse-drawn carriages (and, in winter, cross-country skiers). Bikes can be rented outside the park, and carriage rides can be arranged at Wildwood Stable (see "Travel Essentials" for more information).

The Long Haul

In summer, families hunkered down at Acadia for a week or more generally find ranger-led activities essential. From mid-May through mid-October, the folks with the wide-brimmed hats offer guided walks, nature talks, and opportunities to view peregrine falcons and raptors. Kids signed up for Acadia's Junior Ranger Program complete an activity workbook and attend ranger-led programs, then receive a certificate and Acadia National Park junior ranger patch.

If island fever begins to set in, consider taking a ranger-narrated cruise; boats depart from various points on the island. Aside from getting out on the water, guests learn maritime history; handle sea life hauled up from the ocean floor; and look for seals, porpoises, and birds, including bald eagles, osprey, and black guillemots. To get an even closer look, rent a kayak and paddle the finger-like nooks of the rugged coastline (see "Travel Essentials" for more information).

With Bar Harbor and the loop road, the island's east side can feel crowded; for a change of pace, it's worth exploring the meandering roads and small towns of the quieter west side. Stop at the quintessential Maine port villages of Southwest Harbor and Bass Harbor. Leave time to explore Bass Harbor Head Lighthouse and walk the 1.4 miles of shore and forest along the Wonderland Trail (Route 102A, one mile south of Seawall Campground).

Finally, seekers of ultimate solitude will appreciate Schoodic Peninsula, an hour north of Mount Desert Island, off Route 1 on the mainland. Its couple of thousand acres, culminating at Schoodic Point's huge flat rocks and big surf, make a dramatic setting for a picnic. Most remote of all? The practically deserted Isle au Haut (via the mail boat from Stonington, a 1.5-hour drive from Bar Harbor). Walking the cliff-edge trails amid mossy bogs and spruce trees, you'll see hardly anyone and have the coast of Maine all to yourself, at last. **NP**

Ethan Gilsdorf is travel and arts writer and teacher based in Boston. His work has appeared in the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, and *National Geographic Traveler*.

FORTY FIVE MILES of carriage roads beckon bikers, hikers, and even cross-country skiers, when the conditions are right.

Travel Essentials

SEE ACADIA NATIONAL PARK'S website (www.nps.gov/acad) for extensive information about fees, trails, activities, and camping, or call 207.288.3338. Once here, pick up the park newsletter, the *Beaver Log*, for details on ranger programs and other park news.

The best times to visit Acadia are spring, early summer, and fall. Leaf peeping season is gorgeous, but unless you want to share the narrow park loop roads with tour buses full of cruise ship passengers docked at Bar Harbor, it's best to avoid October. The park loop road is open April 15 to November 30, weather permitting; small sections remain passable in winter.

The park is a 3.5-hour drive north of Portland and 1.5 hours south from Bangor. To cut down on your driving hours in the park, use the Island Explorer Shuttle Bus (www.exploreacadia.com, June 23 to early October), which services major park destinations, campgrounds, carriage road entrances, and trailheads, towns, and the Bar Harbor-Hancock County Regional Airport. Shuttles are equipped with bicycle racks, making a car-free vacation possible. Accommodations outside the park include hotels, cabins, B&Bs, and private campgrounds. Inside the park, campgrounds are the only lodging option. Two are on Mount Desert: Seawall (no reservations accepted) and Blackwoods (book space through 877.444.6777 or www.recreation.gov). Sites have cold running water and flush toilets but no showers or electric or water hookups. A third carry-in, carry-out campground, Duck Harbor, is located on Isle au Haut (207.288.3338); facilities here are rustic: hand-pumped water, chemical toilet only. The Jordan Pond House (www.jordanpond.com, 207.276.3316) is the only place to eat in the park, so many visitors leave the park to dine in Bar Harbor and other villages.

To arrange for carriage rides or to board your horse, contact Wildwood Stable (www.acadia.net/wildwood, 207.276.3622; accessible carriages available). To rent kayaks and book guided kayak trips, try National Park Sea Kayak (www.acadiakayak.com) or Coastal Kayaking Tours (www.acadiafun.com). Bikes can be rented in town at Acadia Bike (www.acadiabike.com) and Bar Harbor Bike Shop (www.barharborbike.com).

If you're interested in getting your hands dirty, you can even sign up for trail maintenance camping trips with the Appalachian Mountain Club; visit www.outdoors.org and click on "Volunteer for Trails."

BY JEFF RENNICKE

OF TIME AND RIVERS FLOWING

FORTY YEARS downstream for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 **1978** 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 **1988** 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 **1998** 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 **2008**

THE YAMPA RIVER meanders through Colorado's arid landscape.

© ANDREW BANNECKER

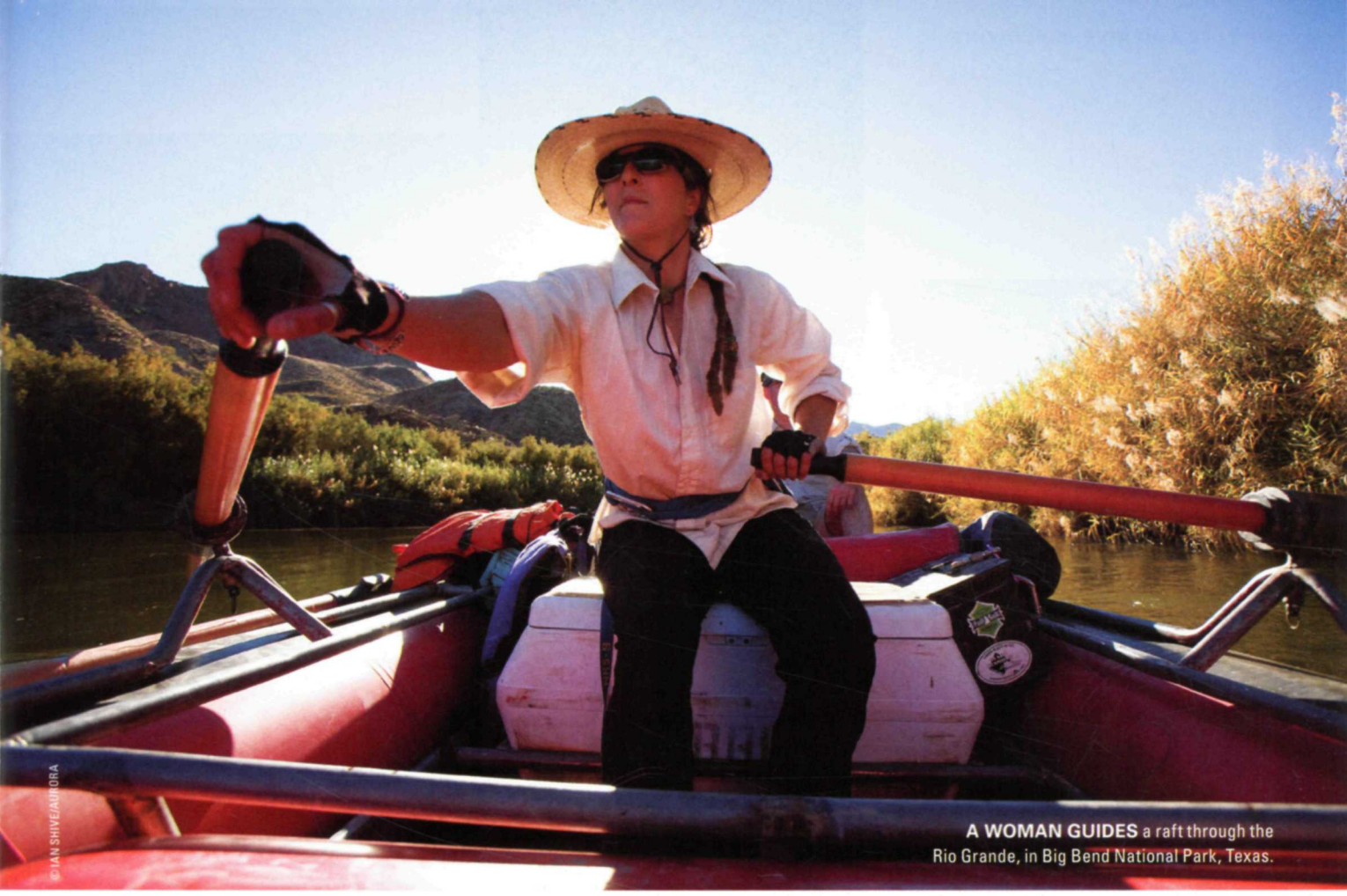
TUCKED IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER of Colorado amid the canyons and cougar tracks of Dinosaur National Monument, the Yampa River winds like a coiled snake. In spots it rumbles through rapids with names like Warm Springs that make rafting the Yampa feel like being shot out of a water cannon. In other places, such as Serpentine Bends, its path loops lazily through seven miles of graceful turns to cover just two miles as the raven flies, slowing the pace to the speed of a cloud shadow, a spectacular but contemplative ride. That combination—long stretches of quiet drifting punctuated by bursts of sheer excitement—makes the Yampa one of the premier whitewater rivers in our national parks, and the perfect metaphor for the up-and-down history of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS), which will celebrate its 40th anniversary in October. As one of the nation's wildest but unprotected rivers, the Yampa may also be the perfect symbol for what the system still needs to accomplish.

© JERRY GINSBERG

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK'S plan to protect the Merced River has been repeatedly overturned by the courts, despite the park's vigorous efforts.

Rivers flow through the heart of America and Americans. They have been the pathways of explorers, the conduits of commerce, and the muse of poets and painters. They have lit the lights and turned the turbines of a nation straining at its seams to grow. "America is a great story, and there is a river on every page of it," Charles Kuralt once famously said. Less famously, he continued, "Let's remember that, and dedicate ourselves to the great work of restoring these rivers to health." That part would take a little longer.

It wasn't until the mid-1950s that any real thought was given to systematically preserving some of this nation's 3.5 million miles of rivers. A proposal for a dam at Echo Park, near the confluence of the Yampa and Green Rivers



© IAN SHIVE/AURORA

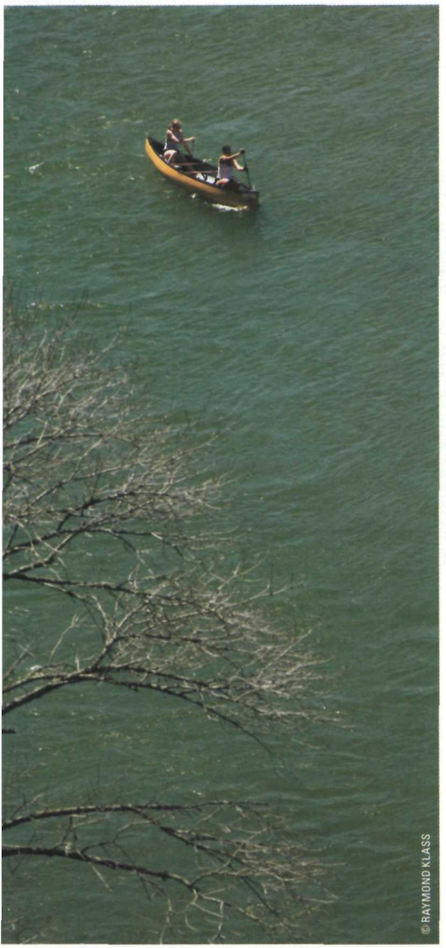
A WOMAN GUIDES a raft through the Rio Grande, in Big Bend National Park, Texas.

in Dinosaur National Monument, had raised the ire of a public that believed that at the very least, rivers within national parks and monuments should be safe. The outcry shouted down the proposed dam and raised the issue of river protection in the public eye. Sections of the Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park had already been lost to the O'Shaughnessy Dam in Hetch Hetchy Valley. Glen Canyon would soon become "the place no one knew" when the dam planned for Echo Park was moved downstream on the Colorado River, drowning a beautiful but little-known canyon. Scores of other less publicized rivers all across the country were being stilled by dams, polluted by industry, channeled for flood control, or tapped out for irrigation. Rivers, it seemed, were becoming an endangered species. Something needed to be done. On October 2, 1968, something was.

"The Congress declares that the established national policy of dam and other construction… needs to be complemented by a policy that would preserve… selected rivers in their free-flowing condition," reads the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act signed by President Lyndon Johnson that day." At its outset the NWSRS included 789 miles of eight rivers—the Middle Forks of both the Clearwater and the Salmon in Idaho, the Eleven Point in Missouri, the Feather in California, the Rogue in Oregon, the Rio Grande in New Mexico, and both the St. Croix and the Wolf in Wisconsin—and named 27 other rivers to be studied for potential inclusion. Perhaps even more important, the legislation did for wild rivers what the Wilderness Act had done for wild landscapes: It established a formal system to ensure that valuable natural resources would be preserved and protected "for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

"The act fits neatly with the mission of the National Park Service," says Sue Jennings, formerly the Wild and Scenic Rivers coordinator for the Midwest Region (now with Mount Rainier National Park). "It creates an additional layer of protection for rivers—another tool in the toolbox." With that toolbox the act designates rivers, or stretches of rivers, as "wild," "scenic," or "recreational," depending on the level of existing impoundments and shoreline development. It protects designated rivers from federally licensed dams and diversions, limits development in a quarter-mile-wide riparian zone on those rivers flowing across public lands, and calls on the managing agency to preserve the rivers' "outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values." Rivers can be proposed for inclusion in the system by citizen groups working through a member of Congress, by federal agencies, or by state governments petitioning the Secretary of Interior.

Like river runners dreaming of whitewater, passage of the act came with big visions—100 protected rivers in the first decade, double that by 1990, and eventually a blue web of protected rivers stringing the nation together from coast to coast like watery ribbons. But it hasn't worked out that way. Like the meanders of the Yampa, the system has at times surged forward and at other times seemed to move two steps sideways for every step ahead. In its first four years, not a single river was added. The tenth anniversary came and went with only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THE GIFT THAT Keeps On Giving

DAVID MORYC of American Rivers has a vision: a gift for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers all wrapped up in blue ribbons, 40 of them to be exact. "The goal of our '40 by 40' initiative is to see 40 new rivers added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by its 40th anniversary." Only four of the 40 rivers have been secured so far, which Moryc admits isn't terribly impressive. But there are now 16 bills involving more than 100 rivers before Congress. One of those, the Snake Headwaters Legacy Act, could yield the largest addition to the system in 15 years. The bill, introduced by Wyoming's Sen. Craig Thomas shortly before his death, would protect 21 segments including rivers in both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Others would protect the Perquimans River in North Carolina, an ecological wonder complete with bald eagles and blue crabs; the Pratt, a popular paddling river in Washington; and the Eightmile in Connecticut, among others. Moryc is urging people to write their congressional representatives to support the passage of these important bills. "Wild and Scenic Rivers are the gifts that keep on giving," he says. "A little bit of work right now will result in endless enjoyment for millions of Americans, for generations to come." To lend a hand, visit www.AmericanRivers.org.


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WILD & SCENIC rivers preserve resources for paddlers and wildlife, like this newt in Tennessee's Obed River.

16 new rivers. Then, as if rushing through a rapid, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act added 26 rivers, nearly doubling the mileage with one stroke of the pen. Oregon added 40 rivers in 1988, and Michigan, another 14 in 1992. In between, the system seemed to drift on long stretches of quiet inaction.

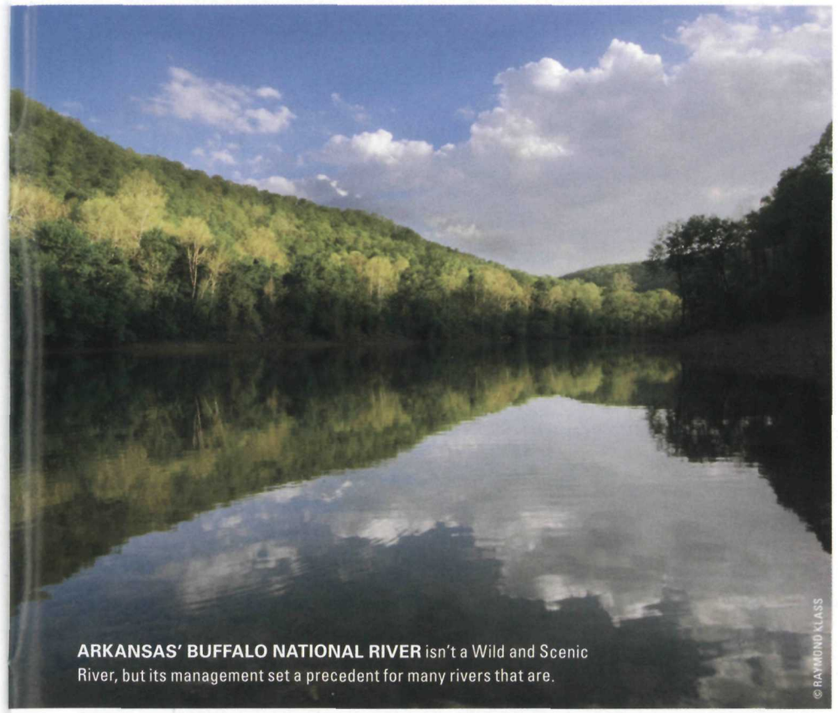
To date there are 168 rivers in the system, flowing for 11,409 miles, including some of the "crown jewels" of American rivers—sections of the Missouri traveled by Lewis and Clark, the Chattooga of South Carolina and Georgia made famous by the movie *Deliverance*, and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway in Maine, among others. (To see a complete list, including Wild and Scenic Rivers in your area, visit www.rivers.gov.)

For its part, the National Park Service (NPS) oversees 37 Wild and Scenic Rivers flowing for more than 2,800 miles. These too include "crown jewel" rivers— from the grizzly stitched horizons of Alaska's Noatak to the Delaware, the longest free-flowing river east of the Mississippi, from John Muir's beloved Tuolumne in Yosemite to the Great Egg Harbor in New Jersey. Twenty-eight of the rivers managed by NPS are units of the National Park System. Nine, including the Delaware, are "partnership" rivers managed cooperatively with state and local authorities. Another 19 rivers designated under Section 2(a)(ii) of the act are managed by the states, although the Park Service retains a complex set of review responsibilities.

The varied designations and management categories have led to a diverse system of protected rivers but have not been without their problems. Citing "failure to meet legal mandates," "inconsistency in management," and "absence of centralized leadership and staff training" among other issues, a recent report by the Park Service's Wild and Scenic Rivers Task Force gave the agency grades ranging from B+ to a series of Fs for the handling of its responsibilities under the National Wild and Scenic River Act. "The credibility of the Park Service's management role is threatened," the report stated, "as are the nation's heritage river resources with which the Park Service is entrusted." For evidence, the task force pointed to costly litigation on the Merced River in Yosemite and the Park Service's failure to address use capacity issues. It cited resource damage from tributary dams on the Obed and permitting issues involving a gravel mine on the Eel River. Each year since 1996, American Rivers' annual list of "Most Endangered Rivers" has included at least two rivers managed in part or in whole by the Park Service. That troubling reality led the report's authors to conclude, "As the 40th anniversary of the Act approaches, it has become clear that…the Park Service management approach is in need of a tune-up."

A key step in that potential tune-up may happen soon. In May 2007, the Park Service National Leadership Council announced the creation of a new service-wide Wild and Scenic Rivers Program and a steering committee to investigate funding sources for a national coordinator. The program would consolidate management, facilitate employee training, oversee outreach programs, and establish a management home for the rivers program within the Park Service. The effort is "a real bright spot," according to Joan Harns, a member of the task force that recommended the program. "I see this as a renewed commitment on the part of the Park Service to say yes, indeed, Wild and Scenic Rivers are important, and we are going to take steps to improve the coordination and consistency of the way we manage our responsibilities to these rivers."

Beyond the funding initiatives and the acronyms, beyond the politics and the numbers, there is still the simple beauty of the rivers themselves. "Humans have always had a fascination with flowing water," says Cassie Thomas, a planner in the Park Service regional office in Alaska. "They focus something in us in a way that even beautiful mountains can't. Linear and sinuous, they are metaphors for life and the passage of time." NP


© RAYMOND KLASS

ARKANSAS' BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER isn't a Wild and Scenic River, but its management set a precedent for many rivers that are.

NPCA in Action

LIKE THE TANGLE OF CURRENTS seething through a rocky rapid, the regulations of the Wild Rivers Act can be a Byzantine maze, which may help explain how an NPCA battle to stop a dam on a tributary of a river *not* designated as a wild river came to help protect rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

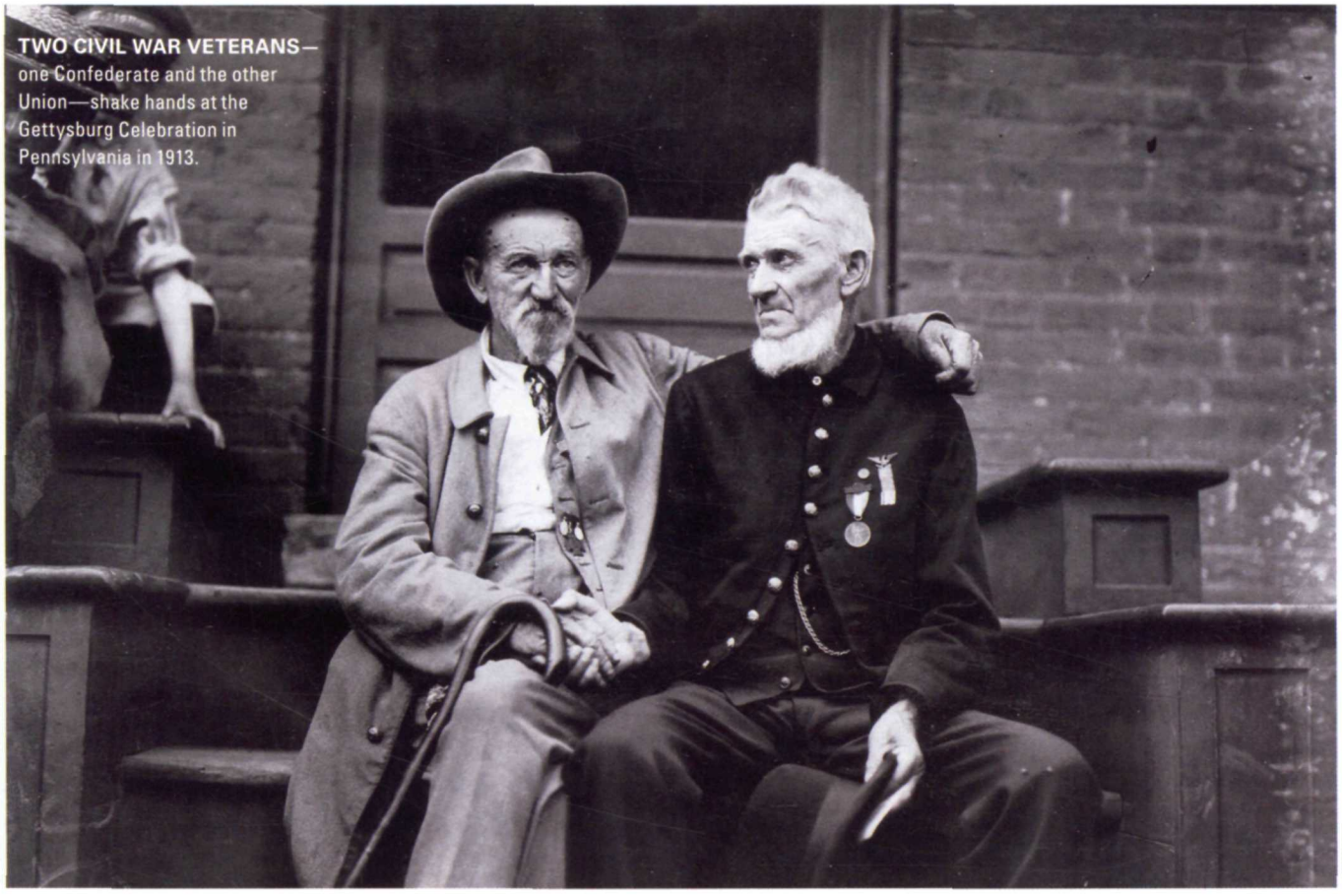
The Buffalo River in Arkansas became America's first National River in 1972. Although not a part of the system, the Buffalo is managed by the National Park Service and protected under language very similar to Section 7 of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, language requiring that developments upstream or downstream from the protected river not "unreasonably diminish" the river's values. When Searcy County in Arkansas proposed damming Bear Creek, a tributary of the Buffalo River some 20 miles outside of the park, that language was put to the test.

"The big question," says Don Barger, NPCA's southeast regional director, "was who should be allowed to decide if a project 'diminishes' the river: the people responsible for permitting the dam, in this case the Army Corps of Engineers, or the National Park Service, who is responsible for protecting the river?" Combining forces with groups as diverse as the Ozark Society, the Sierra Club, American Rivers, and others, NPCA filed a lawsuit that eventually led authorities to revoke the permit for the Bear Creek Dam. Perhaps more important, the decision set an important legal precedent that provides watershed-wide protection of national wild and scenic rivers extending beyond national park boundaries.

Rivers are fluid, elusive, and unpredictable. Sometimes, so are river battles. "We wanted to stop a dam," says Barger, "but by helping the National Park Service fight this dam, NPCA helped reshape Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, ultimately giving federal agencies more control over development that could influence the rivers they protect both inside the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and beyond."

Jeff Rennicke is a former whitewater river guide who now teaches literature at Conserve School in Wisconsin's North Woods.

By John Hennessy



TWO CIVIL WAR VETERANS—one Confederate and the other Union—shake hands at the Gettysburg Celebration in Pennsylvania in 1913.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Beyond the Battlefields

The National Park Service is changing the way it tells stories about the Civil War.

When I entered the business of interpreting history to the public, I brought with me an intellectual sophistication not far evolved from my childhood sentiments as a nine-year-old in Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland: History is *cool*. Fast-forward to my first years as an interpretive ranger at Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia in the 1980s, when I knew a lot about the Civil War but understood little. The public that wandered those fields with me, however, knew and understood even less. And as avid consumers of stories about the soldiers' amazing deeds, they seemed to believe I was doing my job quite well.

About three years in came the challenge—not from an academic who knew more about the war than I did, but from a park visitor who knew far less. He approached me after a tour and asked, "Why do you do this?" I started to explain how important it was to understand the experiences of the soldiers who fought here, but he cut me off. "Who cares what regiment was here or what regiment was there? Why does all this matter? How can you stand to talk about death all the time? With enthusiasm?! What a horror!" And he walked away.

That confrontation was the first hint that not everyone shared my rather narrow vision of the Civil War. The challenge befuddled me, but in many ways it shaped my career—forcing me to recognize the interesting role public historians play in interpreting the Civil War to the nation. To a greater degree than most, we sit on a wobbly roost.

On the one side of us is a vast expanse of tradition, tugging relentlessly, reminding us why the nation chose to remember the Civil War as it did in postwar decades. The country focused on aspects that could bind a shattered republic back together, setting aside "bothersome" issues like slavery and

TREASURE IN TEXAS

SECRET HOARD OF 110-YEAR-OLD SILVER STUNS COIN EXPERTS!

Larger than actual size of 30.6 mm

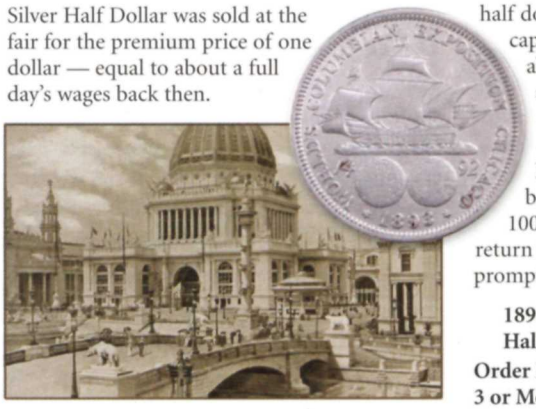
AUSTIN, Texas, Tuesday 8:55 AM — For years stories have circulated about a huge cache of U.S. silver half dollars that had been accumulated and stashed away in an unknown location by an old-time collector. But it was not until our firm was summoned to a tiny farm outside Austin, Texas that hearsay suddenly became startling fact.

There, spread before us on a dining room table, was a small mountain of silver half dollars. But as we began to inspect each coin, one by one, our surprise turned to shock. For these were not just any old silver coins, but rather the very first United States commemoratives, the legendary 1893 Columbian Exposition Half Dollars — over a thousand of them! What's more, each and every coin was preserved in Very Fine condition. The old-timer knew his stuff, and had kept only the better coins in collectible grade.

FIRST EVER, LAST EVER?

This is the first hoard of authentic original 1893 Columbian silver halves we've ever seen of this magnitude, and perhaps the last as well. The United States ceased issuing 90% silver coins 40 years ago. Since then, millions upon millions have vanished forever into the melting pot. It is doubtful we will ever chance upon a hoard of this size and quality again. Due to our private purchase of this major find, this may be your last opportunity to acquire this historically important and valuable collectors coin through a public offering such as this. The Columbian Half Dollar was issued to celebrate the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. It was one of the great world's fairs of the 19th century. Situated on almost 700 acres bordering Lake Michigan, the Expo grounds held 150 buildings with exhibits from all the nations of North and South America. At the fair one could ride the world's first Ferris Wheel, or take in such sights as a 22,000 pound brick of Canadian cheese or a 30,000 pound temple crafted entirely of chocolate!

Thousands of visitors attended the fair during 1892-93. The official U.S. Mint Columbian Silver Half Dollar was sold at the fair for the premium price of one dollar — equal to about a full day's wages back then.



THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION HALF-DOLLAR

Designers: Charles Barber (obverse) and George Morgan (reverse)
Diameter: 30.6 mm
Weight: 12.5 grams
Composition: .900 fine silver
Status: Legal-Tender Commemorative
Date: 1893

SILVER LEGACY OF LASTING VALUE

Relatively few Silver Columbian Half Dollars survived the last century, and fewer yet in Very Fine condition. These coins retain their full designs in bold relief with complete dates. Columbus' ship the Santa Maria sails across the reverse side of the coin, with the two hemispheres representing the world beneath it. This is your chance to acquire a family heirloom that will be the cornerstone of any collection. The Columbian Exposition Silver Half Dollar will always be sought-after by collectors for its historic importance as our nation's FIRST commemorative coin. Act today to become one of the few who has the chance to own a coin from this major find before they are gone forever. Get one for yourself, your friends and loved ones. It will make a gift of lasting value that they will treasure for a lifetime.

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A GROUP OF "CONTRABANDS"—slaves that escaped but were not yet free—gather in Virginia during the Civil War.

race, which divided us. And so the nation's collective gaze focused squarely on battlefields, and the shared experience of soldiers blue and gray, courageously engaged toward noble ends, each convinced of his righteousness, most led by wise and noble men. Anything else not clad in uniform—like the causes, results, and legacy of the war—was left out of public conversation.

This was the tradition inherited by the National Park Service when it took over management of the battlefields in the 1930s, and this was the historical tradition I championed during my first years on the front line at Manassas. Until that unhappy visitor openly challenged my interpretation with a question that I had thus far failed to grasp: Why does it matter?

In the last five decades, America's longstanding view of the Civil War has been disputed, reconsidered, and expanded immensely. Scholars have argued that interpretation focused strictly on the military story is misleading or, more often, extremely shortsighted. The sector of the public that can relate to my angry friend at Manassas sometimes accuses us of confusing history with nostalgia. More often, they just stop visiting battlefields.

The debate poses an interesting challenge for Park Service historians. Traditional programs focused on men in uniform generally offend or disappoint those advocating a broader view of the war. Programs exploring causes, consequences, or the most incendiary topic—slavery—are often seen by traditionalists as an attempt to politicize or even diminish the long-held view of the war as a stage for valor and sacrifice.

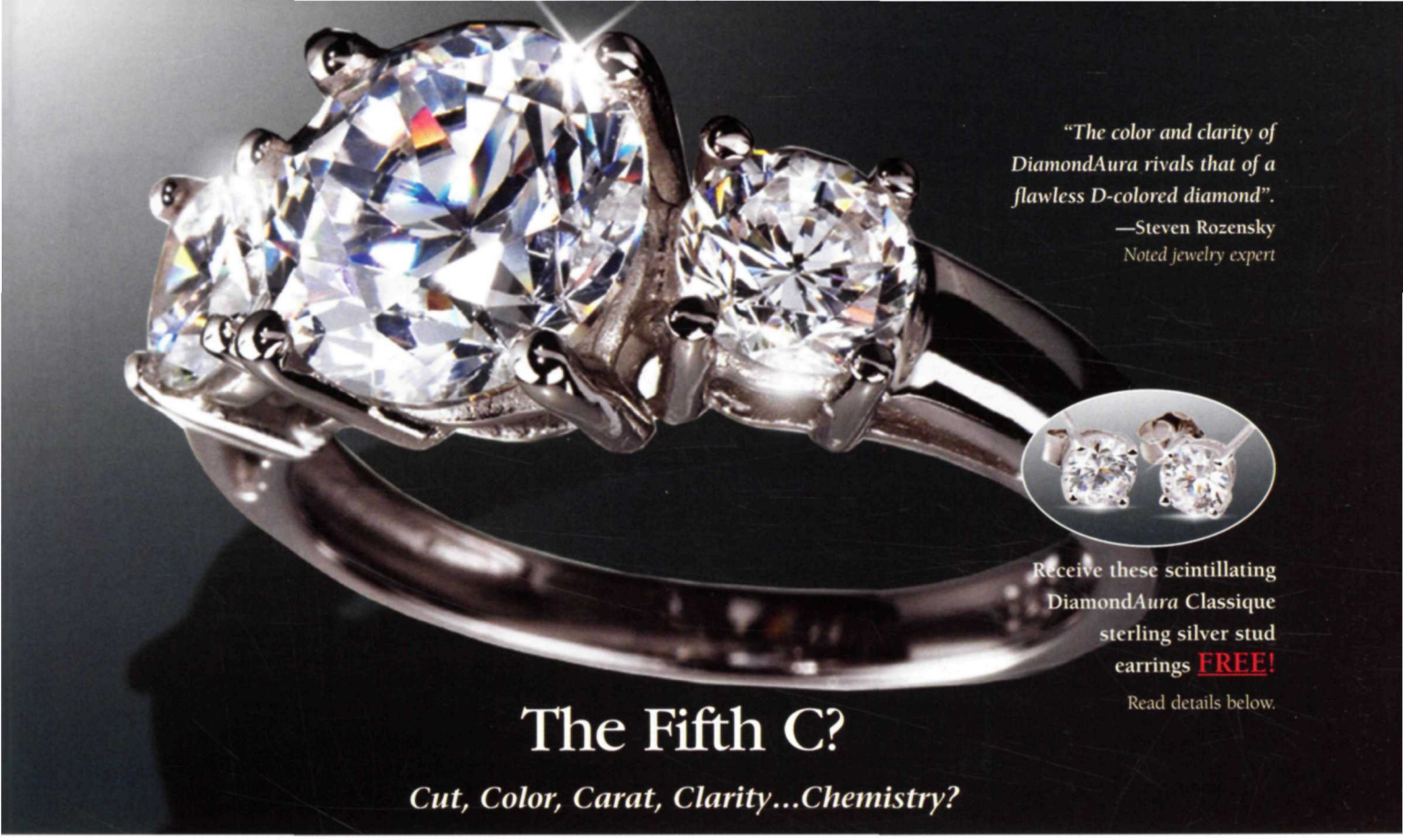
What do we as public historians make of all that? Are we storytellers bound by tradition, or historians seeking to expand knowledge and understanding?

We are, I submit, both. Dozens of Park Service sites inherit their stories directly from the participants—President Lyndon B. Johnson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and President Jimmy Carter, to name a few. Battlefields inherited their stories in the same way, too. Are we not affected by the mandate or wishes of those soldiers, civilians, and politicians who bequeath their legacy to us? Of course we are. And we should be. The National Park Service, as part of the government, is charged with helping to sustain our nation—its identity, its values, its memory. We acquired and accepted these battlefields as a form of tribute and commemoration to those who fought on those grounds, and continuing to fulfill that mandate is a moral and national obligation. We are not, and should not be, above the forces of historical memory and tradition.

But we must be aware of those forces. We must help visitors understand the distinction between history and tradition. And, when needed, we must untangle the two. This is an exercise in going beyond tradition, not abandoning it. The new museum at Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania helps visitors understand that Lincoln's use of the battlefield at Gettysburg—as a stage upon which to articulate a new vision for the nation—had everything to do with the profound nature of the battle itself. In Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia, we can take people to the riverbanks of the Rappahannock and read a white woman's lament that the Yankees' arrival in 1862 left her "heartsick... stunned and waiting for the end," and then read a slaves' memoir, speaking of the same moment by declaring, "I could not begin to express my new born hopes for I felt like I was certain of my freedom now." The very same moment, perceived and remembered so differently. A war that meant one thing to one person and something entirely different to another. How rich is that?

By just focusing on the battle details, compelling as they are, the Park Service has lost people like the angry visitor at Manassas all those years ago. I console myself with the thought that he may have just been a grump without an appreciation for cultural significance, and I try to believe that losing a few people like him is okay. But losing a nation is not. Americans need to know why these events are relevant beyond the inspiration they can provide. By engaging the public in history that accepts differing perceptions, digs deep into the human experience, and illustrates the profound impact of the Civil War on America and the world, we public historians have the chance to do something a bit historic ourselves. **NP**

John Hennessy is the Chief Historian and Chief of Interpretation at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia.



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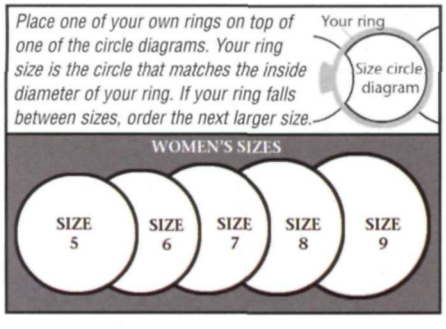

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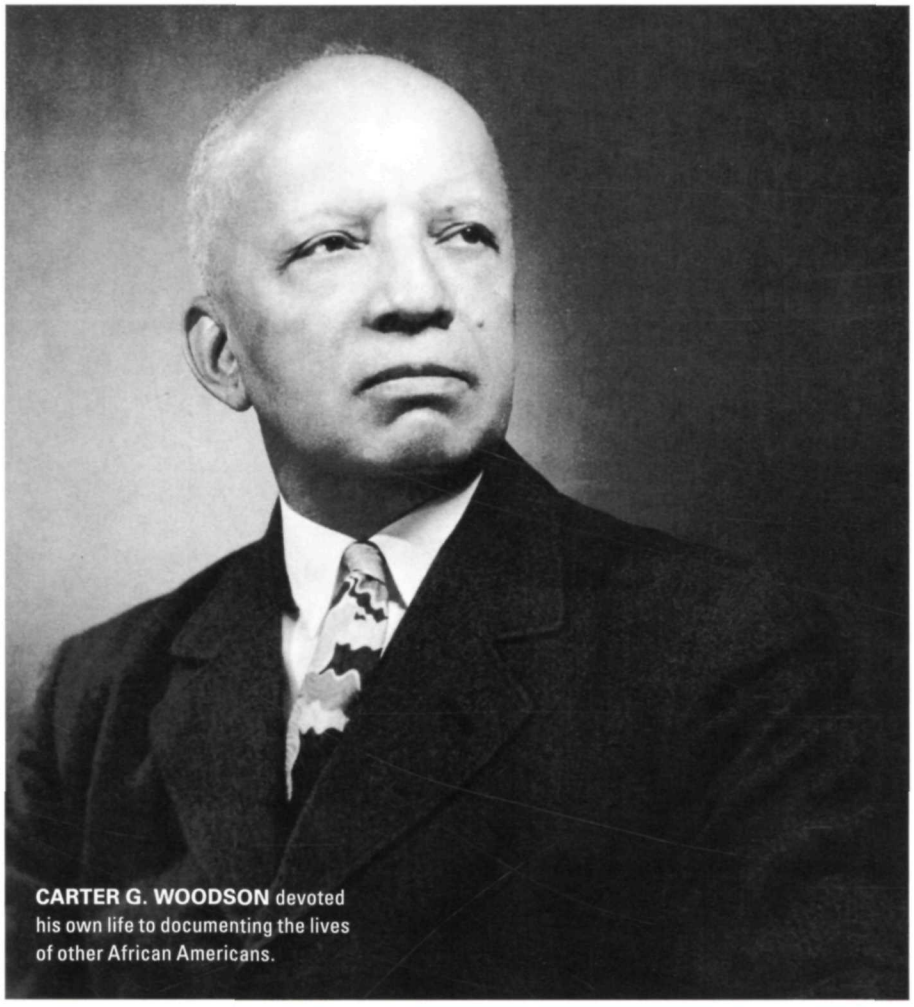
TRAVEL **PLANNER**

By Ethan Gilsdorf



COURTESY OF WEST VIRGINIA STATE ARCHIVES, ANGELLA BICKLEY COLLECTION

CARTER G. WOODSON devoted his own life to documenting the lives of other African Americans.

Where Black History Began

Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site reflects the history of a man who expanded the meaning of the word.

The house at 1538 9th Street lies vacant, as it has for some 30 years, secured against vandals, and abutting nondescript homes and a pizzeria. Visitors aren't yet welcome. The address is a dream behind plywood.

When the Park Service unveils the Carter G. Woodson Home as a National Historic Site in Washington D.C.'s Shaw neighborhood (with luck, sometime before 2015), the residence of one of American history's unsung heroes, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, will finally be made public. And with that, there is hope that Woodson's lifework will at last be given the recognition it deserves.

"There is no African-American history without the pioneering work of Woodson," says Robert Parker, a historian and park ranger who is managing the site.

Carter Godwin Woodson (1875-1950) never became a household name like many other black leaders. Yet the historian, author, editor, and journalist devoted his own life to documenting the lives of other African Americans.

Those who make the history get the accolades, but people don't know as much about the ones who recorded that history: the curators, collectors, researchers, and writers, says Parker. "You hear about Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks... but you don't hear about the ones who are authoring their stories."

Woodson published the *Negro History Bulletin*, developed for elementary and high school teachers, and the more scholarly *Journal of Negro History*. But he's best known for founding the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (today, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, or ASALH) which, in 1926, established Negro History Week.

"From the very first year, it caught on rapidly within the African-American community, nationwide," says Daryl Scott, PhD, chairman of the department of history at nearby Howard University. "By the 1930s, governors and mayors all across the nation were issuing proclamations." Negro History Week even had a following among white teachers who had no black students, and eventually blossomed into Black History Month.

As a young student himself, Woodson had to overcome an onerous upbringing. Born to former slaves in Virginia, he and his brother worked on the family farm as children; later the young Woodson was a coal miner. Although he was unable to attend school regularly until adulthood, as a 20-year-old, Woodson completed high school in

two years, then earned a bachelors from Berea College in Kentucky and a masters from the University of Chicago. When he received his PhD from Harvard in 1913, he was the second African American to do so, following only W.E.B Dubois. Woodson taught in the Philippines for several years, then moved to Washington, D.C., to conduct research at the Library of Congress.

"It is true that many Negroes do not desire to hear anything about their race, and few whites of today will listen to the story of woe," Woodson wrote in *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. "With most of them the race question has been settled. The Negro has been assigned to the lowest drudgery as the sphere in which the masses must toil to make a living; and socially and politically the race has been generally proscribed. Inasmuch as the traducers of the race have 'settled' the matter in this fashion, they naturally oppose any effort to change this status."

By documenting history, Woodson believed he could initiate change. "He did not use his Ivy League education to simply return to the Ivy League," says Parker. "He wanted to make sure that African-American people connected to their history."

Woodson's Shaw/U Street neighborhood was known as the "Black Broadway" in its day, home to Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, Thurgood Marshall, and Mary McLeod Bethune (whose home is a National Historic Site five blocks from the Woodson home). But Woodson's documentary efforts were largely "a one-person operation," says Scott. "He lived in the house, he ran the Association from the house, he ran the publishing from the same place. And he lived on he third floor in modest quarters." A solitary man of few needs, he ate most of his meals at the nearby YMCA, which is still open today. Woodson never married or had children, too consumed in his work to tend to a marriage and family. Woodson did it all from 1538 9th Street, his home from 1915 until his death; the building continued to serve as ASALH's offices until the 1970s.

In 2005, the Park Service acquired the property and began to partner with ASALH to renovate the home. And there's plenty of work to be done: structural analyses, the purchase of an adjacent building, and an investigation of what Woodson's office and living quarters might have been like so many years ago. "From an interpretive standpoint, the Park Service needs to decide the most significant story or stories to tell," says Greg Marshall, Superintendent of the Edison Historic Site in West Orange, New Jersey. "Then use the house, the furniture, the shaving kits, and the shoes to tell that story. The goal is to create an emotional connection between these things and the visitors."

Those efforts are all in the service of bringing Woodson the man to life again. "This was his office. This was his library, his personal residence," says Parker. "This is where black history began." **NP**

Ethan Gilsdorf is a freelance journalist, poet, and teacher living in Somerville, Massachusetts.

By Gordon and Cathy Illg

ARCHES NATIONAL PARK

Utah

What's not special about Arches National Park? You have a stunning landscape, fantastic rock formations, amazing colors, and some of the clearest, darkest night skies in the country. Winter nights are especially full of mystery and wonder—and on this night in particular, we had the privilege of leading an entire group of photographers into the park to capture this moment. The camera sees things the human eye can't, and we like how this photograph captures some of that magic.

No one should pass up the chance to see a sky like this, but there aren't many places left to do it. I hope viewers are captivated by what this image represents, and understand the importance of preserving our night skies. National parks like Arches are incredible places for people to experience what is left of the natural world. This country would not be the same without them.



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New England Islands & Mountains
June 2009

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Rafting the Green in Dinosaur
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The Green River in Dinosaur National Monument surges among canyons unearthed by wind, water, and time. Inspire your family with scenery that rivals the Grand Canyon, adventures of rafting, and memories for a lifetime. PRICE: $1,925 ($321)*

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Glacier National Park is part of a world-class environmental and cultural heritage area, known as the Crown of the Continent. Bring it all to life with spectacular hikes in Glacier and Canada's Waterton Lakes, an interpretive tour at the Blackfoot Reservation, and a walk in ancient uncut rainforest. PRICE: $3,395 ($770)*

Hiking in North Cascades
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North Cascades National Park is an alpine wilderness of glacier-carved valleys, mineral-filled lakes, plunging waterfalls, hundreds of glaciers, and jagged mountain peaks. Energize your family memories in a park known for hiking and mountaineering with daily hiking options suitable for a variety of experience levels and ages. PRICE: $2,495 ($400)*

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Photographing Olympic & Rainier
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The high peaks, lush rainforests, and isolated beaches of Olympic National Park make for spectacular views and prime photography settings. Fill your contact sheet with shots from the largest single-peak glacier system in the lower forty-eight, its subalpine meadows and snowy ridgelines, at Mount Rainier National Park. PRICE: $2,695 ($650)*

The Black Hills & Badlands
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Badlands National Park's haunting landscape, iconic Mount Rushmore, and Wind Cave's sheer size make the Black Hills a diverse and desired destination. Discover a system of national and state parks, national forests, and national grasslands that offer a perfect setting for abundant wildlife and historical heritage. PRICE: $2,773 ($550)*

Wilds of Assateague
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Assateague Island National Seashore—a narrow barrier island along the crowded eastern seaboard—is famous for Misty of Chincoteague. Discover the island's marshes and lagoons that are home to a host of other wildlife, including peregrine falcons and other raptors migrating south for the winter. PRICE: $1,794 ($280)*

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Big Bend National Park offers hauntingly beautiful landscapes and intriguing wildlife with an unforgettable sense of solitude. Walk a different kind of walk among massive canyons, desert expanses, the Rio Grande, and the Chisos Mountains in one of the wildest corners of America. PRICE: $2,175 ($450)*

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The Hawaiian Islands are home to seven national parks. Witness the natural beauty of volcanic activity, observe marine life, and participate in authentic Hawaiian luaus. PRICE: $3,895 ($895)*

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*All NPCA Pricing is double occupancy (single supplements apply).

Photo (Left to Right): Rafting in Dinosaur National Park © O.A.R.S.; A red fox greets new company © Natalia Bratslavsky/Dreamstime; Lava meets water at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park © Pacific Islands Institute

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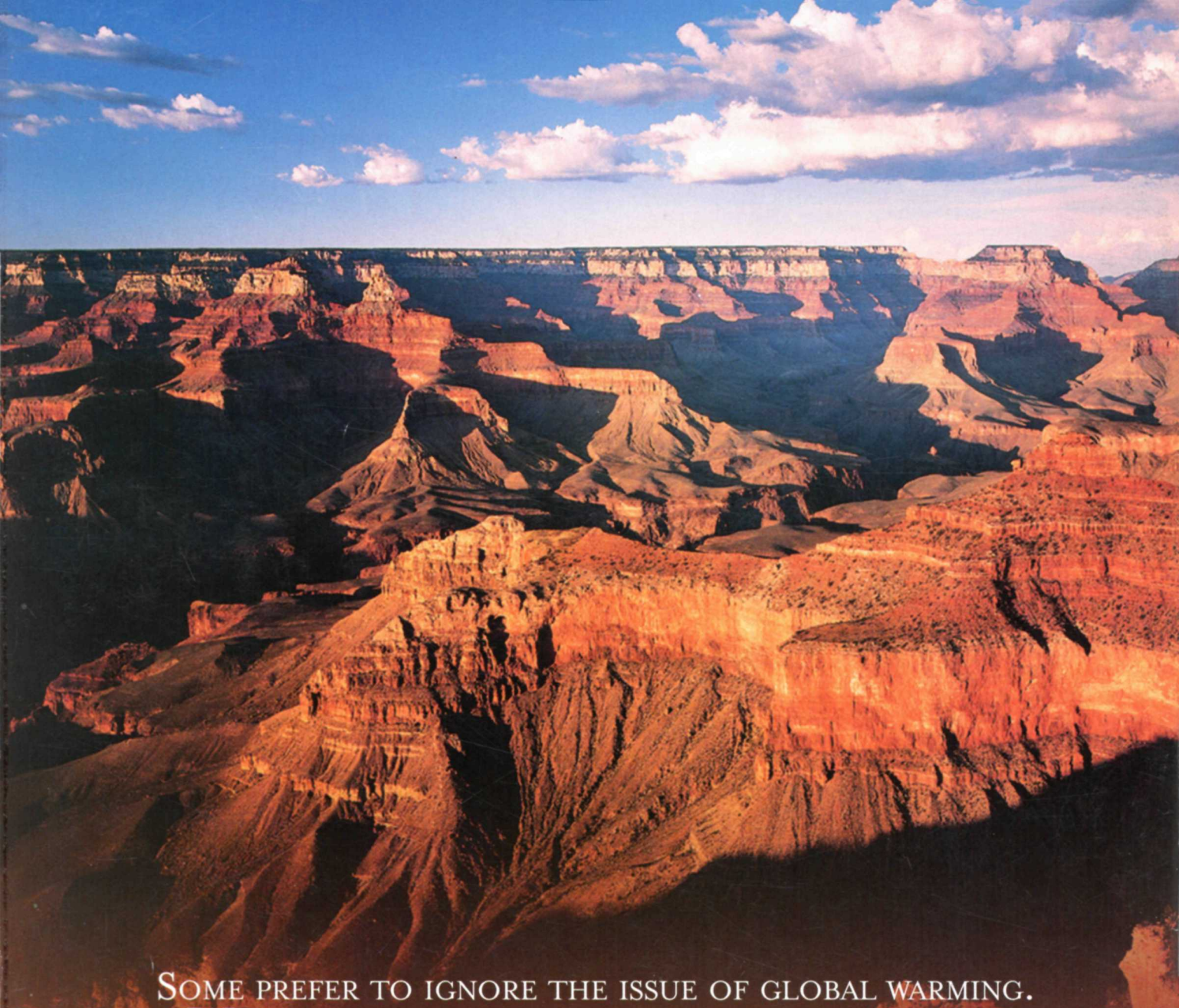

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