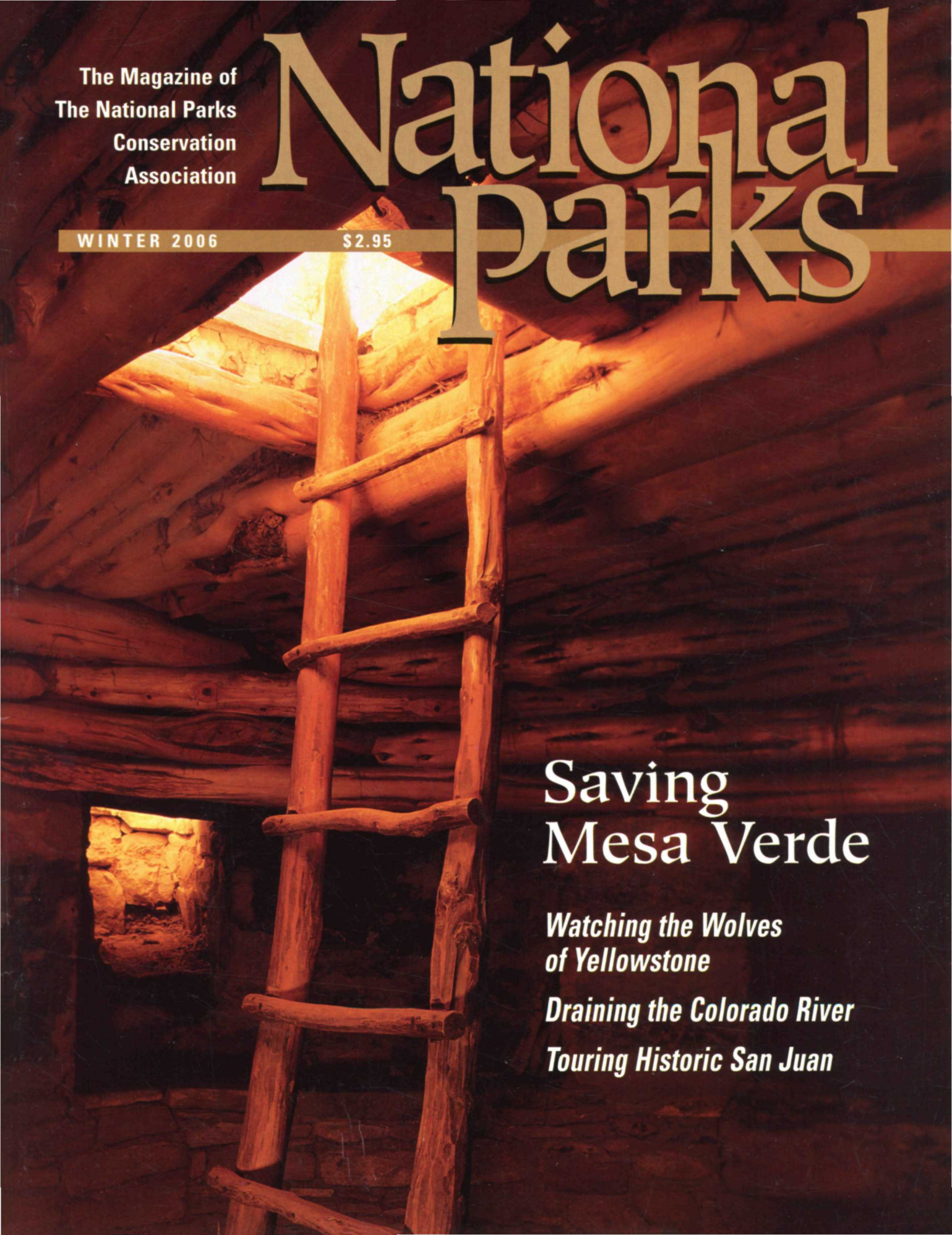
The Magazine of
The National Parks
Conservation
Association

National Parks

WINTER 2006 $2.95



Saving Mesa Verde

Watching the Wolves of Yellowstone

Draining the Colorado River

Touring Historic San Juan

Ship's Mysterious Disappearance Changes American History

Mistake Nets Fortune In Shipwreck Silver

Captain Jerry Murphy didn't know fishing would land him a spot in history. One sweltering August evening in 1993, Murphy's fishing boat, *The Mistake,* landed its greatest catch. While trawling south of Louisiana, Murphy netted what he thought were rocks. Much to his amazement, these heavy "rocks" were actually pure silver Spanish Half Reales, among the FIRST legal tender silver coins from colonial times! Not only did Murphy "mistakenly" discover a fortune in silver shipwreck coins, he also stumbled upon the 200-year-old mystery of the lost *El Cazador*. As Murphy would soon find out, this was no ordinary ship and these were no ordinary coins!

Did Conspiracy Sink Ship – And Spain's American Empire?

In 1783, over 200 years before Murphy's "mistake," Spain was mired in an economic crisis that threatened its control of Louisiana. In an effort to regain control of the vast territory, King Carlos III struck a fortune in silver coins at the Mexico City Mint and ordered his most powerful warship — *El Cazador* (The Hunter) — to carry the coins to New Orleans where they would be placed into circulation. The ship mysteriously vanished short of its destination leaving no survivors or clues to explain its disappearance. Financially crippled, Spain reluctantly sold Louisiana to France's Napoleon Bonaparte. Three years later Napoleon, in an effort to rescue his own struggling economy, sold the Louisiana Territory to the U.S at a bargain price.

Spain's mysterious loss was blamed on stormy waters. But was The Hunter hunted down — the result of stormy relations with its foes? *No one will ever know.*

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Struck over 220 years ago at the historic Mexico City Mint — America's first Mint — these authentic Spanish Silver Half Reales never circulated! About the size of a dime, coins like these were trusted pocket change for people like Thomas Jefferson & George Washington and were legal tender in the U.S. until the Civil War! Only a fraction of the *El Cazador's* treasure has been recovered and each coin available in this offer has been individually hand-selected and professionally preserved. A signed Certificate of Authenticity and a deluxe collector's holder that details the *El Cazador's* last voyage and mysterious demise accompany each Spanish Silver Half Reale.

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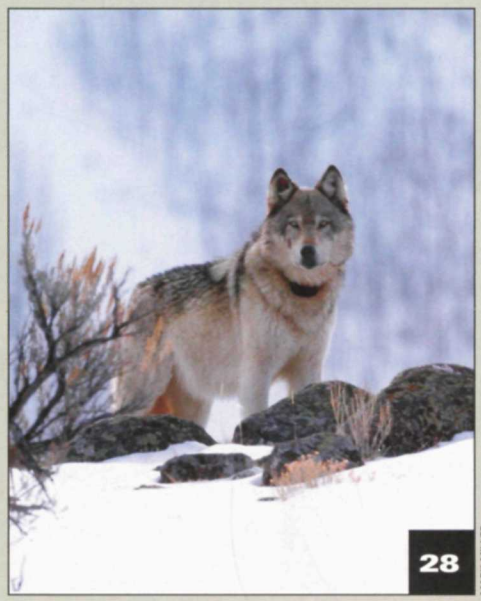

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MARK MILLER

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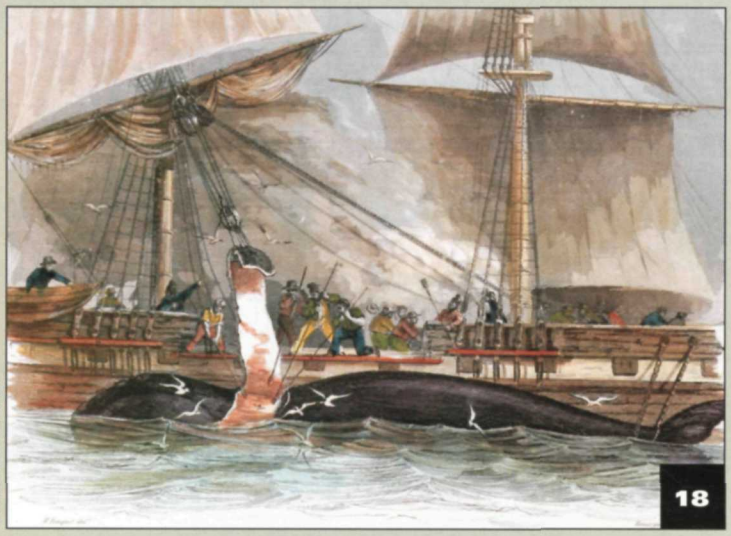

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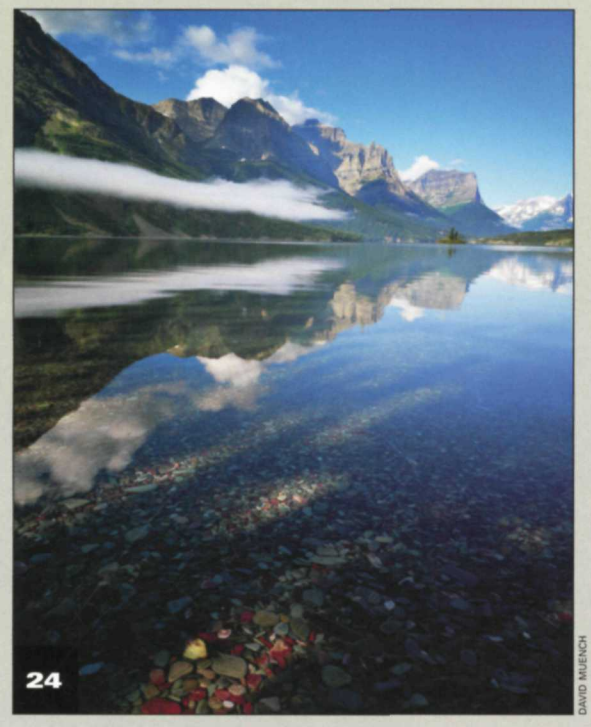

DAVID MUENCH

BILL BACHMANN/DANITA DELIMONT

Departments

A Challenging Climate


DUNCAN HAAS

The hurricane season of 2005 was one of the most devastating on record and one of the busiest. Epsilon was the 26th named storm, 13 of which were hurricanes. Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma affected not only hundreds of thousands of people along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts, but also took a toll on some of our national parks.

In addition to the natural disasters that affected the parks, the National Park System faced a challenging political climate. The House Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), suggested through the budget reconciliation process that one way of raising revenue would be to sell off 15 national parks to energy and commercial developers; encourage greater commercialization in the parks; and sell off naming rights. Fortunately, this idea drew such an enormous national outcry that it died very quickly. But other ideas for raising money at the expense of public lands and the national parks were spawned. At this writing, many of them have died.

Other challenges came from the Department of the Interior, where political appointee Paul Hoffman suggested dramatic changes to the policies that form the foundation for the National Park Service. Hoffman's rewrite could have transformed the Park Service from a preservation agency to one where recreation was the primary focus. Once again, our members and supporters joined forces to halt that threat. Another draft is being considered, although NPCA has encouraged the Park Service and the Department of the Interior to abandon the revision process and retain the policies that have been on the books since 2001. But the threats are not over. As we move into 2006, the park system will be facing new challenges.

We are just a decade away from the centennial of the National Park System. The parks face ongoing challenges, including air pollution, encroachment from development, and chronic funding shortfalls exacerbated by other national priorities. NPCA needs the help of its members, supporters, and partners to ensure that the national parks celebrate their 100th anniversary as a world-class resource.

Please join our growing list of activists by signing up for *Park Lines* at www.npca.org. Our e-newsletter carries the latest legislative and other news about the parks. It is also the quickest way for us to engage our members when we need help protecting the parks.

Thanks for your support this past year, and we look forward to your continued support in the new year and throughout the coming decade.

Thomas C. Kiernan

EDITOR'S NOTE

Cultural Celebration


CHAD EVANS WYATT

The first glimpse of the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado is both unsettling and mystical, eerie and spectacular.

Imagine if those dwellings, the stories they tell, and the culture they represent no longer existed.

More than 100 years ago, the pottery and other works left behind by the people who lived in the cliff dwellings were disappearing at an alarming rate. The "buildings" that had stood for centuries had no protection from the Sunday curiosity seekers and those in search of a profit who combed the sites for pots and other artifacts.

Into this picture stepped a young newspaper reporter on assignment to write about the "buried cities." Virginia McClurg became convinced that the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde deserved protection and devoted much of her passion, time, and energy to persuading the public and decision makers. In 1906, Mesa Verde became the first national park established for its cultural significance. This year, we will celebrate the park's 100th anniversary.

As we celebrate the birthday of Mesa Verde, we should also reflect on the actions of the dedicated group we have to thank for its preservation as well as the words of another individual dedicated to the knowledge and preservation of cultures and peoples.

"Never doubt that a small group of committed, individuals can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."—Margaret Mead.

Linda M. Rancourt
Editor-in-Chief

National Parks

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Linda M. Rancourt
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Briggs Cunningham
SENIOR EDITOR: Scott Kirkwood
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Amy Leinbach Marquis
DESIGN CONSULTANT: Bates Creative Group

NATIONAL PARKS
1300 19th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036
202-223-6722; npmag@npca.org

NATIONAL ADVERTISING OFFICE
Ascend Media
7015 College Blvd., Suite 600, Overland Park, KS 66211

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
Holly Baker: 913-344-1392; fax: 913-469-0806
hbaker@ascendmedia.com
Amy Galey: 913-344-1411; fax: 913-469-0806
agaley@ascendmedia.com

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National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting 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
The magazine is the only national publication focusing solely on national parks. *National Parks* creates an awareness of the need to protect and properly manage park resources, encourages an appreciation for the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, and informs and inspires individuals to help preserve them.

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
For more information on Partners for the Parks, contact our Membership Department, extension 213. For information about Trustees for the Parks, bequests, planned gifts, and matching gifts, call our Development Department, extension 145 or 146. You can also donate by shopping online at www. npca.org, where 5 percent of your purchases is donated to NPCA at no extra cost to you.

QUESTIONS?
If you have any questions about your membership, call Member Services at 1-800-628-7275. *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
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Dialogue on Diversity, Recycling, Maine Woods

Readers Divided

I am an interpretive park ranger at the Peaks of Otter in Virginia. It was refreshing and enjoyable to find an article ["Continental Divide," Fall 2005] addressing the need for African Americans to become more aware and involved in our national parks.

I am an African American woman, and I have been an interpretive ranger each summer for the past eight years. I know first-hand the perceptions you described in your article. I have had very little luck convincing many other African Americans to experience the wonders of nature offered in the park where I work. Hopefully, with time your articles and web site will slowly erode the false perception that nature and the conditions of our earth are the concerns or issues only for white Americans.

Sandra Nelms-Ludwig
Bedford, VA

I share Audrey Peterman's sentiments and agree that I am a "fan for life" of the National Park System. My family and I find that park visitors are usually friendly and enjoy sharing their experiences.

That is where the shared sentiments end. It is unfortunate and disturbing that the article puts a racial spin on visits to the parks. In this country, citizens are of numerous racial backgrounds, but we are all Americans.

The article said that "some years ago" Americans of African origin felt that the park system "did not relate to them." This is no fault of the Park Service. The parks have been in the same place since the 1800s. The Park Service promotes itself to all Americans without the need to target specific groups. If people can't relate or do not enjoy these things, that is their prerogative.

The article states "issues of race, class, and privilege still continue to determine who belongs in the Great Outdoors…and that "attracting diverse visitors and employees remains an elusive goal." How outrageous! The only thing that determines who enjoys the Great Outdoors is desire. My family and I have seen diverse populations of visitors and employees at Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon. At Yellowstone, we felt like the minority. We heard visitors speaking Korean, Japanese, Chinese, French, German, Spanish, and other languages that we were unable to identify. Employees wore nametags that gave their state or nation of origin. Many employees were from other countries. We visited with a family at the Grand Canyon. They said they were "on holiday" for six weeks. They lived in Austria.

We must see our country's parks for what they are: Unique American gems enjoyed by millions of people from all over the country, all over the world, and from all walks of life.

Dave Herberg
Fenton, MO

Editorial Reply: Although the park system is available for all to enjoy, it remains true that most of the diverse visitors are from other nations. For cultural and other reasons, African Americans, Asian Americans, and visitors of Latin heritage do not visit the parks in as high percentages as their white counterparts. It is precisely because the park system was established in an era when all Americans were not equal, that targeted efforts are needed today so that everyone feels included. As wonderful as it is to see visitors from around the world enjoying our natural treasures, only Americans can vote for their continued protection.

Reasons to Renew

When I read your letter about the very generous donation NPCA has received [President's Outlook, Fall 2005], I went straight to the waste basket, retreived my membership renewal, and wrote a check! It's a tiny drop in the bucket, but I hope that many "drops" will keep the bucket partially filled.

It is so important that we support the many good causes to conserve, preserve, protect, and address whatever issues allow us to enjoy and appreciate our country in the present and future.

I do enjoy reading the quarterly publication and pass it along to my local elementary school, as their funds do not allow subscriptions to many of the informative magazines.

Sarah Hodge
Englewood, CO

Recycling Ideas

Thank you for your article ["Treading Lightly on the Land," Summer 2005]. It is great to see that consessioners are taking part in the effort to be more environmentally responsible. But I was disappointed to read that "recycling is old news." It continues to be one of the most fundamental steps we can take to make use of our resources. Certainly, it is an idea that has been around for a while, but don't diminish its importance.

Having visited many national park

sites with my family, I have appreciated seeing recycling receptacles. In some states, it seems that the only place to recycle is in the national parks.

Unfortunately, while at Yellowstone this summer, I was at a loss to find a receptacle for our plastic bottles, despite the signs around Old Faithful proclaiming that recycled plastic was used to build the "boardwalk." I finally located a person at the Snow Lodge who willingly accepted the bottles. The containers should be obvious and convenient.

Please encourage the Park Service to provide more readily accessible recycling receptacles.

Mark Lillehaugen
Moorhead, MN

Maine Woods

It was with great interest that I read your article on the proposed Maine Woods National Park and Preserve ["Maine Woods," Fall 2005]. Our first trip to this area was when our oldest child was nine; he is now 38. Over the years, we have seen small but important changes to the area. Most of the changes resulted as lumber mills changed hands, reducing the need for local labor.

My family would welcome this new national park. As to the concern about a loss of jobs in the area: I visited Yellowstone National Park in 1960 and again in 1998. The economy has grown considerably with lodges, restaurants, guide service, etc. Most of these new structures are tasteful and blend in with the natural area around them. I foresee the same tasteful growth for our Northern Woods should the proposal become a reality.

Alice Kidd
Lake Tranquility, NJ

Corrections

On page 17 of the Summer 2005 issue, the dragonfly is resting, not feasting, on the fruit. In "A Challenge to our Members" on page 3, we misspelled Camp Schurman. On page 41, the image identified as a stone crab is actually a calico crab.

ONLINE CONNECTION

What's New at NPCA.org

Our Thanks to You!

This fall, NPCA raised the alarm on threats to the national parks generated by the House Resources Committee. Thanks to you, more than 31,000 electronic letters were sent to Congress, urging rejection of a proposal by Rep. Richard Pombo (D-CA), chairman of the House Resources Committee, that would have sold off 15 national parks, increased commercialization, and required the Park Service to generate revenue with sponsorships from businesses and other entities.

Your efforts paid off! The Resources Committee came out with a second proposal that did not include the sale and commercialization of national parks! Your help is critical in protecting parks for present and future generations.

We will be calling on you for help again to halt revisions to the National Park Service's management policies, the rules that govern how park managers protect our national parks. Changes suggested to the current 2001 policies could steer the parks toward greater commercialization and exploitation. Please visit www.npca.org to help us encourage the Park Service to abandon its changes and put conservation first. The public comment period is open through February 18, 2006.

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F. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED	4,498	9,537
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ParkScope

NEWS & NOTES

By Scott Kirkwood

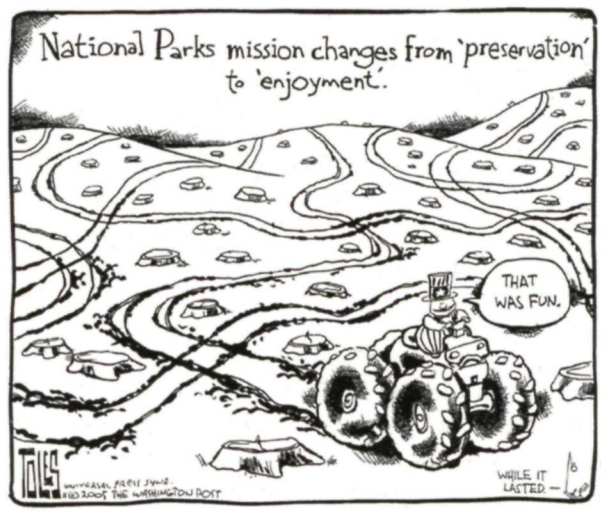
Rewriting the Rules

National Park Service considers drastic changes to guiding documents

The Department of Interior is taking a red pen to documents that lay down the mission of the National Park Service, and the results may be felt for years to come.

The Park Service's management policies guide the daily decisions of superintendents as they pursue the goal of guaranteeing the preservation of parks for the future while providing for the enjoyment of park resources. Although some might consider the process a tedious clarification of bureaucratic policies, it's a meaningful exercise that will have dramatic effects on the way we experience our national parks.

The troubles began in August, when Paul Hoffman, an Interior political appointee, sought to rework the Park Service's management policies, which he characterized as outdated. Although it's true that the Organic Act established the Park Service's priorities in 1916, the principles laid out in the document were working well by any measure. The management policies had even undergone moderate changes as recently as 1988 and 2001, during lengthy processes that involved plenty of public input. Even so, Hoffman offered a radical revision that would have lowered the benchmark for preservation, allowing any and all activities that do not cause park resources to become "permanently impaired." Parks could presumably be open to logging, mining, and oil and gas exploration, even at the expense of wildlife, as long as those species could possibly be reintroduced at some future point. This new document expanded the potential number of snowmobiles in Yellowstone, Jet-Skis in Everglades, and off-road vehicles in countless parks like Joshua Tree and Mojave; increased the likelihood of loud and unsightly airplanes flying over national parks such as the Grand Canyon and Great Smoky Mountains; made way for greater air pollution in Shenandoah's skies and light pollution that would obscure stargazing at Chaco Canyon; and limited the options available to park rangers interested in securing the fate of animals in Grand Teton, Glacier, and countless other parks.



Immediate media response to the proposal coupled with extreme pressure from NPCA and other conservation groups prompted the Department of Interior to back away from the initial draft. A second draft was offered up weeks later, and that document is open for public comment until February 18.

"The second draft of the management policies is less extreme than the Hoffman draft, but, honestly, that's not saying much," says Craig Obey, NPCA's vice president for government

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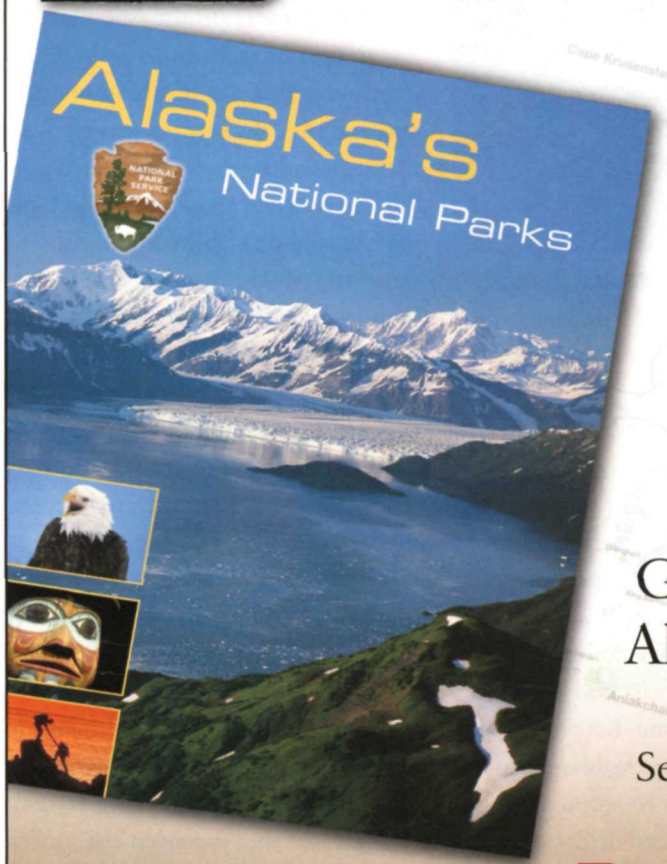

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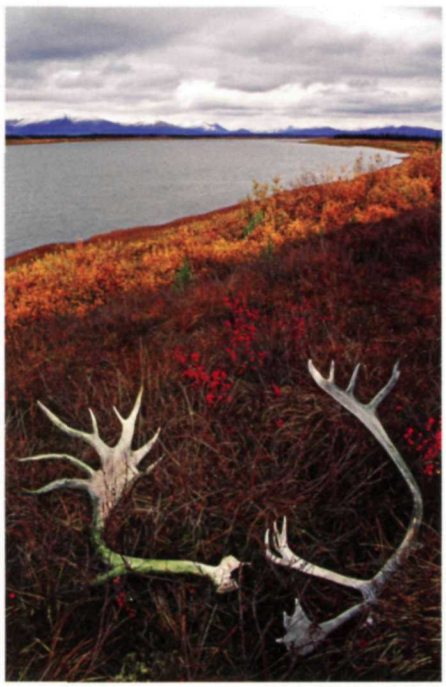
affairs. "The new policies still weaken longstanding legal mandates that preserve the country's heritage; they seem to reflect the notion that our national parks are resources to be used up rather than unique places set aside to reflect our heritage for generations to come." The current draft still leads the national parks toward greater commercialization and exploitation, increased air pollution and noise pollution, and widespread motorized vehicle use—activities that may well bolster private industry, but are clearly not welcomed by most visitors.

At a hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks on November 1, Deny Galvin, NPCA Trustee and former Park Service deputy director with 38 years of service, questioned the need to revise the management policies once again: "Nearly 300 million people visited the parks last year, and we know from surveys that they 'enjoyed' them," Galvin said. "Despite this, there are those who suggest that NPS management of the parks is too restrictive, or that the parks are locked up, or lack access. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fundamental reinterpretation of the Organic Act that is being proposed in the rewrite of the management policies does not make it a better document for agency manager's guidance…but replaces…the clear guidance of the 2001 edition with muddy, unclear, and too-broad discretion left to NPS managers and administration appointees."

The Department of Interior has issued a related proposal on a separate track that aims to increase philanthropy efforts within parks. Efforts to raise funds for the parks are to be applauded, but several potential inadvertent consequences are troubling: Overly zealous recognition of corporate giving could quickly lead the parks to attain a commercialized feel, leading the walls of visitor centers to be covered in corporate logos. If park staff were expected to garner funding through philanthropy, they may struggle to complete their traditional responsibilities. The risk that philanthropy will be used to supplant government funding rather than provide a greater level of excellence is troublesome.



O.T. LUONG/TERRA GALLERIA

Kobuk Valley National Park in Alaska was one of 15 parks considered for the auction block.

And there's still more. In September, Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA) alarmed many park lovers when his committee contemplated an even more outrageous idea. Just as Congress began pursuing the budget-reconciliation process—designed to bring federal spending in line, given rising deficits and costs associated with Hurricane Katrina—Pombo's committee drafted legislation to sell off 15 national parks to corporate interests to reduce the federal deficit. The legislation would have also required parks to sell commercial naming rights to trails and buildings. Once word got out to the public, representatives for Pombo quickly characterized the notion as a "brainstorm of all the possible alternatives," then simply "a joke," and finally an unpalatable alternative to opening the Arctic Refuge to oil drilling. NPCA's reaction prompted media attention that led Pombo to disown the idea.

Still, the reconciliation bill contains a damaging provision that would allow private companies to purchase old mining claims staked on government property, including land that has since become part of a national park. Before the turn of the century, Congress passed the 1872 Mining Law allowing anyone to buy government land for a pittance, hoping to bolster the mineral industry and prompt economic growth. But in 1994, Congress recognized that this land giveaway was no longer fiscally responsible, and a moratorium was placed on any claims that hadn't yet been sold. Pombo's bill would lift the moratorium and resume the land giveaway; several national parks would be affected. The bill also removes an old provision requiring the land be viable for mineral development, which means that parkland with so-called "unpatented claims" could be used to erect condominiums or shopping malls, among other uses. National parks such as Mojave, Death Valley, and others contain more than 18,000 acres that could be sold to private interests if the legislation passed. At press time, the House and the Senate had yet to determine the final language of the bill to be delivered to President Bush.

NPCA has already done much to shape the debate and will continue doing so. To let those in Washington know your thoughts on potential changes to the management policies, visit www.npca.org/policyrewrites. For updates on important park-protection issues, visit www.npca.org/takeaction.

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Your endowment gift, combined with the matching funds it generates, will help to ensure that NPCA will be able to continue its park protection programs for generations to come.

To find out more, please call Director of Gift Planning Morgan Dodd toll-free 1-877-468-5775 or e-mail him at mdodd@npca.org

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Please send me more information on how to triple the impact of my gift to NPCA's endowment.

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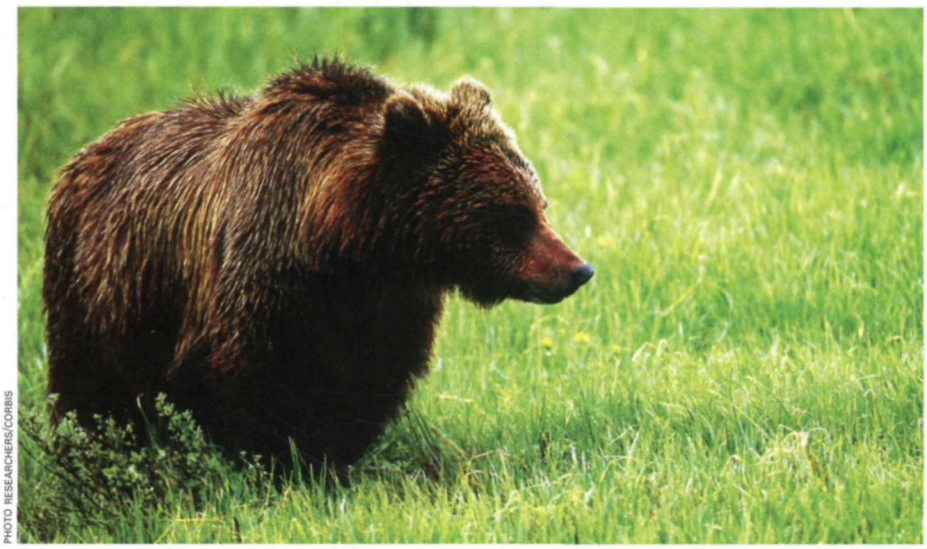


PHOTO RESEARCHERS/CORBIS

Simple Bear Necessities

How will Yellowstone's grizzlies fare once endangered species protections are removed?

After 30 years of conservation efforts and extensive research, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has proposed that grizzly bears living within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem no longer be categorized as "threatened" animals under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Some see this move as a sign of the ultimate success of the legislation, but still others feel it may be premature.

Most everyone agrees, it's not a question of whether grizzlies will be delisted, but simply *when*. The scientific evidence is clear: In the 30 years since protections were extended to grizzlies living in the Greater Yellowstone Area, their numbers have climbed from about 200 to more than 600, with a genetic diversity sufficient to ensure the species' success. All of the goals set down in the USFWS Grizzly Recovery Plan have been met, including bear distribution, cub production, and allowable mortality levels. And USFWS has approved the grizzly bear management plans submitted by Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. Wildlife biologists now estimate a 99 percent probability that the Yellowstone grizzly bear population will persist for 100 years. Although the Bush Administration has been accused of letting politics trump science when it comes to public lands and resource decisions, the group of scientists from USFWS, the Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Forest Service, state wildlife agencies, and several universities has functioned without political interference up to this point.

"After carefully reviewing the criteria established for bear recovery and the requirements of the ESA, the Fish and Wildlife Service has demonstrated that these goals have been met and the science underpinning the animal's recovery is solid," says Tim Stevens, program manager for NPCA's Yellowstone field office. "If the ESA is going to work the way it was designed to work, then it's clearly time to recognize that grizzlies have made a successful comeback—and much of that is due to the research and protections established in America's first national park."

In recent decades, Yellowstone National Park has emerged as a leader in reducing human-bear conflicts and conducting research to understand the needs of these animals. The park has established an extensive "bear-proof" garbage system, moved developments away from trout-spawning areas where bears feed, strictly enforced regulations aimed at reducing conflicts, and served as the hub of grizzly bear research for more than 30 years.

Make no mistake: The grizzly isn't out of the woods yet. The challenge of keeping Yellowstone's bear population healthy will not likely end in our lifetime, or even our children's lifetime. The biggest challenges facing grizzlies include development on public and private land, potential loss of key food sources, human-caused bear deaths, and ongoing federal funding for adequate monitoring and protections. Of course, prompt and appropriate action—including relisting the grizzly—must be taken if research indicates that any of these threats present significant problems.

But if and when the grizzly is removed from the endangered species list, it will not be left to fend for itself. Many people overlook the fact that delisting a species requires a series of stringent protections that ensure that the hard-fought advances aren't for naught.

"The document guiding the grizzly bear conservation strategy says there must be no net loss in habitat quality inside of the primary conservation area—9,200 square miles of habitat in the Greater Yellowstone Area," says Chuck Schwartz, a USGS wildlife biologist leading the independent Interagency

Grizzly Bear Study Team. "That means if the Forest Service chooses to build a new road in the primary conservation area, it would be required to remove an existing amount of road of similar grizzly habitat. These criteria are substantially more rigorous than those under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. In fact, under the existing threatened status, we could see negative changes in habitat quality that could not occur if the bear were delisted."

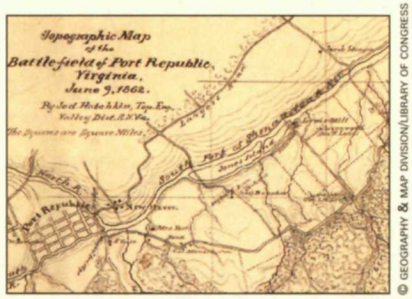
This conservation plan will establish guidelines that the state wildlife agencies would have to pursue with the help of federal agencies involved in the animal's management. USFWS will then be able to devote time and resources to other bear populations whose future is in doubt, such as the Cabinet-Yak population in northwest Montana.

As the most studied wildlife species in the Lower 48, grizzlies will also be provided with an extra margin of safety upon delisting: Mortality limits (the limit on the number of bears that die each year) are already closely tracked and ensure a healthy, growing population. If those mortality limits are exceeded in back-to-back years, a review process will be triggered, and problems will be addressed immediately.

Lawsuits are quite likely to slow the delisting process for months or even years, but delisting is clearly on the horizon. And when that day finally comes, it should not be considered an ending, but a new beginning. Given the impact of humans on this region, grizzly bears can never again be treated as an ordinary species; ongoing challenges to bears and their habitat must be addressed. Grizzlies will always require careful and adaptive management, and NPCA is committed to ensuring the species remains healthy and abundant throughout the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem for future generations.

News in Brief

Washington, DC—The Library of Congress recently expanded its collections to include some of the most fascinating relics of the Civil War—the actual maps used by Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. The Hotchkiss Map Collection was obtained from Mrs. R. E. Christian, granddaughter of Major Jedediah Hotchkiss who served as a topographic engineer in the Confederate Army. The collection consists of 341 sketchbooks, manuscripts, and annotated printed maps. To view the collection, visit http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/maps/hotchkiss.



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Rising from the Ashes

Fire destroys Fort Clatsop, rebuilding already begun

At 11:00 p.m. on October 3, Superintendent Chip Jenkins received a phone call from the volunteer fire chief, who told him that Fort Clatsop, the jewel of Oregon's Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, was going up in flames. By the time Jenkins had investigated the damage and returned home, it was 4:00 a.m. But he didn't get much time to catch up on his sleep.

"At five o'clock that morning I got the first of multiple media calls, and by six o'clock offers of help started to pour in," says Jenkins. "The Oregon and Washington state congressional delegation signed a letter to the Secretary of Interior asking for whatever was needed to rebuild the fort. The forest products industry offered to donate all of the logs for the new construction. A ten-year-old student in Vancouver, Washington, later raised $500 with a penny drive at his elementary school." The flood of e-mails and phone calls forced the park to bring on a temporary employee just to respond to the offers for help and coordinate the donations.

MACDUFF EVERTON/CORBIS

Fort Clatsop, before fire claimed much of the structure last October.

Although the building that burned down on that fall day was a replica built in the 1950s, the land and the structure have a history that's closely tied to the community.

Lewis and Clark's expedition arrived in the area now occupied by the national park on November 7, 1805, and recognized that they would be hard-pressed to cross the Rocky Mountains and return to St. Louis with the arrival of severe winter weather. So after scouting out a location with the help of a local Clatsop Indian tribe, the pioneers decided to build a humble fort that would protect them for a few months. Once the colder weather passed, they began their journey home and left the fort to the Clatsop Indians.

Flash forward 150 years later. The Astoria Junior Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, the Finnish Brotherhood, and others banded together to construct a replica that would mark the adventurers' stay on the Pacific coast. The community was invited to gather at an airport hangar and assemble the structure. Logs were numbered for final assembly, the wood was pressure treated, and the replica was assembled at the final site. The Oregon Historical Society operated Fort Clatsop until 1958, when it became a national park unit.

"This is a great example of how a National Park Service site works together with a community and forms powerful and lasting connections between people and our nation's heritage," says Jenkins. "People who helped build that fort still live here—even children who played on it during construction—and now they bring their children and grandchildren to visit."

In the years since the replica fort was constructed, the National Park Service has done even more to strengthen that bond by building a new entrance road and visitor center, and planting more than 15,000 trees around the fort. Since 1995, nearly 100,000 local students have visited the park thanks to educational outreach programs.

So when people learned of the fire (ruled an accident), they were ready to do something about it. More than 400 logs were delivered to the Clatsop County Fairgrounds, and on December 10, the public was invited to recreate the process begun by their own ancestors. Park Service workers skilled in historical log constructions are overseeing the effort to remove bark from the logs, cut the notches, and fit the logs together. Although the first replica was a nearly perfect example of Finnish log cabin construction, the new structure will hew more closely to the original, making it a little rough around the edges. In March, the wood will be treated with preservatives and the National Guard will transport the wood to the park site for reassembly. The walls should be up by March 23, and the fort is scheduled to be completed in June, just in time to welcome thousands of summer visitors.

Relaxation therapy for your feet

Visco-elastic foam has changed the way people sleep, now it helps the way you walk.

by Leigh Ligon

My feet hurt! How many times have you heard *or* said that…standing in line at the grocery store or simply while doing daily routine tasks? I feel like the older I get the more my feet ache. I've tried elevating my feet, soaking them in a hot water and expensive massage therapy—but to no avail. That's why I'm so excited to tell you about my recent discovery—CLOUD10 Slippers!

How did a NASA invention save my feet? From the moment I slipped them on, they molded to the shape of my feet like I had a custom fit pair of slippers made especially for me! The slipper's insole is made from visco-elastic memory foam originally created by NASA. This foam equalizes pressure, reduces stress and tension and provides incredible comfort.

According to the American Podiatric Medical Association, as people age, their feet tend to spread, and lose the fatty pads that cushion the bottom of the feet. Additional weight can affect the bone and ligament structure. These slippers mold to the contours of my feet through my body's heat and weight, literally cushioning every single step I take.

Technologically advanced slippers mold to the contours of your feet making each step feel like you're walking on Cloud 10!

Did you know that the average person takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps a day, which adds up to about 115,000 miles over a lifetime? That's enough to go around the circumference of the earth four times. No wonder we all have tired, aching feet.

I've heard about similar kinds of slippers, but I couldn't afford to spend nearly $70 a pair. The CLOUD10 Slippers were a much better fit for my budget. The outer material of these stylish slippers is beautiful tan faux suede and they feature a cozy, fleece-lined interior and collar to provide added warmth. The durable rubber sole is perfect for my quick trips outdoors to grab the morning paper.

- *Inner sole is constructed from visco-elastic memory foam*
- *Body heat molds foam to cushion feet for maximum support*
- *Super-soft, fleece lining provides added warmth*
- *Durable rubber sole—perfect for quick outdoor trips!*

If you have arthritic feet like I do, you suffer from inflammation and pain in your joints. Our feet have to last a lifetime and I've decided to stop neglecting the part of my body that keeps me mobile.

These slippers have a unisex design making them great for both men and women. I wear my CLOUD10 Slippers every chance I get and my feet have never felt so pampered.

Sink your feet into luxury. We are so confident that CLOUD10 slippers will cushion your feet in complete comfort that we will offer you a no-questions asked in-home trial for 30 days. If you're not 100% completely satisfied, just return them for a full refund of the purchase price.

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Spinning Their Wheels?

Death Valley's Surprise Canyon may be threatened by off-road vehicles. Again.

SHERRY ELLIS

Hikers in Surprise Canyon may soon need to look both ways before crossing the stream.

For years, off-road vehicles ravaged Surprise Canyon, destroying aquatic life in the streams beneath their wheels, polluting the water with antifreeze and other chemicals, and scaring away sensitive desert wildlife such as bighorn sheep. The canyon, which stretches from Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property into Death Valley National Park, was a mecca for extreme off-roaders willing to winch their rigs up waterfalls and bring a spare axle, in case one was broken. But that all ended in 2001 when the area was closed to vehicles because of a lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club. Since then, their absence and severe flooding have returned the land to nature. Cottonwood and willows now fill the canyon; scrub brush that had been pruned back for vehicles has taken over the landscape. Surprise Canyon is now becoming increasingly popular with hikers who trek to historic Panamint City, an abandoned mining town that thrived during the late 1800s.

Back then, miners constructed a road through the canyon to reach excavations in Panamint City. When the land was designated as wilderness in 1994, a special exemption allowed for continued vehicle traffic along the canyon. The road ceased to exist decades ago because of repeated flooding and the end of mining operations. But an imminent environmental impact statement has off-roaders hoping to regain access to the canyon. If the BLM decides to allow extreme off-roaders to return to its land, the impact will be felt along its entire length, including land in the park.

"Although the canyon is managed by two separate agencies, it's an artificial segregation in terms of the ecosystem," says Howard Gross, program manager for NPCA's desert field office. "Impacts in the lower canyon, managed by the BLM, will be felt in the upper canyon in Death Valley as wildlife compete for limited habitat. And hikers will be deterred from using the upper canyon in the park if the lower canyon—which they'll have to pass through—is trashed by off-road vehicles."

Surprise Canyon features some of the few spring-fed perennial streams in the Mojave desert, and that means it's one of the few places where hikers don't need to pack in gallons of water—they can just dip their canteens in the clear-running stream. It's also home to many rare and endemic animals and plants such as bighorn sheep, the Panamint alligator lizard, and the Panamint daisy. Many migratory and nesting songbirds depend on the canyon's habitat.

"The Park Service should be able to protect rare and important resources like Surprise Canyon from damaging uses," says Gross. "And the BLM should recognize that Surprise Canyon is such a unique and valuable resource that it shouldn't be sacrificed for the enjoyment of a small number of people, when so many off-roading opportunities are widely available in the Mojave desert."

On a national level, NPCA and other conservation organizations filed suit against the Park Service and Department of Interior in November, demanding the agencies enforce regulations to prevent damage caused by off-road vehicles at the Grand Canyon, Olympic, Arches, and Canyonlands, among others. Visit www.npca.org for updates on the outcome.

News in Brief

Death Valley, CA—Last year, PBS sent film crews to Death Valley National Park to produce an episode of the series "Nature." The result is *Life in Death Valley*—a look at an otherworldly landscape of molten rock canyons, lunar craters, and unexpected wildflowers—airing Sunday, January 8 at 8 p.m. on most PBS channels. Get a close-up look at animals in this extreme place, including coyotes, roadrunners, the Devil's Hole pupfish, and athletes who participate in the Kiehl's Badwater Ultramarathon, a grueling 135-mile race through the desert.

RACHAEL WILSON; © NATURAL HISTORY NEW ZEALAND AND THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK

PHOTO BY HOWARD GROSS/NPCA

National Parks Conservation Association 2006 Salute to the Parks Dinner

The National Building Museum, Washington, DC
March 29, 2006

Honorees:

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
William Penn Mott Jr. Park Leadership Award

James McPherson, Ph.D.
Robin W. Winks Award
for Enhancing Public Understanding of National Parks

NPCA thanks **Xanterra Parks & Resorts**
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To join this prestigious group of organizations in supporting NPCA's Salute to the Parks dinner, please contact Amy Prestes, manager of corporate and foundation relations, at 800-628-7275, ext. 265.

The City That Lit the World

GIANNI DAGLI ORTI/S/CORBIS

A mid-19th Century painting by M. Boquet shows a crew cutting up a whale.

A whaling community in Massachusetts teaches lessons in diversity and conservation.

By Amy Leinbach Marquis

The life of a 19th century whaler was one of patience and grit. Hunting excursions averaged four years with no promise of profit or prey. Whaleships became isolated, floating societies, forcing as many as 36 men to live in extremely close quarters. Around the clock, the crew would stand four-hour watches, scanning the ocean for the spout from a blowhole. After days, perhaps months of boredom, the long-awaited moment would arrive:

"There she blows!"

The events that followed, of a crew racing to harpoon and slaughter an enormous whale, are enough to make stomachs turn knowing what we know now about these gentle creatures—their epic migrations, haunting melodies, and intelligent behavior. Nevertheless, it was a culture in its own, making its way into the American mainstream through epic novels such as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*—inspired by the writer's own excursion upon a whaleship. The whaling industry, and its bustling hub in New Bedford, Massachusetts, paved the way for the industrial revolution, opening a tiny, New England seaport to a rich, diverse world.

Local preservation groups understood this and laid the groundwork for the creation of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in 1996. Owned and run in partnership among state and municipal agencies, nonprofit institutions, community organizations, and the National Park Service, it encompasses several museums and historic buildings set against a landscape of stone-paved streets and distinctive seaside architecture. Here, Americans can connect to their roots and reflect on both inspiring and controversial aspects sparked by the history of whaling.

To understand what whaling meant to New Bedford and to the nation, imagine life before petroleum was discovered, pre-1859. It was the whale oil and spermaceti (a liquid wax) from sperm whales that kept candles burning, lamps shining, and lighthouses guiding ships back to port. Whale oil produced the finest quality soaps, while a rare-occurring substance called ambergris—found in diseased whales—was a prized ingredient for medicines, aphrodisiacs, and perfumes. It's no wonder this little town was dubbed "The City That Lit The World."

While New Bedford was busy exporting these products all over the globe, the city stayed busy importing a mixture of cultures, thanks to the international nature of whaling. New Bedford fleets picked up whalers from the Atlantic islands of the Azores and Cape Verde in their pursuit of whales. Native Americans found steady work on ships,

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

as did African Americans who fled to New Bedford's Quaker communities via the Underground Railroad. By the mid-19th century, New Bedford was an impressive melting pot, where any hard-working, respected seaman of any race could rise up to become a captain.

In 1859, petroleum was discovered in Pennsylvania and the need for whale oil declined. Crews shifted their interests to baleen—a fingernail-like substance found in the mouths of toothless whales and used to filter krill. The baleen was manufactured into corset stays, buggy whips, fishing rods, and other items that plastic would be used for today. To find this resource, whalemen had to make long, treacherous journeys south around the tip of South America and far north to the icy straits of Alaska. Some men never returned to New Bedford.

"Many whalemen jumped ship in foreign ports," says Celeste Bernardo, the park's superintendent. "Life was hard, monotonous, and often unprofitable. Many found themselves impoverished after a four-year voyage."

It was during this time that starkly different cultures became intermixed. In Barrow, Alaska, New Bedford crews whaling for profit met native Inupiat whaling to survive. Yankee men settled in Alaska during this time, marrying native women and starting families. A new generation, ethnically rich and complex, was born.

"Today's residents of Barrow are for the most part very interested in finding out about their 'Massachusetts' side," says Jennifer Gonsalves, chief of visitor services at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. "We're not ignoring what happens when cultures collide—like disease and loss of culture—we're trying to move forward."

While the whaling industry shined as a non-discriminating culture, the industry took a toll on whales all across the globe. High demands for whale products lead to overwhaling, eventually decimating sperm whale and southern right whale populations along the Atlantic coast. By the early 20th century, certain whale populations worldwide teetered on the brink of extinction, including the Arctic bowhead and gray whales. Over the course of the industry, roughly half-a-million whales were slaughtered.

But has the city learned from its past practices? Gonsalves remembers the 1980s when New Bedford's fishing industry was riding the wave of bountiful catches and sky-high profits, until the federal government stepped in and forced the community to think about sustainability. Congress bought back fishing boats from owners and set up retraining programs to help citizens find new work. Marine scientists partnered with crewmen on expeditions to map out sustainable plans.

Society has come a long way since the whaling era. But America still faces great challenges in energy and conservation. "People [in the 19th century] were in search of a non-renewable resource: whales," Bernardo says. "I don't think there could be a more compelling time than now to tell New Bedford's story and think about the consequences." ❖

A Fighting Chance

JIM JACOBI/ U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

By Scott Kirkwood

The Mauna Loa silversword blooms only once in its lifetime, but restoration efforts are making the sight more common.

When European voyagers landed on the shores of the Big Island about 230 years ago, the higher terrain of Mauna Loa volcano was covered by the native Mauna Loa silversword, which numbered in the tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands. At that time, the island harbored no terrestrial mammals, save a single native bat species. But Europeans brought with them domesticated animals including pigs, goats, sheep, and cattle—all of which would eventually become wild; years later, mouflon sheep were also introduced as game animals. Soon enough the animals' browsing, trampling, and uprooting of native plants took its toll on the island's unique vegetation. Many animals found the nutritious and delicious silversword to be irresistible. Because silverswords had evolved in the absence of ungulates, their unbranched structure and single rosette of leaves made them painfully vulnerable. As a plant that flowers only once in a lifetime, the silversword's ability to procreate is greatly limited. And it's not the only plant struggling to survive.

"Even though Hawaii accounts for only about two-tenths of 1 percent of all the land area in the United States, it accounts for more than 35 percent of all federally listed threatened and endangered plants," says Rob Robichaux, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Arizona and president of the Silversword Foundation. "The level of endangerment is so vastly out of proportion to the land area that it dwarfs what's going on in the rest of the United States. The chief culprits impacting Hawaii's native plants are nonnative animals, especially ungulates."

Silverswords are Hawaii's highest-profile plants because of their striking beauty, which has made them icons much like the saguaro cacti of the Southwest. So the Park Service is working with the Silversword Foundation, the University of Hawaii's Volcano Rare Plant Facility, and other government agencies to restore the plants to the landscape.

Scott Kirkwood is senior editor for *National Parks* magazine.

By the late 1990s, when the Mauna Loa silversword was in its most precarious state, fewer than 1,000 plants were scattered in three different sites totaling only about three acres. Returning the plants to their former prevalence meant tackling a number of challenges.

"Mauna Loa silverswords live for ten to 50 years, flower once, and then die," says Tim Tunison, chief of resources management with Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. "As 'obligate cross-pollinators,' they require another plant nearby to set their seed—unlike many other plants that can reproduce on their own—which means that if you're going to recover the species you need large numbers of plants within a short distance of one another."

To that end, beginning in 1999, botanists gathered seeds from the remaining populations and germinated them in a greenhouse at the Rare Plant Facility. After about six to nine months, the seedlings grew to about four to five inches tall, at which point they were planted on state land and federal land in the national park, a process that continues today.

G. BRAD LEWIS

A student volunteer plants one of the thousands of silversword seedlings.

In the six years since the program began, more than 20,000 seedlings have been planted on Mauna Loa. A startling 70 percent of those plants have survived, yielding nearly 14,000 silverswords, including more than 8,000 within the park itself. In recent years, thousands of seedlings have been flown by helicopter to planting sites within the park, where Park Service worker, students, and other volunteers await with trowels in hand.

Visitors to the park will soon be able to see Mauna Loa silverswords from hiking trails for the first time in decades. As the plants begin to flower in a few years, botanists will collect and spread their seeds in additional sites across the volcano's slopes, further expanding the scope of the recovery.

"The question often arises, why keep going if we've already introduced 20,000 plants, given the large number of other plant species in Hawaii that are also endangered?" says Robichaux. "But our goal is to achieve true recovery for the Mauna Loa silversword—if we can do that, it may improve the prospects for successfully returning many other endangered plants to Hawaii's landscapes, and that's what really motivates us." ❖

Building a Mystery

The architecture and social order of Chaco Canyon still puzzle anthropologists today.

By Scott Kirkwood

DAVID MUENCH/CORBIS

Kivas at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

Some believe this ancient city was founded in the spirit of community and a shared mission, with enormous buildings full of religious significance. Others believe it was a civilization run by the rich and powerful, who coerced the less fortunate into constructing huge palaces for their enjoyment.

Although the interpretation of the evidence differs widely, the questions posed by Chaco Culture National Historical Park are consistent: Why build a city here? And why expend thousands of hours of labor to erect such monumental structures? A search through the architecture and artifacts answers many questions, but conjures even more.

Chaco Canyon, located in the northwest corner of New Mexico, was a major center of ancestral Puebloan culture between A.D. 850 and 1250, quite possibly a hub of ceremony, trade, and administration. Such cities generally thrive where transportation options are numerous and food is plentiful—conditions often found on the shores of a major waterway. But the Chaco people erected these impressive structures in the middle of nowhere—miles from any significant source of water. Chaco Canyon is difficult to get to and offers very few advantages to those who make the journey: The soil isn't ideal for planting, and frosts in late spring and early fall make the growing season painfully short.

"Chaco doesn't seem to have developed as a farming area," says Russ Bodnar, the park's chief of interpretation. "So a lot of folks think that something in Chaco's intrinsic sacredness may have made it important enough to put a major cultural center here—possibly a miraculous event from long-ago times or some association with mythology."

"No one has really answered these questions to everyone's satisfaction," says G.B. Cornucopia, another interpreter with the Park Service. "There are those who believe that at one time, this region was a much wetter area—not because the climate was so different, but because natural and manmade dams provided enough standing water so that drainage into the canyon was sufficient to allow for farming, at least for a certain amount of time."

But others counter that even in the wettest of periods, these water-control systems would fall far short of providing for the populace of a large city. In fact, some characterize these waterworks as decorative architectural structures—demonstrations of powerful control over the elements.

"As an interpreter here, my job gets

Scott Kirkwood is senior editor for *National Parks* magazine.

harder the longer I've been here, because there are just too many answers to these questions," says Cornucopia. "The kivas and greathouses at Chaco are far more monumental and more grandiose than what Puebloans are constructing today but we need to remember these structures were built over a 300-year period. It's easy to look at the final product and say that's what they were always like. But it's only a snapshot—in early days, they may have been building with an entirely different motivation in mind."

Clearly, these are immense and awe-inspiring buildings that took an enormous amount of time, energy, and resources to erect, especially given the construction materials of the day.

"The Chaco people overutilized resources to produce something that was underutilized," says Cornucopia, "treating the wood in incredibly, almost sacramental ways that didn't make it stronger, but simply added to their workload." Evidence also shows that the buildings were oriented to true north using astronomical guidelines, indicating a reverence for patterns in the night sky.

Most archaeologists and anthropologists agree that the immense workload and intricate design of such structures must have been justified by some higher purpose that would motivate the hundreds or thousands of workers toiling day after day.

"Right now the major divergence is between archaeologists who see Chaco like a modern pueblo—very egalitarian and communal—and others who think that something happened there that you don't see in modern pueblos—people who got power over other people and eventually abused that power," says Steve Lekson, curator of anthropology at the University of Colorado Museum.

To help visitors grasp some of the possible conceptions of ancient Chaco architecture, some Park Service interpreters compare the great buildings to the monumental architecture and political significance of Washington, D.C., while others compare it to Mecca or the Vatican, a seat of power intricately tied to religion. But much of the challenge in answering these mysteries may lie in our natural inclination to filter this ancient world through modern eyes.

Modern buildings are generally designed for a unique purpose such as commerce, shelter, religion, or politics. But in many ancient communities, those divisions were unnatural, even arbitrary; separation of church and state is a fairly new concept among Western civilizations. Trying to pin down the significance of these ruins may be like trying to attribute a single unified purpose to each building along Manhattan's skyline—an exercise in futility even if pursued today, and one that would be even more confounding centuries after the city's residents had vanished. ❖

Wilderness Reflected

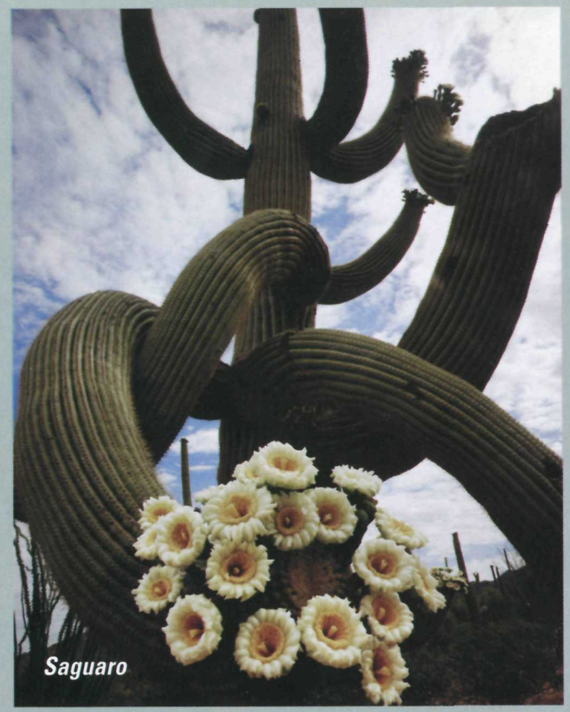
A photographer captures some of the best reasons for keeping our national parks wild.

Political appointees in Washington, D.C., have begun rewriting the National Park Service's management plans, which weigh the challenge of preserving the land with the impacts of using that land (see page 8). NPCA has done much to counter these proposals with the words of our staff, our members, and our activists, but those words can convey only so much. So we present the stirring photography of David Muench accompanied by the simple prose of Ruth Rudner, both pulled from the pages of Our National Parks, *a new book that presents some of the best arguments we can imagine. (For a copy, visit your local bookstore, or contact Graphic Arts Books at www.gacpc.com.)*

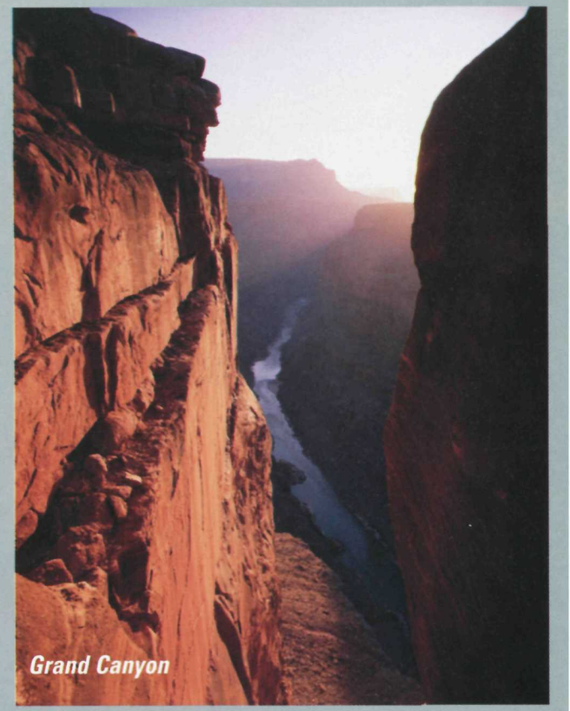
Years ago I backpacked from Rendezvous Mountain to Lake Solitude and Paintbrush Canyon in the Grand Tetons. When I stopped at the Moose Visitor Center the day before the hike to pick up my permit for campsites reserved in advance, I overheard the man ahead of me requesting a permit for an overnight hike somewhere in the Tetons the next day. The ranger checked her list. "I'm sorry," she said. "The back country is completely booked for tomorrow." It was my first experience with the idea that wilderness and management were forever at odds. How could a wild place be booked at all? How could a bureaucrat say there is no room in the wilderness? It made no sense until I began my own hike and understood that the quality of my experience was related to the fact that, in the days I was out, I saw few other people until coming, near the end, within reach of day hikers. Even then, at night, I had the wilderness to myself. A wilderness experience. Available only because this hugely popular area was managed. For wildness will not long endure left to the uses of recreationists and exploiters, and neither management nor anything else will long endure without wildness.

Haleakala

Yosemite

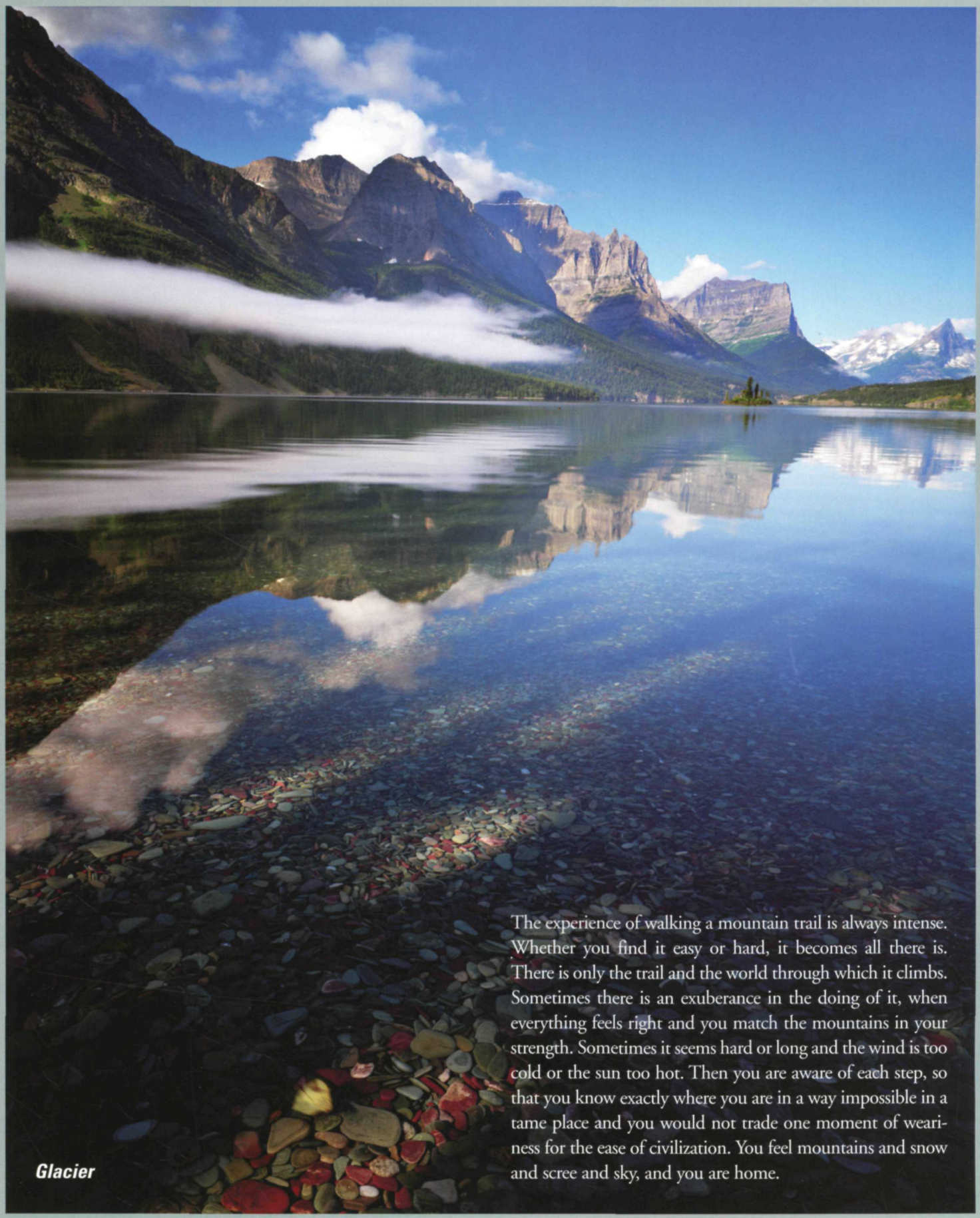


Saguaro



Grand Canyon

Denali



The experience of walking a mountain trail is always intense. Whether you find it easy or hard, it becomes all there is. There is only the trail and the world through which it climbs. Sometimes there is an exuberance in the doing of it, when everything feels right and you match the mountains in your strength. Sometimes it seems hard or long and the wind is too cold or the sun too hot. Then you are aware of each step, so that you know exactly where you are in a way impossible in a tame place and you would not trade one moment of weariness for the ease of civilization. You feel mountains and snow and scree and sky, and you are home.

Glacier

Whether we enter the wilderness of our national parks as an antidote to personal or political turmoil, for the physical and mental challenges we find in its remoteness, the immediate connection it provides us with all other forms of life, or the spirituality it reflects, wilderness is a personal experience, offering itself to each of us on our own terms. Whether we even need to enter it, or are content simply knowing it exists, the idea of wilderness is the driving force of imagination, of wonder and exploration, of connection.

Shenandoah

Great Basin

Years before women had earned the right to vote, a savvy newspaper reporter waged a political battle to preserve the landscape of Mesa Verde.

The Legacy of

Virginia McClurg

Thousands of feet above the Mancos and Montezuma Valleys of southern Colorado, piñon pine and juniper trees cast a blanket of evergreen upon a sandstone plateau. Eighteenth-century Spanish explorers named this dramatic landscape the Mesa Verde or "Green Table." But centuries before, around A.D. 600, an early Pueblo culture had made its home on this land and in the sandstone cliffs below. There they developed a style of architecture that melded their practical and spiritual needs with the natural design of the earth. These people perfected the craft of pottery and managed to live for more than 700 years off a land whose skies were not often generous with rain. But in the late 1800s, mere decades after stumbling upon the remains of this civilization, European settlers threatened to destroy all the Puebloans had left behind.

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By Krista Schlyer

GEORGE H.H. HUEY (RIGHT); COLORADO PHOTO FILES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, TUTT LIBRARY, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO (ABOVE)

WOLF
(& CONSEQUENCE)

"Ninety percent of the people who come to this park want to see wolves."

GEORGE WUERTHNER

WILLIAM CAMPBELL/CORBIS

JESS R. LEE

Hikers search for wolves in Lamar River Valley (left). Dr. Doug Smith leads a collaring operation in the park (above). A wolf stops traffic in Yellowstone (right).

incredible ability to adapt and the immense size and ideal ecology of the Greater Yellowstone area, which includes Grand Teton National Park and several national forests. That prime habitat, combined with a steady diet of elk and political protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act, have yielded 250 wolves and 25 packs in the greater Yellowstone region, at last count. And the wolf watchers have followed, boosting tourism in the region at least $20 million annually, by conservative estimates. Those responsible for the reintroduction never anticipated anything like this.

"Honestly, we were blindsided—none of us ever thought the wolves would be visible," says Doug Smith, wolf project leader at Yellowstone National Park. "I worked on Isle Royale National Park for 13 years and if I saw one wolf a summer, I was thrilled, but here in Yellowstone, people now expect to see wolves and a lot of them do."

Wolves are notoriously elusive, and because these packs came from a forested region of Canada, they were expected to seek cover and avoid open spaces, as do wolves in Isle Royale and Denali. But the Yellowstone wolves soon grew accustomed to the roads and the automobile traffic, and quickly learned to tolerate people. As a result, it has been more than four years since a day went by without a single wolf sighting in the park.

Not surprisingly, the local business community and tourism industry have pounced on the opportunity, providing guides who can explain the biological intricacies of wolf behavior and increase the odds that visitors see what they came to see. Hotels now advertise visits to Yellowstone in the spring and fall, times when they generally wouldn't have bothered; some even rent telescopes and tripods.

"If it weren't for the wolves, I probably wouldn't be in business," says Carl Swoboda, director of operations for Safari Yellowstone, a touring outfit based in Livingston, Montana. "Ninety percent of the people who come here want to see wolves—clients come from as far as Spain, England, Switzerland, and France. Before the wolf reintroduction, our staff included one person who was barely making it, and now we have a staff of three to five, year-round. Ten years ago, a handful of groups were offering these types of trips, now more than 50 different organizations are involved."

The second incredible consequence of wolf reintroduction is actually dozens of smaller consequences wrapped into one. And it all came to light thanks to an ecologist investigating trees.

In 1997, Bill Ripple, a professor with the Department of Forest Resources at Oregon State University, was researching the decline of aspen in Yellowstone's northern range when he went out on a limb, so to speak, and theorized that the absence of wolves was the primary reason.

Ripple investigated the theory by first taking core samples of nearly 100 aspen to determine their age. He soon learned that nearly every tree was at least 70 years old. In other words, since the 1920s, aspen had been unable to sprout new specimens that could survive.

"When we learned that the last wolves in Yellowstone had been killed in 1926, we hypothesized that wolves might have a significant influence on the growth of aspen through cascading effects," says Ripple. "Wolves eat elk and elk eat aspen, so we believed that the lack of the wolves actually led to the decimation of aspen."

Although ecologists had long known about cascading effects among spiders and various aquatic species such as sea otters, research on large predators was sparse. But conditions at Yellowstone provided 70 years of ongoing data, and the wolf-reintroduction provided an unfolding story for comparison.

"Since the wolves have come back, we've begun to see some of the woody species returning, as we'd expect," says Ripple. "The first plants to respond were the willows, and we're just seeing some of the cottonwoods come back as well—we're pretty sure wolves are playing a big part in all this new growth."

But wait, there's more.

"Willow regrowth creates opportunities for increased biodiversity in a number of ways," says Ripple. "Taller willows provide more food for any beaver that are around—since the willow has reappeared, Yellowstone's northern range has gone from one beaver

WOLF (& CONSEQUENCE)

JESS R. LEE

colony to at least eight beaver colonies. Taller willows and more extensive willow species also provide better habitat for certain bird species and provide for a stream-bank protection, decreased erosion, and additional shade cast on the water, which is good for trout."

Of course, analyzing ecological conditions such as these is much like analyzing *economic* conditions: Countless variables make it difficult to draw firm conclusions. Some scientists believe that the resurgence of willow is closely related to the severity of winters and seasonal rainfall, along with a new variable—global climate change. What's more, wolves have only been around for ten years, a blink of an eye in ecological terms.

"We need multiple decades at the minimum to make firm conclusions," says Ripple, "but during the 70 years without wolves, there were times of drought, severe winters and mild winters, fires and the absence of fires, and none of that made any difference on aspen until wolves came along."

In fact, wolves may not even need to kill a sizable number of elk to trigger these changes, but by simply being present on the landscape wolves force elk to favor certain areas with better escape terrain. If that hypothesis is true, the impact of wolves should have played out shortly after their reintroduction, and the numbers are already bearing that out. And even if these indirect effects aren't yet proven, wolves have plenty of direct effects that are more easily discerned.

"We all sensed very early on that wolves would restore the normal distribution of scavenge in the park," says Norm Bishop, a retired Park Service employee who worked closely on the reintroduction effort. "In the absence of wolves there weren't many carcasses of large ungulates like deer, elk, and bison between December and February. If the ground is frozen or everything is under a foot of snow, what's left for a raven, eagle, or wolverine to eat? The best bet for a meal is to find something that's already been killed by another animal. But most large carnivores hibernate in winter or hide their carcasses quite well, so that just leaves wolves."

A study by Yellowstone biologist Daniel Stahler revealed that before wolves had been returned to the park, an average of four ravens scavenged an individual elk carcass, but after wolf reintroduction, each carcass averaged 29 ravens, and some drew as many as 135, prompting wildlife biologists to wonder how ravens ever survived without wolves.

"What we see happening in Yellowstone won't necessarily happen somewhere else, so we have to be careful about how far afield we extend these results," says Mike Phillips, former head of the wolf reintroduction program and now executive director of the Turner Endangered Species Fund. "It's very difficult to parse out the variables and describe cause and effect—quite often the best we can hope to do is describe patterns. But Yellowstone has absolutely fascinating implications [for future] policy decisions. This reintroduction has brought us to the point where we must develop an appropriate answer to the question: What is recovery? The Endangered Species Act says, 'If you give us the support so we can identify, list, and work to recover these species, we'll succeed,' but what is success?"

MARK MILLER

"This reintroduction has brought us to the point where we must answer the question: What is recovery?"

Most people agree that wolves have recovered throughout the northern Rockies, but views differ on whether or not protections should be removed. Although bald eagles have made a dramatic recovery and the American alligator has been delisted, none brings with them the expense and controversy associated with wolves.

Even so, everyone agrees that the animal's protection must eventually be passed from the federal government to the states bordering Yellowstone. USFWS has already agreed that "substantial information indicates that delisting may be warranted" and has approved the wolf-management plans crafted by Idaho and Montana. But in Wyoming, politics trumped the recommendations of state biologists, yielding an obviously ineffective plan: State law currently categorizes wolves as predatory animals, which means wolves outside of Yellowstone and other protected areas can be killed anytime by anyone by any means, without any limits. The struggle between USFWS and the state of Wyoming is sill playing out in court, and delisting cannot be achieved until all three states' plans are approved.

In spite of Yellowstone's success, many people in this country still consider wolves in much the same light as they were viewed 100 years ago, when the animals were first removed to make way for farms and ranches. We've succeeded in returning wolves to the American landscape, and we've witnessed their ability to return the landscape to its natural balance. But as the protections for these animals are handed over to the states surrounding Yellowstone, many people wonder if wolves will be able to endure the next consequence.

Scott Kirkwood is senior editor for *National Parks* magazine.

CHASE SWIFT/CORBIS

RAYMOND GEHMAN/CORBIS

The return of wolves in Yellowstone (opposite page) helped keep the balance between hungry elk and delicious, young aspen trees (above). A wolf hunts in Geyser Basin near Firehole River during a snowstorm (top).

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The Legacy of Virginia McClurg

Thousands of feet above the Mancos and Montezuma Valleys of southern Colorado, piñon pine and juniper trees cast a blanket of evergreen upon a sandstone plateau. Eighteenth-century Spanish explorers named this dramatic landscape the Mesa Verde or "Green Table." But centuries before, around A.D. 600, an early Pueblo culture had made its home on this land and in the sandstone cliffs below. There they developed a style of architecture that melded their practical and spiritual needs with the natural design of the earth. These people perfected the craft of pottery and managed to live for more than 700 years off a land whose skies were not often generous with rain. But in the late 1800s, mere decades after stumbling upon the remains of this civilization, European settlers threatened to destroy all the Puebloans had left behind.

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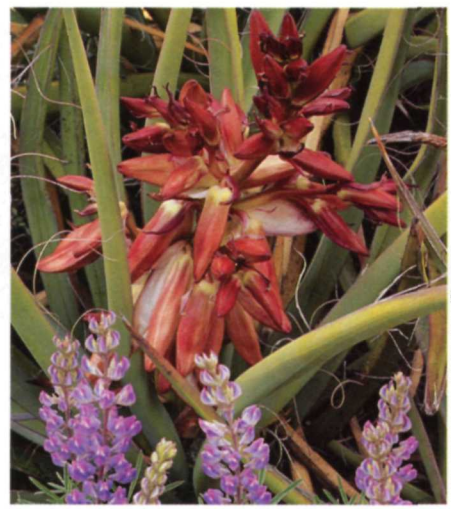


LARRY ULRICH STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY (3)

In addition to ancient dwellings, flora such as showy lupine and Arizona mules ears, spurred lupine and datil yucca, and blue flax (from left to right) can be found on the grounds of Mesa Verde.

ilization that spanned seven centuries and left no apparent clue as to why it had vanished.

The few clues that remained were diminishing daily: Pot hunting had become the local pastime. Locals organized Sunday picnics around digging for souvenirs. Some tossed dynamite into the dwellings before they entered, perhaps as a measure against rattlesnakes or to provide better light and access for pot hunting. Visitors took what they could find and left a bit of themselves behind in the form of discarded garbage or gear, or names carved into the stone walls of the dwellings.

Economics drove excavations of the ruins. A collection of relics—from pots to tools to the very bones of the Ancestral Puebloan people—could sell for $3,000, more than ranching or farming could provide in a decade, according to Duane Smith, author of *Women to the Rescue*, a history of the founding of Mesa Verde National Park.

Consequently, information about the earliest inhabitants of Mesa Verde was disappearing a little more each day—destroyed, unearthed, or packed off to places like Chicago, Denver, and as far as Europe.

McClurg's first visit was short, but four years later she returned for an expedition that cemented her devotion to the preservation of Mesa Verde. A handful of insightful individuals before her had sounded a call to protect the site, but until McClurg signed on, none had the

devotion, moxie, and endurance required to erode the indifference of the federal government, thousands of miles away.

To change that, McClurg began lecturing widely and passionately about the importance of the archaeological record left at Mesa Verde. She motivated her listeners to sign a petition demanding protection of the ruins, and she lobbied Colorado Senator Edward Wolcott to present it to Congress. Wolcott obliged; Congress did not.

McClurg, however, was not one to be dissuaded.

"She was like a bull dog," says Tracey Chavis, executive director of the Mesa Verde Museum Association. And it was her tenacity and audacity that made things happen for Mesa Verde, Chavis says.

Words like "indomitable" and "indefatigable" invariably accompany McClurg's name in historical accounts. And so, despite frequent failed attempts to gain the attention of those in power, McClurg continued her campaign undaunted. She appealed for reinforcements from the 5,000-member Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, which responded by establishing a committee, which eventually became the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association. That group ramped up McClurg's efforts by sponsoring public-information campaigns, funding the mapping of Mesa Verde, and building the first wagon road to the dwellings.

While McClurg and the association worked to raise awareness in Colorado, the association's vice-regent, Lucy Peabody, lobbied hard for the cause in Washington, D.C. In 1901, their combined efforts paid off when a bill was introduced in Congress to designate the cliff dwellings as a national park. The bill died quickly, but it symbolized that the ruins had at last become a national issue.

Preserved in Antiquity

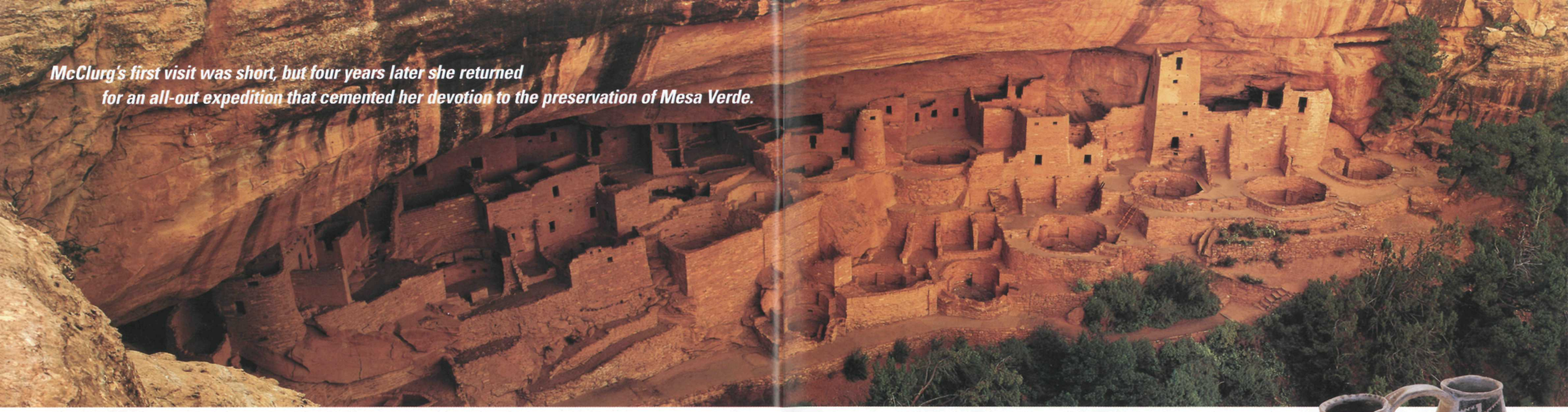
This June will mark 100 years since President Theodore Roosevelt signed one of the most important pieces of conservation legislation in United States history. The Antiquities Act of 1906 culminated a decades-long drive by visionary Americans who, like Virginia McClurg, devoted their lives to protecting the nation's cultural resources.

Newly "discovered" relics of prehistoric civilizations throughout the Southwest, including Colorado's Mesa Verde and Arizona's Casa Grande, had sparked the discussion. Degradation of those sites and the lengthy and cumbersome process required of Congress to afford them protection had highlighted the need for a more immediate solution. The Antiquities Act of 1906 made it possible for the president to use his discretion to quickly set aside "objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States" as national monuments.

The Antiquities Act was used, largely before the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916, to set aside incredible scientific resources such as Zion, Chaco Canyon, and Petrified Forest (which later became national parks, following the approval of Congress). Some structures, such as Montezuma Castle and the Statue of Liberty, have remained national monuments. More recently, some critics have viewed the Antiquities Act as a controversial way for the president to set aside land for preservation without the approval of Congress. But without the Antiquities Act many places that have now come to define America, like the Grand Canyon, Fort Sumter, and Dinosaur National Monument may not have been preserved for future generations.

FRED MANG/NPS

A 1963 archaeological dig exposed human remains and various artifacts at Mesa Verde.



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More than that, it officially entered the work of McClurg and the association into a wider discourse on the importance of prehistoric resources. The discovery of sites like Mesa Verde in the Southwest lay at the heart of a burgeoning awareness about the value of historical preservation in a young nation that had recently celebrated its 100th birthday.

In the ensuing five years, four separate bills were introduced for the protection of Mesa Verde, all of which failed. But eventual establishment of a national park appeared to be quite likely. At this point, McClurg made a decision that ever after clouded her role as founder of Mesa Verde National Park: She took a public stance against the creation of a park to be administered by the federal government, favoring, instead, a state park that would leave the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association in control. McClurg's motivations are subject to historical interpretation, but many have called it pure ego.

It had become an obsession of hers, says Smith, but it was clearly that passion that allowed McClurg to persist as long as she had. As to her reasons for rejecting federal control, it's impossible to be certain, because she didn't record her thoughts for posterity.

McClurg had worked so hard for the protection of Mesa Verde, it's possible she did not want the land controlled by a government that offered women no political voice. National parks generally refused to hire women rangers until well into the 1960s. But McClurg had seen the successful precedent set by Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, who had preserved George Washington's historic home in Virginia. The association continues to maintain and operate it.

With this model in mind, McClurg bitterly resisted federal control of the cliff dwellings. But the movement she had begun had since taken on a life of its own. On June 29, 1906, Congress passed, and President Theodore Roosevelt signed, a bill creating Mesa Verde National Park.

Because of her stance against the federal government, her work of nearly a quarter of a century went largely unheralded upon creation of the park. But the legacy of McClurg's devotion to Mesa Verde lies in the fruits of her labor. Along with leading to the creation of a federally protected park—the first one established for its cultural significance—her campaign prompted a national debate that yielded one of the United States' most important pieces of preservation legislation: The Antiquities Act of 1906 began a federal policy of natural and cultural resources protection that remains to this day.

GEORGE H.H. HUEY (4)

Rare artifacts (above) reflect native culture. A Pueblo ruin consisting of 217 rooms and 23 kivas (top) showcases the largest cliff dwelling in North America.

Krista Schlyer is a freelance writer and photographer based in Washington, D.C.

One Among Many

The work of Virginia McClurg (at right) and Lucy Peabody led to the creation of Mesa Verde National Park 14 years before their government deemed them qualified to vote for the nation's president. And these women weren't alone. They were part of a wider group of women who played leading roles in national park establishment, a list whose length extends much farther than its historical obscurity would suggest.

In the early 1900s, Mary Belle King Sherman spearheaded progressive conservation leadership in the General Federation of Women's Clubs, whose several million members played a central role in the establishment of many parks—including Rocky Mountain and Grand Canyon National Parks—and were integral in the passage of the enabling legislation of the National Park Service in 1916. For her tireless leadership, Sherman earned the nickname "national park lady."

But there were many others, including Minerva Hamilton Hoyt, who traveled the world near the turn of the century to raise awareness about fragile desert plants and landscapes. Hoyt petitioned the federal government to protect a portion of the Colorado and Mojave Deserts—home of the Joshua tree, which had become a sought-after collectible plant and a source of lightweight wood. Hoyt's lobbying, which included sitting on the White House steps until Franklin D. Roosevelt sent word of his support, led to the designation of Joshua Tree National Monument in 1936.

Among the most well known of these women was Marjory Stoneman Douglas, whose extensive writings on the Everglades, including *River of Grass* published in 1947, ignited national awareness about the imperiled ecosystems of South Florida.

STARSMORE CENTER FOR LOCAL HISTORY, COLORADO SPRINGS PIONEERS MUSEUM

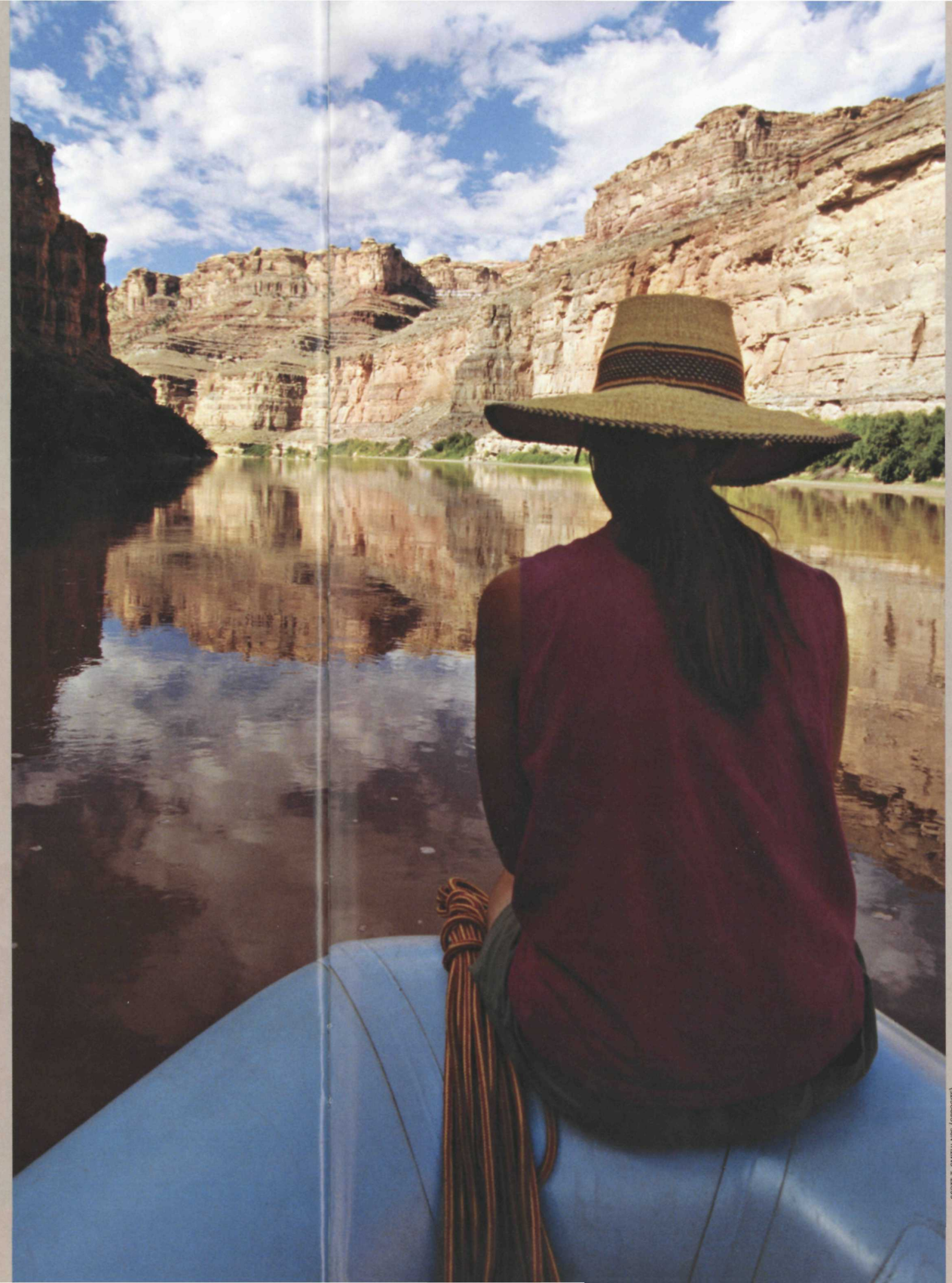
A River Runs Through Them

The Colorado River wends its way through six iconic national parks and recreation areas in the West, but demand for water has had a serious impact on the river's flow and the ecology of surrounding areas.

On May 24, 1869, Major John Wesley Powell, a one-armed former Union soldier, put four wooden boats into the water at Wyoming's Green River, beginning a 1,043-mile journey down the Colorado River. Though it was a glorious voyage that would lead him to name and describe a string of golden and redrock canyons, it came at a price: Powell lost several of his men.

The expedition passed through what is now Dinosaur National Monument, where one of his boats "was drawn into the rapids and ground to pieces" at Disaster Falls. It entered the Colorado River proper on July 18. Where Canyonlands National Park now stands, Powell's now famous journal describes the "swift, twisting, angry current" and the

By Michael Tennesen



SCOTT T. SMITH; NPS (OPPOSITE)

"yellowish" color of the water.

Further down, his party entered Glen Canyon where they marveled at the Indian ruins high up on the cliffs. On August 15, the expedition entered the Grand Canyon where the winding river limited their vision to only a few hundred yards, forcing them to stop frequently, to listen for treacherous rapids around the bend. Still they couldn't help admiring the awesome scenery. "Ever as we go there is some new pinnacle of tower, some crag of peak, some distant view of the upper plateau, some strangely shaped rock, or some deep, narrow side canyon."

If you attempted to recreate Powell's journey today, you would find a much more placid river system, harnessed by a series of dams. Those dams produce relatively clean energy and host some of the highest numbers of national park visitors each year. But as with Powell's journey, these things have come at a price. The biggest sacrifices are in the aquatic and riparian environments. Fish, including the once abundant bonytail chub, humpback chub, and razorback sucker, are now endangered. Native cottonwood-willow groves, which once flourished throughout the region, have largely diminished, replaced by invasive tamarisk shrub.

The increasing shortage of water is a burden to the parks, but it is most apparent on its final run past the Mexican border into the delta region just above the Gulf of California. There, in an area where a young forester named Aldo Leopold once explored a maze of mesquite

A woman floats down a much calmer Colorado River than the one John Wesley Powell (opposite) explored.

ART WOLFE INC.

and willow and "a hundred green lagoons" the "mighty" Colorado trickles to a stop in a fissured moonscape of baked mud and desert weeds; most years it never reaches the ocean.

Much of the explanation for the drastic change can be traced back to the 1922 Colorado River Compact and the 1928 Boulder Canyon Project Act. Those acts allocated a total of 17.5 million acre feet of water to seven U.S. states and Mexico. (An acre foot is the amount of water needed to cover an acre of ground to the depth of one foot.) But the agreement didn't set aside any water for the natural environment. What's more, recent studies reveal these figures were inflated. It is only because the upper basin (above Grand Canyon) has drawn less than allotted amounts that the system has worked at all.

LAURENCE PARENT

Dammed and diverted in the Southwest, the Colorado River trickles to a stop at the Gulf of Mexico (top). Held by the Hoover Dam (above), the river forms Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

The lower basin of the Colorado includes southern California, Arizona, and Nevada—areas with some of the biggest population bursts in recent decades. From 1950 to 2003, Phoenix, Arizona, jumped from 332,000 residents to more than 3 million. During the same time, Las Vegas, Nevada, has grown from a city of 48,000 to 1.4 million.

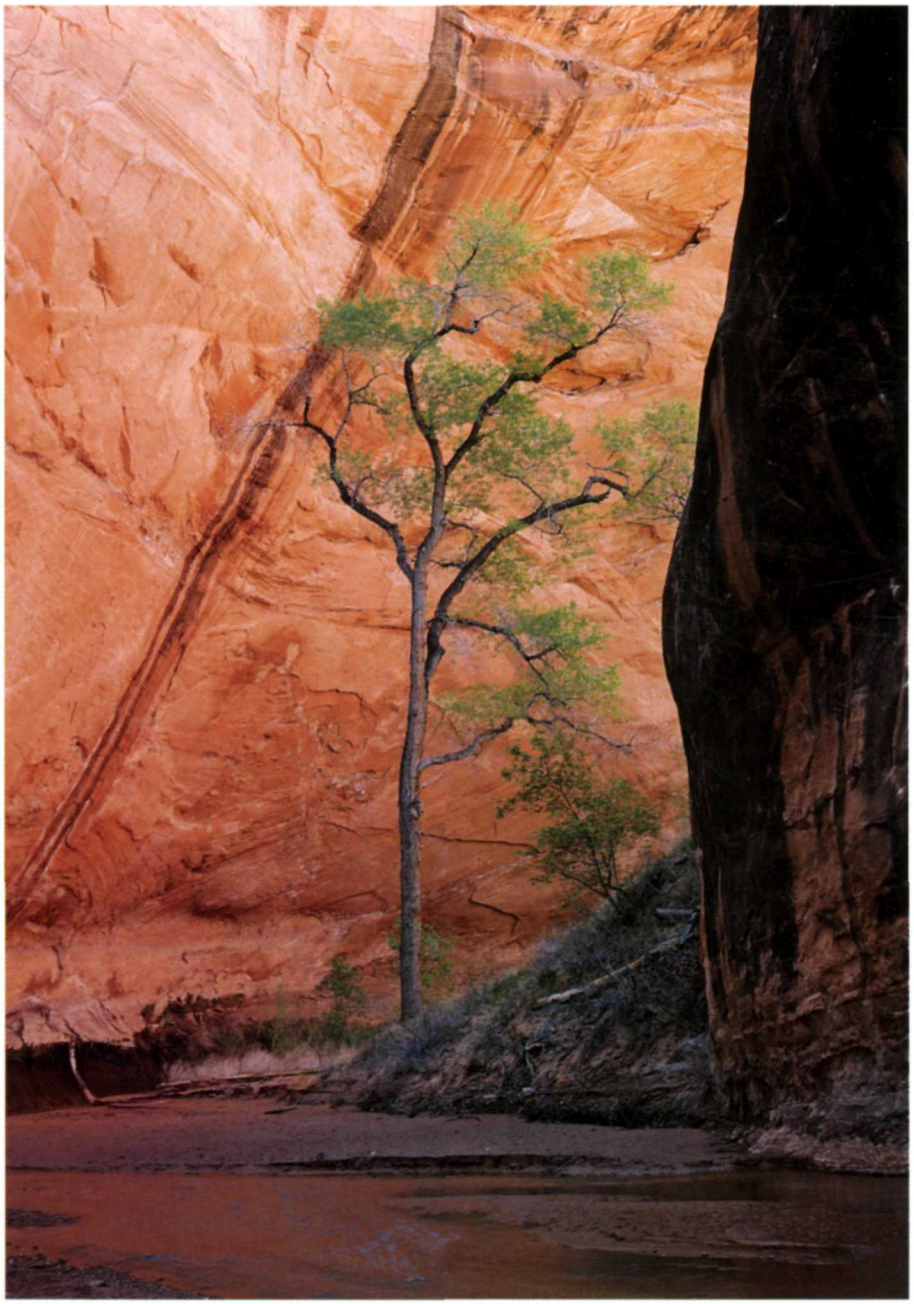
For the most part, the parks along the river are located above the

major river diversions serving Las Vegas, northern Arizona, and southern California. Rocky Mountain National Park shares Colorado River water with Denver and Colorado Springs but doesn't suffer the serious effects that its sister parks downstream experience.

According to Jack Schmidt, a geomorphologist at Utah State University, the quantity of water flowing through Canyonlands National Park, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area is not radically different than it was before the dams. "But the way in which it is distributed over time is different. The floods have been eliminated, low flows are too large, we've removed most of the sediment, and we've altered the temperature structure of the water."

Whereas the river below Lake Powell once ran hot in the summer months and nearly froze in winter, its water now comes out of the bottom of the Glen Canyon dam, where it's chilled to the mid 40s and only rises to the low 50s by the time it arrives in Lake Mead. Most of the sediment that gave the river its name (Spanish for "colored") has been removed. The Colorado now runs clean below Glen Canyon, and more than a million tons of sediment remain trapped behind the dam. Clearer waters favor keen-eyed fish like trout, which can out-compete native fish accustomed to feeling their way around in a murkier environment.

Park Service botanist Tamara Nauman at Dinosaur National Monument wrestles with another problem linked to the river: invasive plants. The monument is poised on the Green River, a major tributary of the Colorado. The dam at Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area removes sediment from the Green and the river then cuts deeper into the ground, lowering the water table. This and other effects related to the dam favor tamarisk shrubs over native trees.



FRED HIRSCHMANN

Cottonwoods have declined in tandem with the water levels along the Colorado River.

"In the natural system, we have spring floods and almost no water in summer, and the cottonwoods, willows, and box elder have adapted to those conditions," says Nauman. "With the dam, we get no spring floods, and more water in summer—the floods don't scour the banks of brush, and the tamarisk thrive with that late summer drink of water."

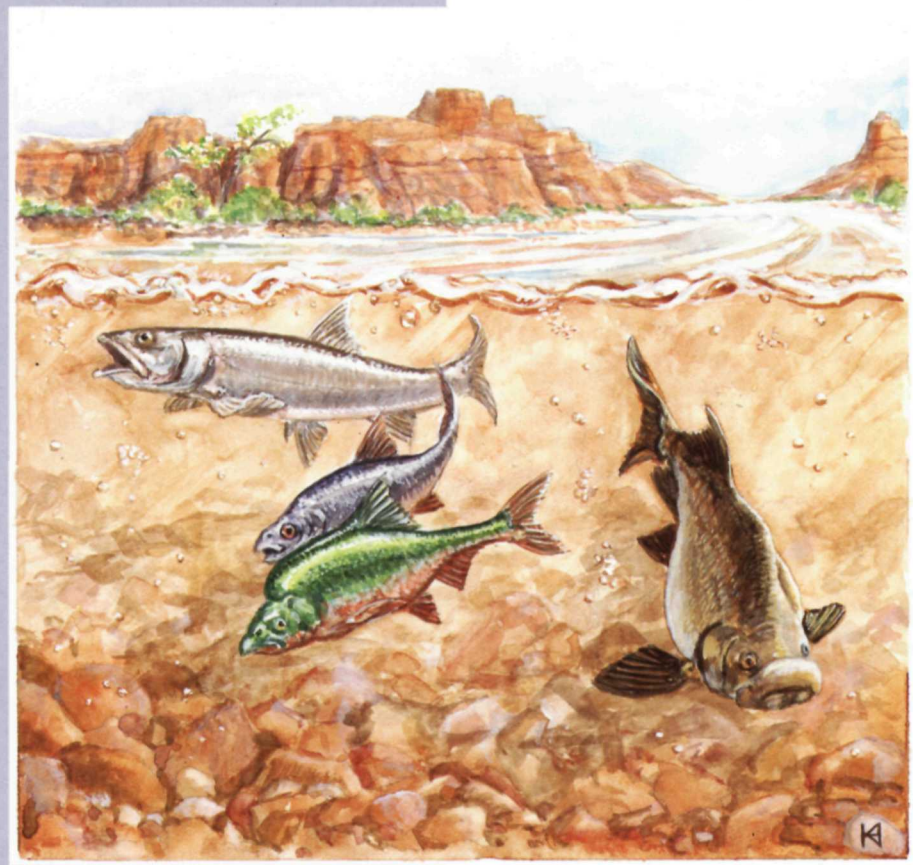
The loss of cottonwoods and willows has also lowered the number of migrating songbirds that stop here and in other parks in the Colorado River Basin. Insects that have evolved with the native vegetation don't recognize nonnative plants as home, and their absence reduces the food available to birds. Falling branches from taller native trees

Battle in the Black Canyon

Last year, NPCA joined with a number of other organizations including The Wilderness Society and Trout Unlimited to file suit against the National Park Service and the Department of Interior. At issue were plans to relinquish to Colorado the water rights claimed by the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument, which date from 1933. The Gunnison River, which flows through the park, is part of the Colorado River Basin, and the park had been asking for additional water flow to rehabilitate the river, its natural plants, and native fish. Instead, the Bush Administration moved to turn water rights over to the state to disperse as it likes to private residences, farms, and other needs.

"Locals always feel that they should have more say with water rights because the parks are in their neighborhoods," says Elizabeth Fayad, NPCA counsel. "But the states are subject to a variety of pressures that are often at odds with park purposes. We don't want national park needs to be part of the local state mix. The parks belong to all Americans."

In its legal brief, NPCA said that the national park has had a legitimate claim to that water for decades, that plants and animals throughout the ecosystem—especially fisheries—rely on that water.



KIM HARRELL

Endangered fish, such as from top, pikeminnow, bonytail and humpback chubs, and razorback sucker, rely on the river.

Without every drop of this crucial resource, park officials couldn't possibly preserve the canyon as defined in the park's mission statement. The federal government had filed a motion to dismiss the case, but the judge turned down that request. NPCA's legal team has since filed motion for summary judgment in its favor, based on the federal government's failure to comply with environmental protocols and its movement to dispose of park property without congressional approval. A ruling in the case is expected in the coming months.

produce cavities for nesting owls and woodpeckers, but when tamarisk moves in, those cavities never form.

Along the lower Colorado, the lack of sediment creates other problems. The majority of the sediment is picked up as it runs through the soft sandstone of Canyonlands National Park, but the Glen Canyon Dam stops its progress.

In the spring of 1996, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt oversaw an experiment that released water from Glen Canyon Dam, flooding the Colorado River and rebuilding critical beaches and restoring backwater habitats critical to endangered fish. The result was considered a successful step toward reestablishing native vegetation, which increases insect populations and, in turn, provides a strong food base for native fish and bird species. The increased flows

JOHN ELK III

Park visitors take a break in Red Wall Cavern on the Colorado River.

scoured the backwaters that had silted in and restored critical habitat for the humpback chub, an endangered fish, and native fish species. A similar experiment took place at the Grand Canyon on Thanksgiving of 2004, improving sandbars throughout the river. The U.S. Geological Survey reported "robust increase" in beaches in upper Marble Canyon, and acknowledged that high-volume flushes of water from the dam could be useful for rebuilding beaches in the canyon.

David Haskell, former Science Center director for Grand Canyon National Park, now director for the nonprofit Living Rivers, goes one step further. He believes the dam should come down for good. According to Haskell, not only does the dam radically alter the aquatic environment through Grand Canyon, but it's a catastrophe waiting to happen. "In about 60 years, the sediment will build up to a point where the dam could break," says Haskell. "Models of a dam break show a 500-foot wall of water scouring every living thing out of Grand Canyon."

According to Haskell, 500,000 acre feet of water evaporate from the lake every year. He believes that simply pumping that water into the aquifer would decrease evaporation enough to eliminate the need for the dam. "We could have a stunning new park in Glen Canyon, native species in the Grand Canyon, and avoid a catastrophe," says Haskell.

Schmidt and others, however, believe that with global climate change increasing our exposure to drought, this country lacks the political will to pull down the dams. Still he does see a window of opportunity for legitimate rehabilitation of parklands in the upper Colorado. "The biggest challenge is for the National Park Service to formulate a clear vision of where it wants to take us."

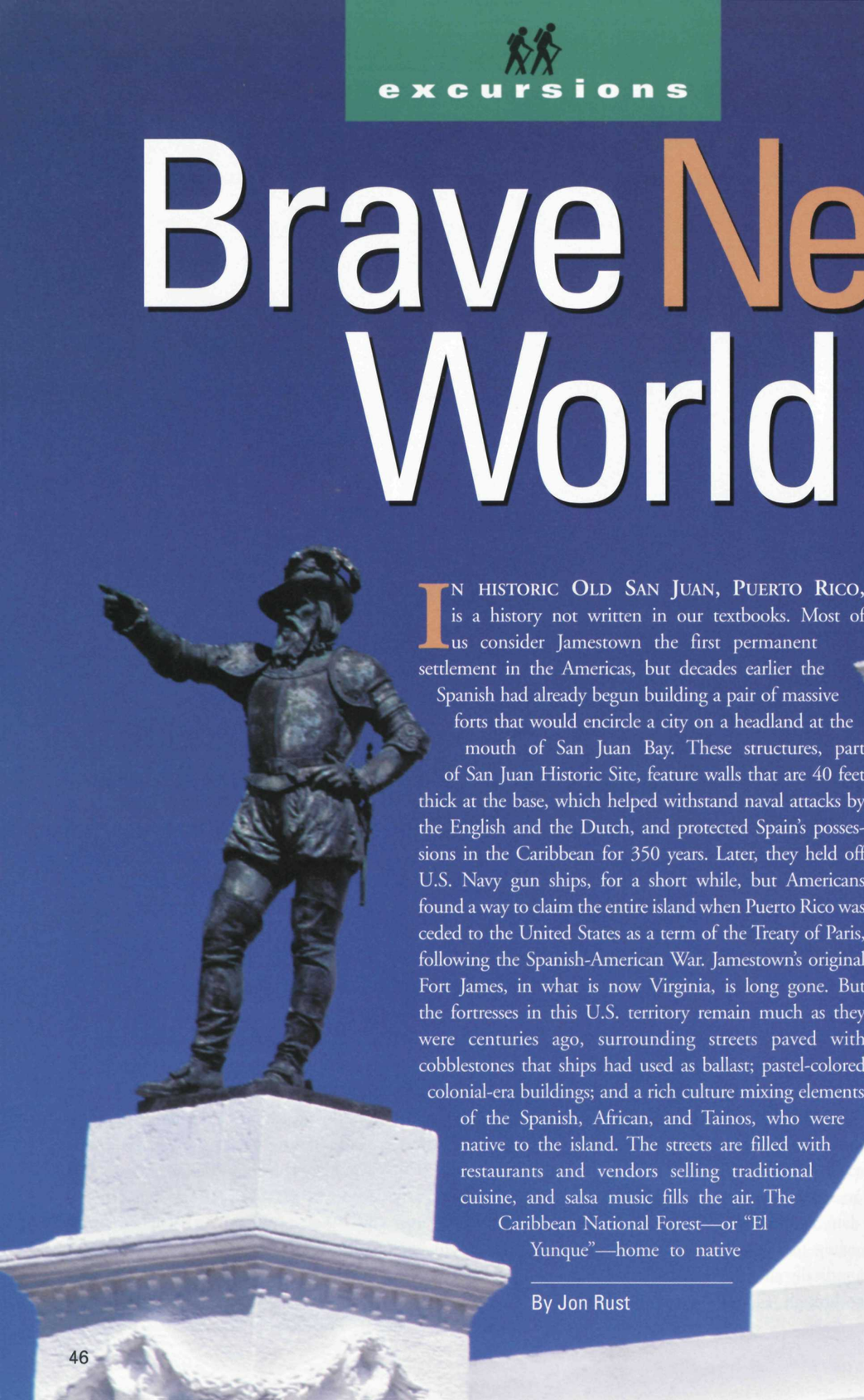
Schmidt has a wish list: "Aggressive control of non-native riparian vegetation, restoration of pre-dam river temperatures, reintroducing sediment into the rivers, reestablishing annual large floods, greatly reducing or eliminating peak hydropower production…that would be enormous progress."

Michael Tennesen, a media fellow at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment, has written for *Audubon, Discover, National Wildlife,* and *Smithsonian.*

Brave New World

IN HISTORIC OLD SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, is a history not written in our textbooks. Most of us consider Jamestown the first permanent settlement in the Americas, but decades earlier the Spanish had already begun building a pair of massive forts that would encircle a city on a headland at the mouth of San Juan Bay. These structures, part of San Juan Historic Site, feature walls that are 40 feet thick at the base, which helped withstand naval attacks by the English and the Dutch, and protected Spain's possessions in the Caribbean for 350 years. Later, they held off U.S. Navy gun ships, for a short while, but Americans found a way to claim the entire island when Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States as a term of the Treaty of Paris, following the Spanish-American War. Jamestown's original Fort James, in what is now Virginia, is long gone. But the fortresses in this U.S. territory remain much as they were centuries ago, surrounding streets paved with cobblestones that ships had used as ballast; pastel-colored colonial-era buildings; and a rich culture mixing elements of the Spanish, African, and Tainos, who were native to the island. The streets are filled with restaurants and vendors selling traditional cuisine, and salsa music fills the air. The Caribbean National Forest—or "El Yunque"—home to native

By Jon Rust



San Juan National Historic Site tells the tale of the New World, while a nearby tropical rainforest holds the history of the old.

RANDA BISHOP/DANITA DELIMONT

MICHAEL MOLINARI/DANITA DELIMONT

CATHY AND GORDON ILLG

Fort San Cristóbal (above) defended San Juan in the 16th and 17th centuries. The brown booby (right) is among the area's abundant wildlife.

orchids, towering tropical ferns, chirping tree frogs, and the Puerto Rican parrot—one of the world's most endangered birds—is just a short drive away.

After the first colonists arrived in Puerto Rico in 1509, it became clear that the entrance to San Juan Bay had to be protected from European nations vying for Caribbean trade. Construction of a tower began in 1539, to protect the Spanish empire in the Americas. San Felipe Del Morro, or El Morro, would remain under construction for centuries, as a series of attacks—by Sir Francis Drake in 1595, the Earl of Cumberland in 1598, and the Dutch in 1625—made clear that more extensive protection was needed. A second massive embattlement, Fort San Cristóbal, would soon be erected to the east, at the entrance to the city, to protect against overland invasions. The forts and the walled city would soon become impregnable, even holding back the U.S. Navy in 1898. (A shell lobbed by a U.S. gunship is still lodged in El Morro.) Just a year before the U.S. invasion, the walls at the west end of the city had been torn down to make way for the growing population confined within the 50 square blocks of Old San Juan. (An exhibition, "The City that Grew Beyond Its Walls," based on documents lost for 100 years after the Spanish American War, is now on display at San Cristóbal.)

Evidence of the relatively recent American presence remains in the concrete battlements built atop the limestone and gravel walls. These were built to hold off German U-boats during World War II, and U.S. servicemen stationed here until the 1960s scratched graffiti into the surface. But the forts today are much as they were hundreds of years ago, when they were the gateway to

the Indies and home to hundreds of soldiers sent to a strange land. The forts' surfaces served as gigantic rainwater collection systems that filled cisterns designed to last through months-long sieges. Among the labyrinthine tunnels and mining galleries designed to hold off attackers, you'll find images rendered by prisoners in the 18th century, including ships drawn on darkened dungeon walls. The San Juan Gate, where ships once anchored to unload new arrivals and goods, leads to a walkway that winds along the bay under the towering walls

GREG JOHNSTON/DANITA DELIMONT

A park visitor snorkels in the crystal clear waters off of El Morro.

of El Morro to the tip of San Juan Bay and the base of the original tower. Across the water is the small fort, San Juan de la Cruz, which provided crossfire protection for El Morro and helped defend the entrance to the bay. San Juan de la Cruz was built on a cay, while nearby cays were used to process slaves and eventually played host to a leper colony.

Ask the park staff about ranger-led activities, and you may learn about a day in the life of an 18th-century soldier or get details on the reconstruction work under way. Thanks to years of extensive experimentation, modern-day masons have replicated ancient techniques to preserve the walls in much the same way they were built. Using a mixture of lime

Sidetrip: Virgin Islands National Park

Pirates loved the Virgin Islands because of the numerous coves where they could anchor out of sight and launch their raids. Laurance Rockefeller fell in love with St. John because of its natural beauty. So he bought it—a lot of it, anyway. In the 1950s, Rockefeller began purchasing large tracts of land in St. John to protect it from development, then turned it over to the Department of the Interior. The U.S. Virgin Islands National Park's 10,000 acres of land and 5,000 acres of water (and adjacent Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument) constitute a Caribbean paradise, with reefs teeming with life, pristine white beaches, isolated bays, tropical forests, and pre-Columbian Caribe Indian petroglyphs.

A third of the park is underwater, and much of its allure is contained in the delights of the sea. A self-guided underwater interpretive trail in Trunk Bay offers snorkelers a great introduction to the watery world of St. John, where you may spot sea turtles in the sea grass, rays, elkhorn and brain coral, translucent needlefish, or tarpon. You might even find a few colorful parrot fish, which chomp on coral and excrete it as the fine white sand you'll be standing on when you towel off. At the remote and scenic Lameshur Bay, large boulders form caves teeming with fish and the remains of Tektite, an underwater habitat for aquanauts occupied in 1969.

In the winter months, the St. Francis Bay trail is a bird-watcher's paradise, and the Park Service offers guided trips down the Reef Bay Trail. You can walk three miles downhill through tropical dry and wet forests, past the ruins of Danish sugar plantations and cap it all off with a swim in the bay—accessible only by foot or by water—before taking a boat back to Cruz Bay.

To get to St. John from the airport in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, take a taxi or "safari bus" to Red Hook, where ferries depart at 6:30 a.m. and then every hour on the hour from 7 a.m. until midnight.

The National Park Service visitor center is in Cruz Bay, a couple of blocks from the ferry dock (www.nps.gov/viis or 340-776-6201). Lodging ranges from luxury resorts to camping and cabins in the park at Cinnamon Bay (www.cinnamonbay.com or 800-539-9998). The Maho Bay eco-resort has camping sites, tent cottages, and studios (www.maho.org 800-392-9004). Both are in beautiful coves with bright blue water and white sand beaches.

NORBERT WU/MINDEN PICTURES

Orange clump coral "bloom" at night in the Caribbean.

Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, so American citizens don't need to worry about bringing their passports. Old San Juan is about 15 minutes by taxi from Luis Munoz Marin International Airport. Winter temperatures average around 75 degrees. The Gallery Inn (787-722-1808) is in a renovated 17th-Century building near El Morro, and Hotel El Convento (787-723-9020) is in a 350-year-old former Carmelite convent. Dining options range from local favorites to Transylvanian fare, from sidewalk cafes to fine dining.

During the San Sebastián Street Festival, from January 22-25, musicians parade through throngs of people on streets lined with exhibitions of traditional arts and crafts, photography, food and drink, and chess matches with masters. Be warned: The crowds can be overwhelming and the partying lasts all night.

The Old City and the forts are easily traveled on foot, but a good pair of walking shoes is a good idea and sunscreen is a must. San Juan National Historic Site is open from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. during the winter and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. during the summer. Orientation talks are offered at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., starting in the main plazas at El Morro and San Cristóbal. The Caribbean National Forest is on Route 191 above the town of Río Grande and is open from 7:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. Bring water; insect spray; rain gear; sturdy, waterproof footwear; and an extra pair of socks.

For more information, check the following sources:
The Puerto Rico Tourism Company: www.gotopuertorico.com or 787-721-2400
San Juan National Historic Site: www.nps.gov/saju or 787-729-6960
Caribbean National Forest: www.fs.fed.us/r8/caribbean or 787-888-1880

BILL BACHMANN/DANITA DELIMONT

DAVID HERBIG/DANITA DELIMONT; DAVID SANGÉ/DANITA DELIMONT (FAR RIGHT)

A cyclist enjoys a colorful sunset ride past El Morro. Old San Juan is famous for its unique 17th-century architecture (left).

and brick that predates cement, these artisans are leaders in the field of traditional lime masonry.

Before your trip comes to a close, be sure to venture beyond the walls of the fort to San Juan Cathedral, which dates to 1521 and is the final resting place of the explorer Juan Ponce de León, the first European to set foot in Florida, and the first governor of Puerto Rico. And make a visit to nearby La Fortaleza, the longest continually occupied governor's mansion in the Western Hemisphere. Although the forts act as the centerpiece of this ancient city, you're sure to find much more to explore beyond their walls. ❖

Jon Rust is a reporter and freelance writer who gave up rock climbing and took up surfing after moving to San Juan.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Alaska's National Parks have something for everyone

Imagine your vacation in Alaska for one moment ...

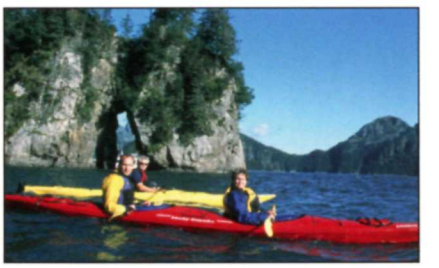
Your delight when you spot a grizzly bear with a cub or two in tow. That instant when the silence of a misty fjord is shattered by a pod of giant humpback whales, breaching high into the air, then crashing back against the sea. While your floatplane flies over

crystal glaciers, toward the midnight sun, remember: This is Alaska. This is real. This is the adventure of a lifetime.

Alaska is different from every other destination in the world. It is expansive and diverse—with 17 National Park areas, Alaska is home to two-thirds of the land in the entire National Park System. Alaska's parklands hold vast mountain ranges and boundless tundra, preserve America's history, and offer visitors a variety of recreational activities.

From breathtaking glaciers, deep blue fjords, rain forests, volcanoes, and wild rivers to majestic mountain ranges and the Arctic circle—the stunning beauty of the 49th state can be seen from almost every vantage point within Alaska's National Parks.

And with so many activities to choose from, Alaska's National Parks



offer something for every type of traveler—whether your interests are wildlife viewing, camping, fishing, outdoor photography, rafting, kayaking, mountain climbing, cross country skiing, flightseeing, day cruises, touring historic or cultural monuments, hiking, or nature walks.

Stop imagining and go—to www.ParksAlaska.com/nps or call 800-822-5212 to find out more about Alaska's National Parks.

Kayak image by Michael DeYoung/ATIA. Hikers/glacier and Root Glacier in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, by Matt Hage/ATIA.

Glacier Bay Lodge and Tours: Easy to reach, hard to forget

The fastest recorded glacier retreat in history, a glacier 4,000 feet thick and extending more than 100 miles, has withdrawn to reveal one of Alaska's most pristine wilderness areas—Glacier Bay National Park. As your one source of tours, activities, and lodging in Glacier Bay, we can help you discover all the majesty of this crown jewel of our national parks.

Stay in a cozy elegance at Glacier Bay Lodge, a convenient home-base for your Glacier Bay adventure. Board a heated, high-speed catamaran and travel to amazing tidewater glaciers as you enjoy a National Park Service ranger-led interpretive program about wildlife and history. See abundant wildlife including humpback and killer whales, sea lions, otters, rare birds, and bears. Enjoy whale watching, kayaking, hiking, fishing, flight seeing, and more.

For reservations and information call 888-229-8687 or visit www.visitglacierbay.com.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

View Alaskan ice falls at Kennicott Glacier Lodge

Kennicott Glacier Lodge, located in the Kennicott National Historic Landmark ghost town, offers the area's finest accommodations and dining. Built in 1987, the lodge has 35 clean, delightful guest rooms, two living rooms, a spacious dining room, and a 180-foot front porch with a spectacular panoramic view of the Wrangell Mountains, Chugach Mountains, and Kennicott Glacier. The homemade food, served family-style, has been called "wilderness gourmet dining."

Guest activities at this destination resort include glacier trekking, flightseeing, photography, alpine hiking, historical tours throughout the ghost town buildings, nature tours, and river rafting. Call 800-582-5128 for more information or visit www.KennicottLodge.com.

See the wonders of Alaska by rail

The best way to see Alaska is on the railroad where two of America's most beloved national parks anchor a 500-mile scenic route. The wonders of Kenai Fjords National Park show the richness of Alaska's maritime ecology. To the north, Denali National Park symbolizes nature's diversity and majesty, featuring Mount McKinley, North America's highest peak.

You'll see this and more of our great land through panoramic windows, underscored by historical narratives of a lifelong Alaskan train crew. The Alaska Railroad's packaged itineraries make great vacations for national park lovers. The "Arctic Circle to Glacier Bay" package visits Denali, Glacier Bay, and Kenai Fjords National Parks. Opt for the upgrade to GoldStar Service on the Denali Star, and travel in style in new, luxurious double-deck dome cars.

Daily summer train adventures to Anchorage, Talkeetna, Fairbanks, Whittier, and Seward are also available. Download the 2006 Scenic Rail Tours brochure at www.AlaskaRailroad.com or call 800-544-0552 or 907-265-2494.

Wildlife abounds at Hallo Bay

Hallo Bay Wilderness Camp is located on the Pacific Coast of Katmai National Park within one of the largest natural concentrations of brown bears in Alaska. Nesting bald eagles, a rich variety of marine wildlife and shorebirds, wolves, moose, and fox are common to the area. In limiting the number of guests to 10 on any given day, Hallo Bay is able to provide a true wilderness experience without the crowds. Hallo Bay provides naturalist guides; comfortable, heated cabins; family style meals; solar and wind generated electricity; hot showers; and environmentally friendly, odorless, and sanitary composting toilet facilities.

For more information call 888-535-2237 or visit www.hallobay.com.

Visit Fairbanks for winter fun and the midnight sun

Fairbanks is the gateway to your authentic Alaskan adventure. Come be energized in summer's land of the "midnight sun." See award-winning exhibits of Alaska's cultural and natural history. Shop for exquisite Alaskan crafts, both Athabascan and Eskimo. Celebrate our Gold Rush past. Be enthralled by winter's unsurpassed display of the Northern Lights. Go mushing with a dog team on a wooded trail. View the artistry of larger-than-life-sized ice sculptures. From our riverfront location, a tour transports you to the edge of the Last Frontier, Denali, and the Arctic wilderness. Make the most of winter fun and the midnight sun in Fairbanks! To start planning now, call 800-327-5774 or visit www.explorefairbanks.com for your free Visitors' and Winter Guide.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Visit Alaska with the help of Alaska Heritage Tours

See the best of Alaska's national parks with Alaska Heritage Tours. Multiday packages and custom adventures provide seamless travel throughout Alaska. See spectacular national parks, wildlife, glaciers, and the breathtaking 20,320-foot tall Denali ("The Great One"). See Prince William Sound or Kenai Fjords National Park on wildlife and glacier cruises. Stay in luxurious lodges surrounded by the beauty of Alaska. Add a dose of adventure to your vacation by taking a guided sea kayaking tour, river rafting trip, or flightseeing excursion. Daily departures and flexible schedules are offered.

The views from the Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge are breathtaking. Just 60 miles from Denali National Park and Mount McKinley, it is the only lodge in Alaska that offers this incredible view—from spacious guest rooms as well as from the lobbies, outdoor viewing deck, meeting facilities and restaurants. Visit the tour desk to arrange your next great adventure—river rafting or glacier landings. The Lodge is built from natural woods and spruce timbers, and features a grand 46-foot-tall river rock fireplace in the Grand Lobby—don't miss it!

Travel south to visit the amazing Kenai Fjords National Park. Take an exciting wildlife and glacier cruise with Kenai Fjords Tours, Alaska's No. 1 wildlife and glacier cruise. See massive tidewater glaciers, whales, puffins, sea lions, and a variety of seabirds. Custom sightseeing vessels were built with comfort in mind, and with large picture windows, you won't miss a thing. The experienced captains and crew have been cruising Kenai Fjords since 1974, and will share their expertise with you on the fully narrated tours.

Enjoy the exclusive Kenai Fjords Wilderness Lodge on Fox Island and stay for the afternoon—or overnight in a private seaside cabin. The island's private chef prepares a delicious grilled Alaska salmon buffet, cooked to perfection. Fox Island is a great way to experience the beauty and seclusion of Resurrection Bay and Kenai Fjords National Park. Add a guided sea kayaking tour and explore the marine wildlife near the island. Test your stone skipping skills on the beach, hike around the island, or just relax.

Another lodging option while exploring Kenai Fjords is Seward Windsong Lodge, in the peaceful Resurrection River valley, near downtown Seward. Explore the surrounding glaciology on a guided Exit Glacier tour, dine on delicious Alaskan cuisine, and experience handcrafted ales at Resurrection Roadhouse. With the lodge's proximity to Seward, guests may enjoy activities including sportfishing, hiking, dogsled tours, flightseeing, and the Alaska SeaLife Center. Seward Windsong Lodge is the perfect base for your Alaska adventure.

Call to book your adventure of a lifetime at 877-258-6877 or visit www.alaskaheritagetours.com.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Harbor hopping with American Cruise Lines

The rustic seaport villages and quaint island towns of coastal New England are rich in maritime history and littered with Victorian clapboard houses. Each destination along the northeastern shore is more fascinating than the one before. The beaches are pristine, the waters are serene, and the sunsets, rich in reds and oranges, are flawless.

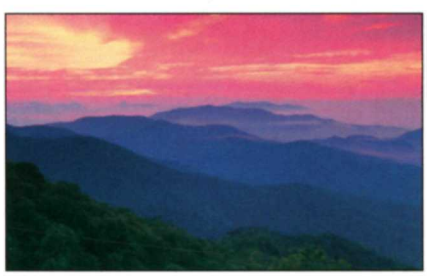
This cozy corner of the United States offers a wealth of activities for every type of traveler. From the breathtaking mansions of Newport to the picture-perfect Gay Head Bluffs of Martha's Vineyard, New England has a distinct charm that visitors remember for years to come. There is so much to do—it's impossible to choose just one coastal town to visit!

Luckily, American Cruise Lines offers you the opportunity to "harbor hop" the islands of New England, wrapping all of the seafaring heritage, beauty, and excitement of the northeast into one amazing trip. Spend eight days cruising along the calm shores, witnessing the ever-changing scenery, stopping at fabulous ports of call, and taking in the fresh salty air. In addition, passengers aboard our luxury ships enjoy activities and lectures hosted by local experts and historians, and tantalizing feasts, including scallops and lobsters, plucked right from the surrounding waters. With fewer than 100 fellow passengers, guests also relish in the personalized service and utmost attention given by the all-American crew.

Why decide on one New England location to visit when you can see them all? Pack your suitcase once, and explore each charming island and bustling harbor with American Cruise Lines.

For those travelers who wish to witness the splendor of a different area along the east coast, American Cruise Lines offers eight other irresistible itineraries. Call today to book your New England Islands Cruise or to find out more about any of the other magnificent coastal tours. Call 800-814-6880 or visit www.americancruiselines.com.

Haywood County, N.C.—Where the sun rises on the Smokies



There's something rejuvenating about being in the mountains. Something about waking up in the morning and seeing the first light on America's most popular national park—the Great Smoky Mountains.

Bolting down whitewater rapids. Standing atop a mountain more than a mile in the sky. Gazing up at Eastern America's highest waterfall, the 411-foot Whitewater Falls. No matter what your idea of exhilaration, Haywood County's landscape is fit for it.

Here, you'll find 12 mountains that peak more than 6,000 feet—the most of any county in the eastern United States. The most famous of these is Cold Mountain—the site of Charles Frazier's novel and the 2003 blockbuster movie of the same name. Along the Blue Ridge Parkway, there is Shining Rock (MP 418.8), Devil's Courthouse (MP 422.4), and Mt. Lynn Lowry (MP 445.2), three points that offer high-elevation hikes. Just to your west, hike into the Great Smoky Mountains, or catch a view of majestic elk. They've only been reintroduced to this area in the past decade, and the Cataloochee Valley is one of the few places where you can see them roam.

And then there's the water. Fierce, rushing water well suited for rafts and kayaks. Rippled trout pools primed for the cast of a fly rod. Picturesque waterfalls spreading mist into the surrounding forest.

In the winter, the mountains glow with an unmatched softness and pristine purity. Head over to the mile-high Cataloochee Ski Area for some serious downhill action.

Discover your next outdoor adventure in Haywood County—located just close enough to the big tourist attractions and just far enough away for you to enjoy time to yourself.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Sail the tall ships of Maine Windjammer

Every week on Penobscot Bay, off Maine's spectacular granite coast, the 14 tall ships in the Maine Windjammer Association provide cruises that transport passengers back to the golden age of sailing where deadlines and itineraries take a back seat to relaxation and beauty. Most of the windjammers are turn-of-the-century wooden cargo schooners that have been retrofitted to carry passengers. Together, they represent the country's largest fleet of historic sailing ships.

Each day, you sail past lighthouses and lobstermen, through narrow channels, and across great bays. Every evening, your windjammer drops anchor in the safe, snug harbor of a quiet fishing village, a bustling waterfront, a cove below the cliffs of Acadia National Park, or an island inhabited solely by nesting eagles and terns. Guests are invited to participate in all shipboard activities, from taking a turn at the wheel to raising and lowering sails. The 14 ships in the Maine Windjammer Association have a well-earned reputation for outstanding sailing adventures and delicious down-home cooking. On one night, everyone goes ashore for a traditional island lobster bake.

Prices for three- to six-day cruises range from $395 to $915 per person. For more information, call 800-807-WIND (9463) or visit www.sailmainecoast.com.

Travel North America by rail

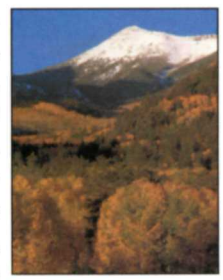
Noted for its exceptional service, fine dining, and décor, American Orient Express (AOE) has brought a return to the graceful Golden Age of rail travel. In addition to offering passengers a vintage rail experience, AOE's all-inclusive vacations include an exploration of America's cultural treasures with insight from historians, as well as off-train excursions which complement the theme of each carefully planned itinerary. In operation since 1985, American Orient Express offers seven regional itineraries throughout the United States and Canada. For information call 800-320-4206 or visit www.americanorientexpress.com.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Northern Arizona: Enigmatic landscapes captivate the soul

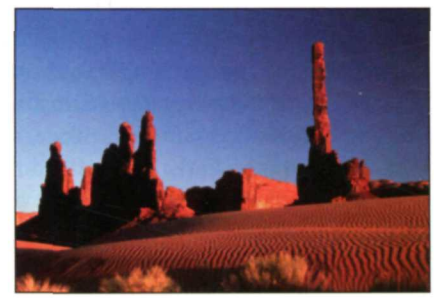
The natural beauty of the Grand Canyon. Fossils 225 million years old. Monument Valley's inspiring vistas. No matter how you look at it, Northern Arizona is the perfect vacation. The region's national parks attract visitors from around the world and provide a variety of recreational activities for the whole family. Some preserve prehistoric resources, while others offer a glimpse into our natural world and 900-year history.

Nearly five million people visit Grand Canyon National Park each year. More than a mile to the canyon floor and about 277 miles from end to end, visitors can backpack, watch birds, camp, river raft, fish, stargaze, and observe wildlife. Hikers have several trail options to reach the bottom, or visitors can take one of the canyon's famous, sure-footed mules for a less strenuous journey.



Petrified Forest National Park, just east of Holbrook, preserves one of the world's largest and most colorful collections of petrified wood. Also included within the park's nearly 100,000 acres are the multihued badlands of the famed Painted Desert. The visitors' center displays skeletons of dinosaurs that used to roam the area, archeological sites, and fossils dating back 225 million years.

Monument Valley, a mysterious wonderland on the Navajo Nation, is an adventure no trip to Northern Arizona would be complete without. These haunting spires and buttes have graced the big screen for years. Enjoy a self-guided tour or join Native American guides on horseback or four-wheel drives.



To plan your vacation, visit GrandCanyonandBeyond.com or call toll-free 866-891-3634.

Grand Canyon image by Joel Grimes; Monument Valley image by Chris Coe; Flagstaff image by Flagstaff Convention and Visitors' Bureau.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Visit Eastern Arizona's Roper Lake

Situated at the base of Mt. Graham, in an area of eastern Arizona known for its hot springs and majestic scenery, Roper Lake State Park is a gem in the state parks system. It's easy to relax and soak up the atmosphere while soaking in the park's natural rock-lined hot tub. When the summer heat catches up, many people cool off with a dip in the lake. At night, the stargazing can't be beat. Being away from the city has its advantages!

Whether you're heading north or south, let Arizona's 27 state parks introduce you to Arizona's natural wonders. For more information, call 602-542-1993 or visit www.azstateparks.com.

Wildland Tours offer taste of Arctic

Explore the New World home of the Vikings and the wonders of Labrador while looking for giant icebergs. The planet's largest gang of playful humpback whales joins the continent's largest gatherings of puffins, murres, and other seabirds on gentle, escorted holidays. Enjoy an authentic introduction to the continent's eastern edge as you sample unique subarctic flavors and savor dramatic seascapes. Experience wild, educational days and comfortable nights in great local hotels.

Wildland Tours—gentle, escorted small-group adventures. For more information, contact P.O. Box 383, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 5J9 Canada; call 709-722-3123 or 888-615-8279; e-mail wildtour@nfld.com; or visit www.wildlands.com.

Alpine hiking for the adventurous

Alpine Adventure Trails Tours Inc., the Swiss Alps specialist, has led day hikers exclusively in the Swiss Alps since 1977. The tours base weekly in small three- and four-star family owned and operated Swiss inns with fine cuisine; and day hike the surrounding area. One- and two-week trips are offered, with a maximum of 15 guests, and each has a choice of two hikes daily—one moderate, one more strenuous.

A new tour offering this year is the Isle of Skye, Scotland. For more information, contact an owner guide at 888-478-4004, e-mail alpine@swisshiking.com, or visit www.swisshiking.com.

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Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Trace the Lewis and Clark Trail with Sunrise Tours

Sunrise Tours has been offering its "Tracing the Trail of Lewis and Clark" historical tour for six years, and the popularity of the excursion has increased steadily. In 2005, travelers from 15 states joined Sunrise Tours on a trek from St. Louis to the coast of Oregon.

Besides deluxe motorcoach transportation, outstanding accommodations, two meals per day, and admission to all attractions, the tour features commentary by an experienced Sunrise Tours historian, a main component of the trip's success.

One traveler from Jamaica, N.Y. wrote, "Everything from the selected sites, to the lectures, to the comfort of the bus (and wonderful driver), to the hotels we stayed in … was exceptional."

Visit www.travelsunrise.com or call 800-881-8804.

Visit South Carolina's historic Olde English District

Get off the interstate and travel the back roads to discover the spirit and charm of the true South—in South Carolina's Olde English District. Come visit and celebrate the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution in the South. Find statewide events at www.southcarolinarevwar.com.

Explore the southern roots of patriotism by visiting sites that helped establish America's independence during the Revolutionary War. The Olde English District, bisected by I-77, is a seven-county region in upper South Carolina between Charlotte and Columbia. In addition to the Revolutionary War history, you'll find a wealth of African-American historical sites, Civil War history, genealogy information, and antique shops.

For travel guides or more information, visit www.sctravel.net or call 800-968-5909.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore provides peaceful escape

Nature lovers and those who revel in the outdoors will find their own personal paradise in the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Long known for their tranquility and scenic beauty, the popular barrier islands along North Carolina's coast provide a quiet haven for vacationers wishing to escape the hustle and bustle of their day-to-day lives.

The Cape Hatteras National Seashore stretches 70 miles north to south across three barrier islands—Bodie, Hatteras, and Ocracoke—linked together by N.C. Highway 12 and the Hatteras Inlet Ferry. The scenic highway passes through eight villages that reflect the nearly 300-year-old history and culture of the Outer Banks.

Visitors can be found surf fishing, sunbathing, swimming, beach combing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, and surfing. Among the sand dunes, marshes, and woodlands, others can be seen auto touring, biking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, camping, hiking, hunting, and stargazing.

The National Seashore offers three visitor centers to help vacationers enjoy their stay at the park. Each of the centers is located in one of the Outer Bank's famous lighthouse stations. The Bodie Island and Ocracoke lighthouses are closed for climbing, but the Cape Hatteras lighthouse is open for climbing Good Friday through Columbus Day.

Those who wish to explore the National Seashore for more than a day can camp at one of its four campgrounds. Cape Point, Frisco, Ocracoke, and Oregon Inlet campgrounds are suitable for both tents and RVs, and offer a variety of amenities, including cold showers, drinking water, flush toilets, picnic tables, and fire grills. No utility hook-ups are provided. While no lodging is available in the Seashore, the small villages scattered throughout the area feature a variety of inns, motels, and private rental properties.

Visitors should visit www.outerbanks.org to plan their next getaway to the Outer Banks of North Carolina, or call 877-OBX-4FUN (877-629-4386).

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Visit historic Northeast Tennessee

More than two centuries ago, the Northeast Tennessee area served as the first great gateway for America's westward expansion. Today, you can discover its beautiful surroundings, rich history, lively culture, and welcoming people.

Most any way you turn in Northeast Tennessee, a place of great history beckons the imagination. In historic Jonesborough, Tennessee's oldest town, jaw-dropping, mind-spinning tall tales of master storytellers enrapture audiences of all ages at the National Storytelling Festival. This warm-hearted hospitality can be experienced today at inns, restaurants, and stopovers throughout the towns and countryside.

Northeast Tennessee blooms with originality, from the theater stages to friendly get-together venues where folks with string instruments lay down some of the music of the mountains. Bristol is the "birthplace of country music" and Abingdon is home to Barter Theatre, celebrated State Theatre of Virginia. Textured crafts, quilts, sculptural art, and dance, among other goings-on, say a lot about the artistic legacy you will find here.

America's first frontier is still out there in the rolling hills and mountains of Northeast Tennessee. Rafting the Nolichucky River takes you into the deepest gorge in the Southeast, a place of timeless beauty. You're never far from kayaking, hiking, camping, backroad cycling, rock climbing, and, in anybody's book, totally awesome fishing.

Experience the excitement of world-class motor sports through the seasons. Bristol Motor Speedway, the world's fastest half-mile, hosts two NASCAR races each year while the Bristol Dragway features events of varying format. The complex also has an ice skating rink and hosts a holiday light display.

For more information on Northeast Tennessee, visit www.netta.com or call 800-468-6882.

Spring & Summer Vacation Planner

Slow down and experience wilderness wonders

Phone calls. Voice mail. E-mail. Overnight delivery. Text messaging. In this hurry-up, we-need-it-yesterday world, it's nice to know there are places that survive, and thrive, in slow motion. Places where hummingbirds take wing, wolves run free, and rivers meander with a natural rhythm all their own. These American sanctuaries deliver messages of color, smell, sense, and sound on screens as big as sunsets and as expansive as mountain ranges.

Signal Mountain Lodge

Forever Resorts offers an exit ramp to these unhurried places. Stay a night, stay a week. Stay as long as it takes to hear the wind again—to feel *yourself* again. Forever Resorts manages authentic national park lodges for those wishing to contact Mother Nature—instead of the home office.

All you have to do is slow down long enough to make a reservation. Visit www.foreverlodging.com for more information.

Civil War history and more in Springfield, Mo.

Leap back in history at one of the nation's most pristine Civil War battlefields—Wilson's Creek National Battlefield—where the first major battle west of the Mississippi took place and the first Union general died in combat.

While Missouri ranks third among states with the most Civil War engagements, the battle at Wilson's Creek was the largest and most pivotal in Missouri. You can also visit the original and biggest Bass Pro Shops® Outdoor World®, Wonders of Wildlife, Cardinals Double-A Minor League Baseball, and much more.

Call 800-678-8767 or visit www.Visit-Springfield.com today for a free visitors' guide.

Country Road Cabins located near National Recreation Areas

Country Road Cabins offer comfortable, deluxe AAA triple diamond-rated deluxe log cabin rentals in West Virginia. Each cabin is fully equipped with hot tub, fireplace, and all bed linens and towels.

The cabins are available year-round and are located in a scenic wooded area near two National Recreation Areas. World-class whitewater rafting is only minutes away at Adventures Mountain River. Great mountain biking, rock climbing, horseback riding, and hiking are also available to combine with a cabin stay.

The New River Gorge and Gauley River National Recreation Areas are both rugged, white-water river areas rich in cultural and natural history, containing an abundance of scenic and recreational opportunities.

These units of the National Park System encompass more than 81,000 acres of land. New River Gorge National Recreation Area, established in 1978, preserves 53 miles of the New River, and is located between the towns of Hinton and Fayetteville. Gauley River National Recreation Area was established in 1988 to protect 25 miles of the Gauley River and six miles of the Meadow River, and is located between the towns of Summersville and Fayetteville.

For more information, call 888-712-2246 or visit www.wvcabins.com.

Visitors and birds flock to McAllen, Texas

McAllen, in the heart of Texas' Rio Grande Valley, the country's most popular birding and butterflying spot, is the perfect place to headquarter for world class birding. Green hotels, excellent restaurants and shopping, and free birding maps and brochures at the McAllen Chamber of Commerce's Visitors' Center are just some of the nature friendly amenities. This Spring's 10th annual Texas Tropics Nature Festival, with trips to Mexico and Costa Rica, will be a highlight of the nature event-filled year. Come for the festival or come on your own. Call toll-free 877-MCALLEN (622-5536) for more events or visit www.mcallenchamber.com.

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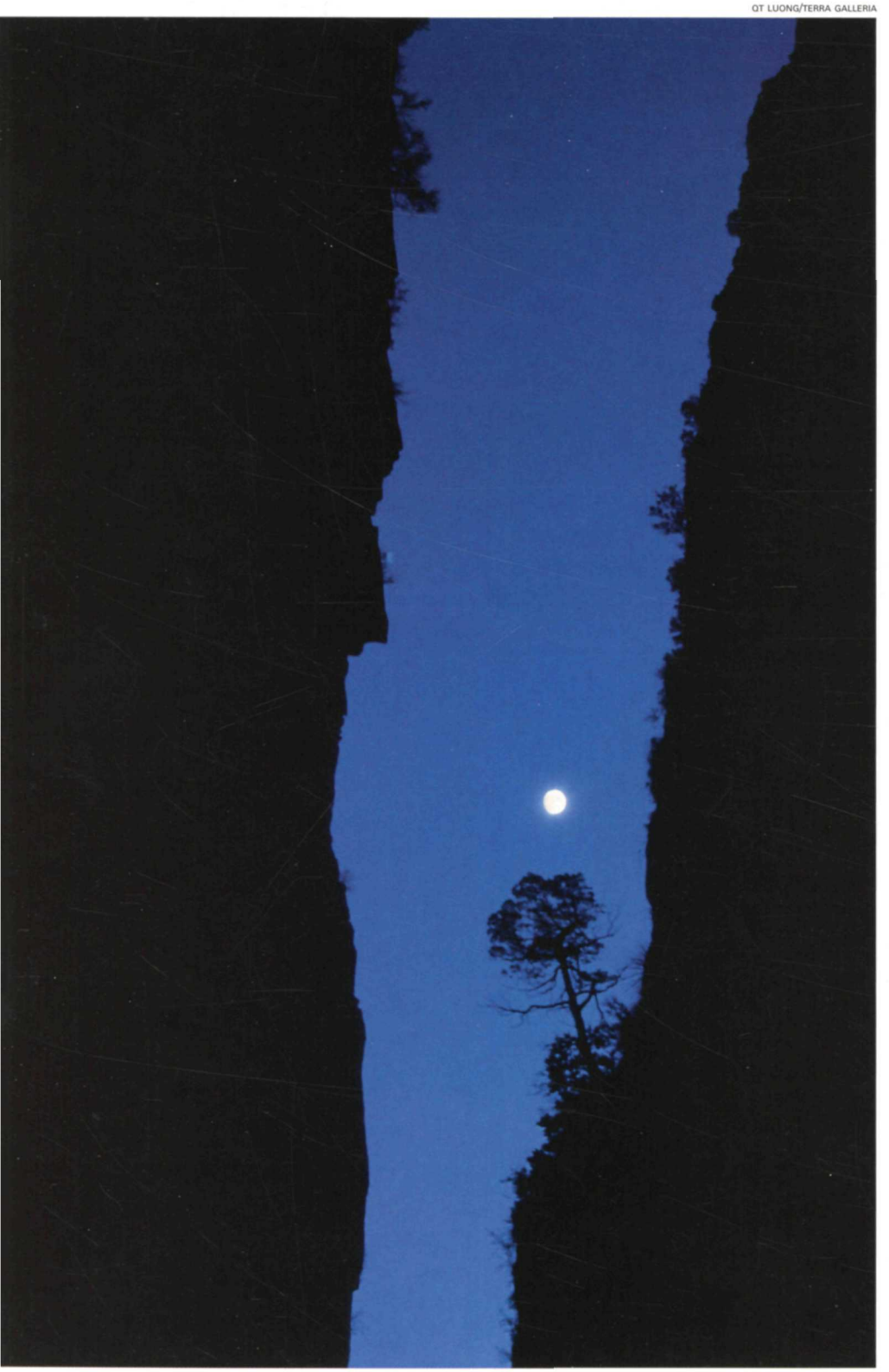
Somewhere Beyond the Sea

QT LUONG/TERRA GALLERIA



An ancient coral reef rests among limestone mountains in this Texas desert park.

Spend one hot day in this arid, rocky landscape, and then try to imagine that this place was once underwater. But 250 million years ago during the Permian Age, this park was part of a vast, tropical ocean teeming with colorful marine life and a 400-mile coral reef. The giant fossil, known as Capitan Reef, spent millions of years underground after the ocean evaporated, until it was pushed up with the birth of the surrounding mountains.

Despite significant changes to the landscape, the park still bustles with diverse life. Its 76,293 acres host a variety of ecosystems from harsh Chihuahuan desert, to lush streamside woodlands, to rocky canyons and mountaintop forests. More than 1,000 species of plants exist, and wildlife residents include the coyote, mountain lion, badger, Texas banded gecko, and 16 species of bats. Archaeologists believe the first inhabitants were hunter-gatherers who arrived as long as 12,000 years ago. Park visitors can see evidence of this culture today through petroglyphs and other artifacts.

Do you know which park this is? Have you been here?

Answer: Devil's Hall in Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas

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If you use standard light bulbs, the lighting in your home leaves you in the "dark ages". Standard incandescent bulbs and traditional fluorescent bulbs do not provide the white light necessary for many of your favorite indoor activities. Reading, sewing, and crafts require you to see details and accurate colors. And as we age, our eyes need more light to focus clearly. But your current bulbs, which emit yellowish or greenish light, leave your eyes tired and strained. Well, we looked to the sun for inspiration and developed the SunWhite lamp. And we priced it much lower than all of the other "daylight" lamps on the market. You can now bring the sun indoors for about half the price that you'd expect.

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Finally we are offering such a low price because our factory boss wants to be the leader in this new technology. He's invested millions in factory machinery to be the most efficient manufacturer of daylight spectrum lighting. He believes that our SunWhite technology will overwhelm the current light bulb business and he wants to be the leader in "sunlighting". So don't get ripped off by paying $99-$159 for "sunlighting" technology.

We are so sure that you will love this lamp that we are offering a 60-day money back guarantee. If this light doesn't brighten up your world, make your eyes feel better and even lift your mood, just send it back for a full refund of the purchase price. We can offer this extended guarantee because so few of our lamps get returned to us. We have sold thousands of lamps and it's extremely rare to get a return. Don't strain your eyes for one more day.

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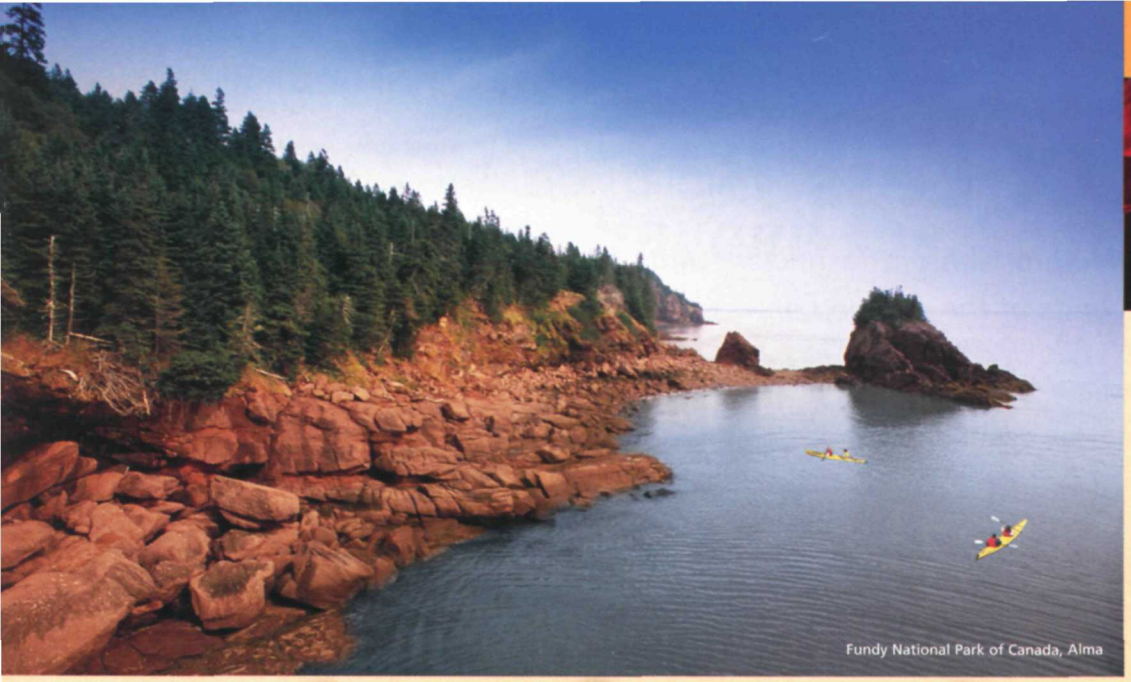


Fundy National Park of Canada, Alma

Murray Beach Provincial Park, Murray Beach

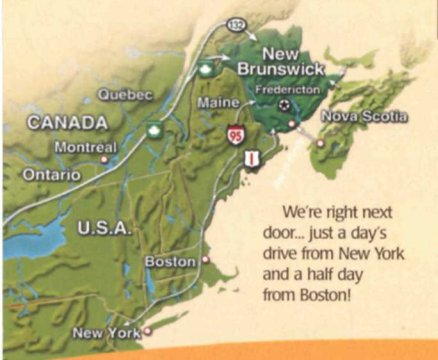
parks of wonder

Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada, Kouchibouguac

Your curiosity rises with the World's Highest Tides. Your wonderment is reflected in the award-winning Baie des Chaleurs. And Mother Nature warmly welcomes you along the many faces of the St. John River. Here, awesome journeys through Natural Wonders are just a walk in the park... in the National and Provincial Parks of New Brunswick, Canada.

Two National Parks. Two Natural Gems.

Start big — at Fundy National Park of Canada. Witness the highest tides in the world — an official Marine Wonder of the World! The natural phenomenon occurs every day, twice a day, as 200 billion tonnes of sea water rush in and out of the Bay of Fundy, causing the tides to rise to a maximum height of 16 m (52 ft.).



When the tides recede, leave your footprints on the ocean floor. Wander around tide-carved caves. Beachcomb for fascinating relics. But do it before the tides rise again. In just six hours, you can kayak above the very same spot!

Watch for wildlife. Up to 95 per cent of the world's semi-palmated sandpipers call the Bay of Fundy mudflats their home. And the bay's nutrient-rich waters are an important feeding ground for over 15 species of whales, including the rare right whale!

Mother Nature has even more tricks up her sleeve at Kouchibouguac National Park of Canada. Take a dip in the lagoon where the water temperature has been recorded as high as 30°C (86°F)! Stroll along endless sandy beaches. Cycle along 60 km (37 mi.) of designated bike trails. Or kayak your way to an island of sun-bathing seals. The perfectly-preserved ecosystem at Kouchibouguac will leave you breathless.

Many Provincial Parks. One Warden: Mother Nature.

Nature's beauty is an inspiring backdrop in New Brunswick's many Provincial Parks. Follow the river — the mighty St. John River — along 400 kilometres (248 mi.) of inspiration. Tee off on a championship golf course. Climb to the pinnacle of the Maritimes atop the ancient Appalachians.

Enjoy a bird's-eye view of the picture-perfect Baie des Chaleurs — declared "one of the most beautiful bays in the world."

So Many Natural Comforts.

Amazingly, you'll find these unspoiled wonders amidst unmatched comforts. Camp in your choice of graded campgrounds. Rejuvenate in a luxury hotel or cosy B&B. Experience the history and nightlife of our cities and hometowns. Savour a succulent lobster dinner and an evening of colourful local theatre. The culture is as unique as the landscape. And the spirits are as high as the tides.

The parks of New Brunswick, Canada. Just a walk in the park? Try an unforgettable journey through a world of Natural Wonder. You have to see it — and feel it — for yourself.

The Hopewell Rocks, Hopewell Cape

Contact us for your FREE DVD and FREE 2006 Vacation Planning Kit and discover awesome vacation ideas, great values and a world of Natural Wonder.

No Small Wonders

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