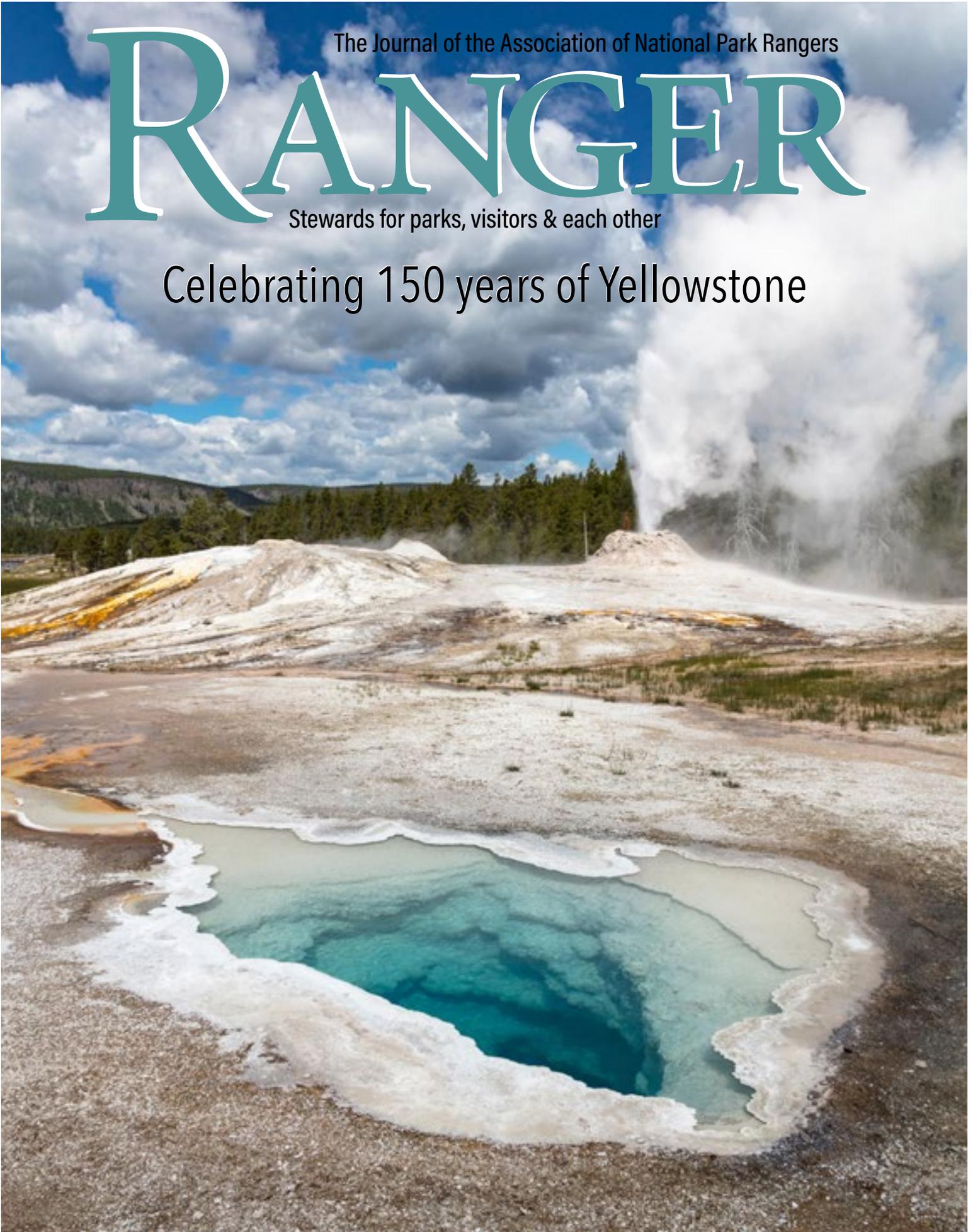


The Journal of the Association of National Park Rangers

RANGER

Stewards for parks, visitors & each other

Celebrating 150 years of Yellowstone



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2022

A special place reaches an important milestone

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On the cover: Lion Geyser and Heart Spring on a sunny afternoon in Yellowstone. NPS / Jacob W. Frank

CORRECTION: In the Winter 2022 issue of *Ranger* magazine, Mike Lynch's title was listed incorrectly. Lynch is president of the Ranger Foundation.

THIS ISSUE OF *RANGER* MAGAZINE IS FOCUSED on the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, which predates the beginnings of the National Park Service itself. Yellowstone, as its superintendent, Cam Sholly, stated, "is not only America's first national park, but it's the first national park in the world. ... it's also really one of the first examples of this country's recognition that conservation and preservation of high-value resources is important and should be a major priority."



For anyone who has been to Yellowstone – and I venture to guess that would be the overwhelming majority of *Ranger* readers – the last half of Sholly's statement is what matters most. Yellowstone exists to serve as a reminder that the land is sacred.

This year's "150 Years of Yellowstone" is designed to reflect on that responsibility. In a media event held at the beginning of 2022, organizers stressed that point.

"It's important that you know that this isn't just about the last century and a half," Sholly said. "We also want to use this anniversary to do a better job of fully recognizing many American Indian nations that lived in this area for thousands of years prior to Yellowstone becoming a park."

Native tribal engagement is, in fact, one of the park's highest priorities this year, Sholly said, as he simultaneously thanked Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and recently appointed NPS Director Chuck Sams for their leadership in this area.

"I really do applaud and share their vision on our responsibility to more fully engage Native American tribal nations and recognize their significant ancestral and modern connections to Yellowstone," he said. "I think the anniversary is a great point in time to do that."

On the pages that follow, we hope you gain some new understanding of how Yellowstone was conceived – Tony Sisto's article on "beginnings" takes a deep dive in that respect, and then looks at a novel interpretation of the park's significance both of, and beyond, its physical boundaries. Looking forward, many thanks to Superintendent Sholly and his staff for their contributions on pages 9 through 14. Amid an already busy season, they took time to answer our questions and provide perspective on the year ahead.

Also worth noting is a fun read from writer Leslie Spurlin on Page 16. Spurlin spoke to two former park "brats" who share their memories of growing up in Yellowstone in the 1950s, a time both treasured for its simplicity but also mired by lack of knowledge – "boy aren't we glad wildlife management has taken on a whole new vision," Brenda Guiltner said of her time growing up there.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Ranger* magazine. And if, by chance, you've not made it out to Yellowstone yet, perhaps this could be the year to make it happen.

— Melissa DeVaughn
Ranger magazine editor

ANPR Land Acknowledgment of Yellowstone National Park

In this sesquicentennial of Yellowstone National Park, ANPR recognizes the many Native American tribes that have traditional connections to the land and its resources going back thousands of years. The National Park Service consults with Yellowstone's 27 formally associated tribes on a government-to-government basis on decisions that affect resources that are significant to tribes. Ranger would like to acknowledge this rich legacy of these tribes to the land, and their continuing association with the National Park Service.

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In meeting these purposes, the Association provides education and other training to develop and/or improve the knowledge and skills of park professionals and those interested in the stewardship of national parks; provides a forum for discussion of common concerns of all employees; and provides information to the public.

The membership of ANPR is comprised of individuals who are entrusted with and committed to the care, study, explanation and/or protection of those natural, cultural and recreational resources included in the National Park System, and persons who support these efforts.

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Yellowstone: Where national parks started

President's message

— Paul R. Anderson

THIS YEAR AND this issue of *Ranger* magazine mark the 150th anniversary of the establishment of our first national park. What an amazing benchmark! Our world has changed dramatically since Congress voted to establish Yellowstone National Park, and we, the national park employees, have grown and evolved over the past 150 years as well. From military control and management in the early years to a combination of military and civilian staffing, and finally to



ANPR President Paul Anderson, right, with Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly, and Harry Yount Lifetime Achievement Award recipients Jack Morehead and Bill Halainen, after the awards presentation in Yellowstone, October 2021. This year marks the establishment of Yellowstone as the country's first national park. NPS / Jim Peaco

a fully civilian workforce, the employees in the national parks have always been dedicated to a higher ideal – to preserve these special places for all Americans to use and enjoy.

Our understanding of park resources and ecosystems continues to evolve, even today. During the early period of national parks, predators were deemed undesirable and eradicated from many parks, including Yellowstone. Wolves and mountain lions were eradicated in Yellowstone and Grand Canyon National Parks and elsewhere. It wasn't until the end of the 20th Century that science helped us better understand ecosystem functioning and the critical importance of restoring predators to the ecosystem. Today the effects of climate change in our parks require us to evolve our thinking and our actions to establish and maintain resilient ecosystems and the integrity of the resources the parks were established to protect. We now need to adjust our thinking about “non-native species” in national parks, as climate warming causes northward and upward migration of species into, through, and out of our parks, including Yellowstone.

Our growing understanding of justice, equality, diversity and inclusion is leading us to broaden how we interpret our parks and their history, and to better understand and incorporate Native Americans (and others) as well as their history in managing and interpreting what are their “homelands.” A diverse park staff adds tremendous value and quality to the work we do, and we must all seek opportunities to improve representation and engagement in our staff, in our programs, and in our visitors. National parks, the national park idea and national park management have not remained static over the past 150 years. Nor will they in the future. The National Park system has grown and become more diverse in character. National park employees have learned, adapted and innovated to meet these changing needs. This is how it should be — we learn from our history and our mistakes and successes, and improve our skills and capabilities for the future. Let us, together, meet the challenge to evolve and improve our knowledge and our culture for the betterment of the parks and the public for the next 150 years!

As always, thank you for your commitment and your dedication to our national parks, and to each other.

— Paul R. Anderson
ANPR President

Yellowstone National Park

‘A place of beginnings’

By Tony Sisto

The substantial gazebo of large stone and timber nestles at the end of a small cul-de-sac in Gardiner, Mont., along the northern boundary of Yellowstone National Park. “Confluence Park,” as the gazebo represents, sits appropriately overlooking the unassuming entrance of the Gardner River* into the greater Yellowstone

River, both coursing, now joined, across the unseen boundary of the park.

Although easily scenic, this confluence simply mimics thousands of other rivers and waterways joining together in their quest for an ocean. And yet, this particular confluence has larger meaning. In this case, it forms the beginning and ending point of the legislated boundaries of the first national park in the world – Yellowstone.

I was recently with Gardiner resident Bill Berg, who showed me changes in the community, particularly along Park Street, which is directly on the boundary line of the park. Bill is a longtime friend and a member of the Yellowstone brotherhood and sisterhood whose lives have been inculcated by Yellowstone country. He is married to retired career Yellowstone park ranger Colette Daigle-Berg. After first arriving in 1972, Bill worked for decades in the park with its various

concessioners, with a few seasons as a backcountry ranger thrown in.

He later shifted gears to begin a highly successful business, “CoolWorks: Jobs in Great Places.” A few years ago, he sold the business, and is now a Park County Commissioner. He is 6-foot-5, but stands taller. He’s always ready for a laugh, but is serious about his job and the things he does.

Over the years, Bill had become transfixed with the idea that the confluence, while representing the physicality of the place of beginning for the 1872 original rectangular boundaries, also speaks philosophically as the beginning of something larger. Hence, he was instrumental, along with others, in the creation of Confluence Park, and talks persuasively of how symbolically important that location is to not only Yellowstone, but to the national park idea worldwide.

What does this place truly represent?

BEGINNINGS

First and always, there is the land. Long before European explorers and Americans entered the picture, at least “27 tribes and bands used the park as their home, hunting grounds, and transportation routes prior to and after European American arrival.” (NPS, Yellowstone). Then, as European settlers moved in larger numbers into North America, the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 acquired much of the future park, while the Oregon Treaty of 1846 gained control of the rest.



Well before the Oregon Treaty, however, the General Land Office was established in 1812 to begin its “plan of rectangular surveys” across the public lands, hoping to establish “the ideal agrarian democracy” envisioned by Thomas Jefferson and others. Surveys were accomplished as the need dictated, usually by the prospect of imminent settlement (Stegner, Wallace; p. 378). Although the future Yellowstone Park was still mostly unexplored by European Americans, and the mountain west had largely not yet been surveyed, settlers were moving west, and the railroads would one day be knocking at the door.

As part of the great scientific surveys of the American west, beginning in the mid-1800s, explorers had increased people’s awareness of some of the wonders of this area. In particular, members of the 1870 Washburn-Langford-Doane expedition into the Yellowstone country published effusive reports of these wonders. Then, in 1871, Dr. Ferdinand Hayden, head of the recently established Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, organized his first expedition to the Yellowstone country. As a result, he proposed the original rectangular boundaries for a national park that appeared as legislation by the end of that year, becoming law on March 1, 1872. Knowing that he had probably not seen the entire Yellowstone country, he conceived the proposed park tract by establishing generally arbitrary points of measurement, including the confluence of the Yellowstone and Gardner rivers, which was easily visible from the standard entry into the Yellowstone area (Clayton, John). It was from here, the “place of beginning” as described in the legislation, that he and his men entered, and to which they returned after their explorations into the future park.

Although Hayden’s map showed the 3,578 square miles of the proposed park, the initial

Boundary team members Dan Reinhart, left, and George Bornemann conduct survey work near the summit of Wolverine Peak in the Northeast boundary of Yellowstone. Photo: Bill Berg



The confluence of the Yellowstone and Gardner rivers: Where 150-year-old Yellowstone National Park all began. Photo: Courtesy Tony Sisto

field surveys for boundary marking did not truly commence until the 1880s. When the early park superintendents arrived, they would describe “the boundaries undefined.” “[T]he fact that the boundaries of the park were not marked, were not even known on the ground – for there had been no survey with markers – created great difficulty,” they said. (Ise, pp. 20, 21). The lack of boundaries made it nearly impossible to manage and protect such an area from illegal hunting, mining, and prospective concessioners seeking to build establishments nearby. After Army Capt. George Anderson arrived as superintendent in 1891, he declared a boundary establishment “the most important bit of work yet to be accomplished.” He thus assigned oversight of the project to Lt. Charles Bromwell of the Army Corps of Engineers “who placed reference monuments of cut stone at the most easterly and southerly points of Yellowstone Lake and at the westerly point of Shoshone Lake.” These monuments then allowed the boundaries as described in the legislation to be measured and established to the east, south, and west. (Haines, Vol II, p. 221, 222). These original monuments still exist.

With the confluence known, and these initial monuments established, fieldwork for the true boundaries of the park commenced in a series of surveys beginning in the 1880s. Fractional surveys of the north boundary, including the confluence, were surveyed by Rodney Page, Assistant Engineer, in 1883, with the remaining boundaries surveyed by others over the next two decades (BLM). After a further flurry of surveys in the late 1920s/early 1930s in response to hydrographical boundary changes, the boundaries were seldom re-visited again or re-marked by surveyors (National Archives). As such, the earlier issues of human misuse across these lines began cropping up again.

THE BOUNDARY PROJECT

In 1982, ranger Bob Jackson, at the remote Thorofare ranger station, contacted Tim Hudson, a civil engineer working with the National Park Service in the Lake District (who later became the park’s chief of maintenance). Tim was overseeing a lot of surveying projects, such as laying out water and sewage lines, and supervised crews of surveyors in the park. The two men had worked together in the mid-1970s, so Bob knew Tim’s experience.

“Bob was having some poaching problems along the boundary,” Hudson said, “and was asking for help.” He needed to know exactly where the boundary was, marked all those decades ago. So that year, over Labor Day weekend, Tim and a co-worker, Nancy Ward (who later became chief of maintenance for the park as well after Tim transferred), organized a team of volunteers from the park and went to Thorofare on their days off to conduct an initial search for the original boundary markers.

The Thorofare is one of the most remote areas of the park, a place that only a minuscule percentage of Yellowstone visitors ever touch. When there, you are “twenty-five miles from the nearest road in that broad, willow-covered valley dominated by 11,000-foot peaks,” (Haines, p. 306, Vol II), an area that Hayden also described: “As far as the eye could reach on every side, bare, bald peaks, domes, ridges in great numbers could be seen. ... From the summit of the ridge, the view is grand in the extreme.” (Hayden, p. 133) Into this country Tim, Nancy and their crew headed, in search of boundary stones and blazes, most not seen since last touched by surveying parties in the early 1900s. In the park archives were copies of early survey field notes for locating bearing trees or markers. These points, in turn, would, if found, point the direction – the bearing – to the



A gazebo at Confluence Park in Gardiner, Mont., marks the “beginnings” of Yellowstone National Park. Photo: Courtesy Tony Sisto

rock cairns or stones marking the boundary itself, now grown over or displaced.

“In the beginning, we mostly used just a compass, but at times did take full survey instruments including a transit,” Nancy explained.

“Starting south on the south boundary trail heading to Bridger Lake, we were able to find some of the bearing trees, including in particular a 4-inch-by-4-inch empty square depression in the ground, where earlier wood had rotted away, marking an early monument,” Tim said.

It was a thrilling moment, which led to eventually finding other original boundary stones and markers. Over the years, they and other volunteer crews have been back several times, bringing new metal boundary signs to clearly mark this critical section of the park.

The project soon became an annual event and continued into other areas of the park that were needing similar assistance. Many “were done for poaching, because of salt licks right on the boundaries,” Tim said (salt licks are legal in Wyoming). Working almost always over the Labor Day weekend on their own time, with other volunteers, the project has continued until today. Tim estimates that at least 40 volunteers have participated over the years, many returning multiple times. Tim has missed only five of the trips; Nancy has never missed one over the past 40 years. The most recent survey was conducted in 2021 at the northeast corner of the park, locating and re-marking some of the 1932 hydrographic boundary changes.

GROUND ZERO

Bill Berg joined the boundary project seven or eight years ago. He found excitement in working with this experienced group and finding living truth in 100-year-old boundary markers in carved stone or wooden monuments, grown-over tree blazes, and archaic descriptions of directions from old bearing points. In these seldom-visited wild and spectacular areas of the park, he continued to reflect on the meaning of identifying a place of importance.

A confluence of rivers does not a park or movement make, but description in law of such a place, and then decades of enactment and further ratification of the worth of this law, can, over time, lead one to wonder deeply, and build from the language of substance something substantial. As Aubrey Haines aptly put it in his “History of Yellowstone”: “The highest development of the park idea, which made its appearance with the creation of Yellowstone National Park, harbored possibilities not immediately apparent.” (Haines, p. 172, Vol I).

After working a number of years in the park, Bill began a job in 1986 that he said shifted his perspective. He began training new concessioner employees arriving in the park, in a room with no windows inside a large concrete building, sitting just above the Yellowstone River.

“Looking for a better sense of arrival” than an enclosed classroom, “I took the classroom outside, and on that first morning of training, standing directly at the conflu-

ence of the two rivers with those first-timers, I said, ‘Welcome to Yellowstone! This is where it started!’”

The impact worked, not only for the students, but in an important way for Bill.

“It was probably around this time that I began reflecting more deeply on the significance of not only the park, but of the confluence, how it represents something larger than simply a survey beginning,” he said. “In many ways it really is the beginning of the global national park idea, as both a geographical point and metaphorically, and perhaps in a larger frame, for much of the conservation movement linked to this idea.”

We were standing and talking on a recent wintry day in October in front of the Roosevelt Memorial Arch just outside Gardiner, that for over a century has welcomed people into Yellowstone.

“In 2010/11, a group of us from Gardiner and the park, organized and campaigned for what later came to be called the Gardiner Gateway Project,” Bill explained. The project included a resurveying and realignment of the traffic flow around the Arch and the entrance along Park Street that sits directly on the north park boundary.

“With a lot of work, and by establishing a deadline, we were able to raise the money, approval, and the work to reach our goals by the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016,” he added.

In all of the project, a hidden jewel was the serendipitous acquisition by the County of some private land near the confluence, and the building of the Confluence Park gazebo. “We made a conscious decision not to have a lot of interpretation, just this cool little secret, tucked away in a small space, overlooking something bigger.”

We were silent for a moment. I thought back to a few years earlier when he had first shown me the gazebo, and we had both stood there looking out over the land. The Gardner River, not much larger than a good-size stream, slips over rocks into the fast-flowing Yellowstone River. A dirt road leads steeply down to where you can touch both waters, and perhaps imagine surveyor Hayden entering the future park from here as he had in 1871 with his pack trains, bound for his own life-changing experience.

Bill continued: “When we were seeking funding and support for the Gateway Project, and giving talks and so-on, the confluence and its importance was always a part of my pitch. I would reference the confluence as ‘Ground Zero’ for the global national park movement.”

He paused. “In the end, for me that is what it is. When looking at geographical spots on the map of significance, this is a big one.”

However it may be presented – Yellowstone, this ‘place of beginning,’ Ground Zero – the national park idea has indeed taken hold. For over 100 years, beginning with the Articles of Confederation, land laws in the United States were implemented primarily to give away or sell the public lands. That ended in 1872, when “the reservation of Yellowstone National Park as a ‘pleasuring ground for all the people’” marked the beginning of a change from disposal to retention.” (Stegner, Page; p. 263)

Ferdinand Hayden recognized this change as well in his 1872 annual report to the Secretary of the Interior, where in a separate chapter on the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, he wrote, with some amazement, what is in essence a thank-you note to Congress:

That our legislators, at a time when public opinion is so strong against appropriating the public domain for any purpose however laudable, should reserve, for the benefit and instruction of the people a tract of 3,578 square miles, is an act that should cause universal joy throughout the land.

And almost immediately it did become joy. Despite increasing pressure on Congress to provide federal funding for the new park (different from the earlier Yosemite grant to California where the state was responsible), national parks continued to be supported (Haines, p.179, Vol I). By 1906 and the passage of the Antiquities Act, Congress had established eight additional parks. And 10 years later, when the NPS was created in 1916, there were 13 parks and 19 national monuments. (Sisto, Ranger, 1993). Likewise, from 300 visitors to Yellowstone in 1872, by 1906 over 217,000 visitors had seen the park. (Haines, p.478, Vol II).

Ferdinand Hayden did not know at the beginning of 1871 what would be brought forth from his journey and its aftermath, what would arise from his surveying placements and descriptions of the proposed park on his map. Yet, things arose of major importance.

“When looking at geographical spots on the map of significance, this is a big one.”

And it is.

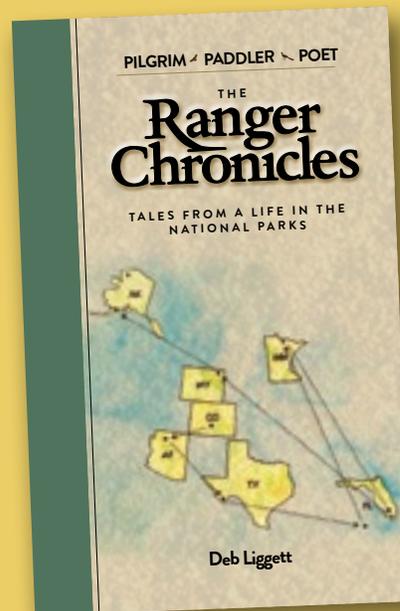
Tony Sisto is retired after 33 years with the NPS. His assignments took him to 10 national park areas, including six years in Yellowstone. He and his wife, Deanne Adams, also an NPS retiree, live in Alaska.

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- Endnotes: “The two spellings of “Gardiner/Gardner” probably resulted from a “phonetic rendering of Jim Bridger’s Virginian drawl.” Today, the town is Gardiner, while the river is Gardner. (See Haines, p. 266 Vol I).*



Survey team member Nancy Ward finds an old cairn when searching for boundary markers, 2016. Photo: Courtesy Bill Berg



Pilgrim, Paddler, Poet: The Ranger Chronicles

is part first-person memoir, part celebration of the natural world, part insider journalism. NPS veteran Deb Liggett’s book is a must-read for rangers, wannabe rangers, armchair travelers and lovers of the nation’s parklands.

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The Ranger Chronicles

Tales from a life in the national parks.

150 sesquicentennial years of Yellowstone

Story by Morgan Warthin & Photos by Jacob Frank



Hikers enjoy the expanse of Specimen Ridge in June 2020. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. NPS / Jacob W. Frank

*M*ARCH 1, 2022, MARKS THE 150TH anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. Signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant, America's first national park was set aside to preserve and protect the scenery, cultural heritage, wildlife, geologic and ecological systems and processes in their natural condition for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Yellowstone serves as the core of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, one of the largest nearly intact natural ecosystems remaining on the planet. Yellowstone has the most active, diverse, and intact collections of combined geothermal features with more than 10,000 hydrothermal sites and half the world's active geysers. The park is also rich in cultural and historical resources with 25 sites, landmarks

and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.

Based on the park's location at the convergence of the Great Plains, Great Basin, and Columbia Plateau, many Native American Tribes have traditional connections to the land and its resources. For more than 10,000 years before Yellowstone became a national park, it was a place where Native Americans hunted, fished, gathered plants, quarried obsidian and used thermal waters for religious and medicinal purposes.

This anniversary is an important moment in time for the world. As stewards of this inspiring place, it is an opportunity for us to reflect on the lessons of the past and strengthen Yellowstone for the future. We will continue making decisions that aim to protect the health of Yellowstone for centuries to come.

Many lessons have been learned during Yellowstone's 150 years. In the 1920s, the government killed nearly all predators in the park, decimated the bison to less than 25 animals and generally took the



“Most of Yellowstone’s visitation occurs within an area that is far less than 1 percent of the park, putting heavy strains on the road and parking infrastructure.”

ecosystem out of balance. Especially over the past 50 years, the National Park Service slowly put the pieces back together through the gray wolf reintroduction in 1995, and major bison, grizzly, cougar, native fish, and many other restoration efforts. These actions have generally brought the ecosystem back into balance in many measurable ways.

Challenges the park has faced are not limited to the early 20th Century. The fires of 1988, human introduction of non-native lake trout to Yellowstone Lake in the 1980s, and many other examples of modern-day intrusions are lessons the park continues to use to improve management for the future.

The 1988 fires for instance, have been described as being instrumental in the public’s understanding of the role of fire in ecosystems. Thirty-six percent (793,880 acres) of the park was affected by fire, and the fires created a landscape of burns, partial burns, and unburned areas – called a mosaic. A mosaic provides natural firebreaks and sustains a greater variety of plant and animal species. After the fires of 1988, a national policy-review team examined the national fire policy and concluded that natural fire policies in national parks and wilderness areas were sound.

The rise in visitation is a challenge Yellowstone faces today and will continue facing in the future. Most of Yellowstone’s visitation occurs within an area that is far less than 1 percent of the park, putting heavy strains on the road and parking infrastructure. Approximately 1,750 acres of the 2.2 million acres are roads and parking lots. This means that increasing visitation levels will have larger impacts on park infrastructure. While managing this challenge, the park will continue to provide visitor access while protecting resources and creating a positive visitor experience.

The park has developed a visitor-use strategy that focuses on preventing and mitigating resource impacts, understanding and responding to impacts on staffing and infrastructure, improving visitor experience and working with gateway communities to continue facilitating recreational access and positive economic impacts through visitor spending. The park has already implemented many micro-geographic actions to address increasing visitation in specific areas. These actions will become more aggressive as visitation increases in future years.

To tackle the challenges of today, Yellowstone set five major strategic priorities, each supporting the overarch-

YELLOWSTONE CHALLENGES, FROM TOP: Crowds gather at the Firehole River bridge at Midway Geyser Basin; a housing project for YACC (Young Adult Conservation Corps) Camp Housing Project is completed in November 2021; and visitors enjoy an Old Faithful afternoon fall eruption. NPS / Jacob W. Frank

‘Yellowstone is bigger than its boundary. Each of our partners plays a vital role in helping make decisions that not only protect Yellowstone for future generations, but also improve the many positive conservation, environmental, economic, and social impacts the park provides this region and the country.’



YELLOWSTONE EVENTS

Due to COVID-19, the park does not currently have large events planned; however, this may change as the year progresses.

FOR MORE INFO:

- VISIT: go.nps.gov/Yellowstone150
- FOLLOW: #Yellowstone150

ing National Park Service (NPS) mission and each critical to the success of Yellowstone National Park. These priorities are:

- Focus on the Core (workforce);
- Strengthen the Yellowstone Ecosystem and Heritage Resources;
- Deliver a World-Class Visitor Experience;
- Invest in Infrastructure; and
- Build Coalitions and Partnerships.

Within each of these strategic priority areas are a wide range of actions designed to achieve success.

Progress continues to be made, including major employee housing and workforce improvements, ongoing progress in conservation and historic preservation, strategic actions for addressing the effects of climate change, managing increasing visitation, and investing hundreds of millions of dollars into current and future infrastructure improvements.

Importantly, Yellowstone is bigger than its boundary. Each of our partners plays a vital role in helping make decisions that not only protect Yellowstone for future generations, but also improve the many positive conservation, environmental, economic, and social impacts the park provides this region and the country.

Beginning March 1, the park will host and participate in a range of activities to commemorate the 150th. Multiple Tribal Nations will be present throughout the summer at Old Faithful as part of the Yellowstone Tribal Heritage Center project where tribal members will interact with visitors about their cultures and heritage. Tribes are also coordinating with Yellowstone to install a large tepee village in the park near the Roosevelt Arch in August.

During this anniversary year, Yellowstone will open 40 new employee housing units throughout the park along with ground-breakings on projects totaling more than \$125 million funded through the Great American Outdoors Act. These projects include two of the largest historic preservation projects in the country and a range of transportation projects that will address aging infrastructure. This year also will mark the reopening of Tower Fall to Chittenden Road (near Dunraven Pass), a \$28-million road improvement project completed over the past two years.

The park will participate in the 15th Biennial Scientific Conference on the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem hosted by Montana State University, the Wyoming Governor’s Hospitality and Tourism Conference, and the University of Wyoming’s Yellowstone National Park 150 Anniversary Symposium. The park is also grateful to Wind River (Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho) and other Tribal Nations for planning a multi-tribal gathering on the Wind River Reservation later in the year.

Morgan Warthin is public affairs officer in the Office of the Superintendent at Yellowstone.



YELLOWSTONE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FROM TOP: Attendees celebrate at a North Entrance tepee installation event in 2021; a new viewpoint and pullout on the Tower to Chittenden Road, which opens this summer; and, as part of a larger effort, the first group of Yellowstone bison exit trailers at Fort Peck Indian Reservation in 2019. NPS / Jacob W. Frank



‘A positive impact’

A conversation with Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly

Yellowstone Superintendent Cam Sholly has had a distinguished NPS career that includes such leadership positions as Midwest regional director, associate director and deputy associate director of Visitor and Resource Protection (HQ), superintendent of the Natchez Trace Parkway, special assistant to the director (HQ) chief of ranger operations for Yosemite and a variety of other field positions. We thank him for taking the time to share some of his thoughts on Yellowstone past, present and future.

Q. How long have you been at Yellowstone National Park, and as superintendent? What is it like to oversee such an iconic part of the nation’s NP history?

A. I’ve been superintendent since 2018. It is the greatest privilege to work with such a dynamic team of employees and partners who are so dedicated to protecting this incredible park for the future.

Q. The Sholly name is not unfamiliar in the NPS. Can you talk about how your father’s career influenced your own, and what it was like being a Park Service “kid?”

A. I am a third-generation NPS employee. My grandfather was the chief ranger of Big Bend and Shenandoah, and superintendent of Badlands back in the 1940s and 1950s. I was fortunate to grow up in parks as a kid when my father worked for the NPS in parks like Yosemite, Crater Lake, Hawaii Volcanoes and Yellowstone. Growing up in parks was a big influence in my life and really gave me a great NPS foundation early on.

Q. This year marks Yellowstone’s 150th anniversary and predates the beginnings of the NPS. Looking back over this time frame, and as a flagship park, how would you say Yellowstone’s very existence has shaped the way the public views the NPS as a whole?

A. The 150th is a really good time for us to not only reflect on the past, but also focus on the future. Early on, we really didn’t get it right. We killed most of the apex predators in the park, decimated the bison population; we were feeding bears out of garbage dumps as late as the 1960s. It’s only been really the last 50 years that we’ve gotten our act together and really put the pieces of this ecosystem back together. In many ways, the mistakes made here in the late 19th and early 20th century helped us change course in how we look at conservation and preservation. We recognized that tinkering in uninformed ways with natural processes can

be devastating to the health of an ecosystem. Due to the incredible work of so many people over the past decades, Yellowstone’s ecosystem in many ways is stronger now than it has been since 1872. That doesn’t mean it isn’t under threat. Whether we look at climate change, increasing visitation, or other external factors, we can easily go backwards if we’re not paying attention and constantly working to protect and improve on the progress we’ve made.

Q. What does Yellowstone hope to convey to the public over the next year to showcase these past 150 years?

A. We’re focused on highlighting the importance of Yellowstone to the world. We’re also taking advantage of this point in time to substantially improve our tribal engagement and collaboration. It’s important to realize that nearly 30 tribes are formally “associated” with Yellowstone and were here for thousands of years prior to Yellowstone becoming a national park.

While we’ve had good partnerships with tribes over the past years, we’re taking our engagement to new levels and I’m proud of the work we’re doing with so many tribal nations leading into the 150th.

It’s important that the public better understand the roles tribes play in this area and that we work together to allow these tribes to tell their stories directly to Yellowstone visitors. A few things we’re doing: We’re working with tribes to stand up the first tribal heritage center in Yellowstone’s history. This will be a place where different tribal nations will showcase their artwork and other cultural and heritage-related history to the public. In partnership with the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes and Intertribal Buffalo Council, we’ve moved nearly 200 Yellowstone bison to Fort Peck since 2019 and 138 have been transferred from Fort Peck to 19 different tribal nations over the past two years. During the 150th we’ll complete a major expansion of our bison facility, which will allow us to move more bison to tribes in the future. In August, multiple tribes will participate in setting up a large tepee village in the park near the north entrance, allowing visitors to directly interact with tribal members. The Nez Perce Tribe will conduct multiple horse rides in the park in July and we’re working with multiple tribes to establish a tribal internship program. The Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes of the Wind River Reservation will host a symposium on the 150th to discuss how we can collaborate more closely in the future. Many other tribes and tribal colleges are engaging us with ideas that we’re excited to work on.

Separately, we’ll have several events throughout the year including a virtual video series shared on social media on various Yellowstone topics, and ribbon cuttings for over 40 new employee housing



Superintendent Cam Sholly at Fort Yellowstone in Yellowstone National Park, 2019. Sholly shares some of his thoughts on the park during this year's 150th anniversary year. NPS / Jacob W. Frank

units and several recently completed major transportation projects. We'll also launch two of the largest historic preservation projects in the country, and a variety of other major projects.

Q. If you had to come up with three management issues/challenges that are most pressing to public lands in general, and Yellowstone, what would they be, and how is Yellowstone addressing those?

A. It's not an easy question to answer. The biggest threats to Yellowstone's future are by far related to climate change. Projections show the park's climate by the end of the century will be similar to what we see today in southern Utah. Understanding and responding to how and when these impacts will occur is the biggest challenge facing not only Yellowstone, but the entire system. We're investing more into climate, understanding the impacts of proliferating non-native species infiltrating the park, working across boundaries with our state, federal, nonprofit, tribal, and public partners to understand how we can better coordinate, share data and science, and proactively address the threats that are coming.

Increasing visitation continues to be challenging and is something we're greatly focused on. We have a very good core visitor use strategy that is helping guide decisions to respond to impacts of visitation on resources, staffing and infrastructure, visitor experience, and our gateway communities. Many new actions will need to be taken as we move forward.

Employee housing, although not flashy, is probably one of the

single biggest challenges we face in the upcoming years. The park does not run itself. It takes a high-quality team and we need to be able to provide quality housing for employees and their families. We've appreciated the support we've gotten over the past few years to replace 1960s and 1970s trailers with new housing units, however, this is only part of the problem. Record housing prices and lack of private rentals have made recruitment of positions very difficult. Couple that with increasing visitation and it's a disaster in the making. As more and more of the workforce retires, many of whom have housing outside the park, the replacements hired will not be able to afford housing and it will require us to provide more housing capacity in the park or through partnerships outside of the park. This is complicated but I suggest in many big parks that are in very expensive housing markets, the agency must embark on a Mission-66 like approach to handling this problem.

Q. What about successes? How has Yellowstone proven to be an example to other national parks and public lands, leading the way in what areas?

A. The NPS is filled with incredible and dedicated people. There is so much great work going on around the country by park service teams everywhere. We regularly learn from other parks and share information on best practices in efforts to make each other better across the system.

We do have one of the best teams in the country here in Yellowstone. As I mentioned, we're very happy with the progress we've

made in a wide range of areas. We set five major strategic priority areas in 2019 including:

- Focus on the Core (Workforce)
- Strengthening the Yellowstone Ecosystem, Heritage Resources and Sustainability
- Providing a World Class Visitor Experience
- Investing in Infrastructure
- Building Coalitions and Partnerships

We're proud of the progress we've made improving employee housing, with more than \$40 million invested in the past two years. We continue to make substantial investments in protecting and maintaining the ecosystem. Examples include investing record amounts into bison conservation and native fish restoration and improving data and science and capacity for addressing climate change. We are also focusing on installation of EV charging stations, completion of multiple solar arrays throughout the park, retrofitting over 26,000 incandescent light bulbs with LED, continuing to divert over half our waste from landfills, and a range of other sustainability priorities.

We continue to look for new ways to improve the visitor experience, piloting one of the first ever driverless automated vehicle (AV) shuttles this past year, conducting a shuttle feasibility study for the Midway Geyser corridor, and connecting with visitors through new exhibits, education programs, web and social media. Over \$125 million will be invested in Yellowstone infrastructure in 2022 as part of the Great American Outdoors Act. This includes two of the largest historic preservation projects in the country. Last, our web of partnerships and coalitions continues to expand substantially, not only throughout the country, but around the globe.

Q. A park can't succeed without great leaders and satisfied staff behind it. How does Yellowstone celebrate and encourage the people who work there so they can in turn provide the best visitor experience?

A. The NPS as a whole has a long way to go here. While we've made great strides as an agency, we have a lot of work to do. We want the best of the best not only here in Yellowstone, but across the system. We have one of the most noble missions and dedicated teams in the world. Continuing to listen to the workforce and break down barriers to innovation and progress is essential. We also have to apply real solutions to the problems we're facing. Our teams must feel support – we must act on what we say and have clarity in our priority setting and execution. Investing in the workforce is paramount if we want to build team cohesion and future leaders.

Q. You mentioned the \$125 million in GAOA funds that will be used for a range of transportation and non-transportation improvement projects. What are the next steps?

A. The agency needs to not only continue investing in the highest priority projects, but we need to ensure we have funding identified to protect these investments in the future. It does us no good to make substantial expenditures in asset improvements only to let them immediately deteriorate through lack of proper cyclical maintenance. I'm confident that our leaders in Washington understand this and we're working on a plan to continue addressing both deferred maintenance levels and the future investments we need to make to protect this progress into the future.



Cam Sholly at Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park, 2018. Sholly is a third-generation NPS professional. NPS / Jacob W. Frank

Q. With the COVID-19 pandemic overshadowing the past two-plus years, park visitation has exploded. What are the positives and negatives of this, and how is Yellowstone addressing this growth?

A. Like all parks, growing visitation continues to imbalance our staffing to workload ratios. Funding levels must keep pace with not only inflation, but with the demands that extra visitation brings. Visitation has increased by 50 million throughout the system since 2013 alone. This causes real impacts to parks that must be addressed strategically in the future.

Q. Can you share with readers some of your favorite places in the park? When you have time to yourself and could explore any areas, where would they be, and why?

A. There are many amazing places in Yellowstone. I try to get into the backcountry at least 200 miles per year and have been fortunate to get out a considerable amount. The Thorofare (SE corner of the park) is my favorite part of the park. It's one of the most remote areas of Yellowstone and an area you can go 20 miles in a day without seeing anyone.

Q. Finally, a more personal question – What do you like to do in your free time, outside of your superintendent flat hat?

A. I'm the worst work/life balance person you've probably ever met. I do get out into the backcountry as much as possible.

Q. Anything else you would like to add?

A. I think my big message to the team here and to teams across the system is thank you for what you do. Don't underestimate the positive impacts you're having on this incredible system. It's easy for us to get consumed by the crisis of the day and/or a lot of the negatives we have to deal with. Remember, what you're doing is noble, worthwhile, and incredibly important to the world. It's easy to turn into a skeptic and cynic. It's harder to break free from that and search for ways to make positive progress.



Two bison graze on the grass in front of the Museum of the National Park Ranger. NPS/Jim Peaco



Museum of the National Park Ranger celebrates the history, culture and evolution of rangers

By Melissa DeV Vaughn

TUCKED AWAY IN YELLOWSTONE'S NORRIS CAMPGROUND IS THE Museum of the National Park Ranger, which captures the evolution of rangers dating to the creation of the park in 1872. The small log structure was once part of an Army outpost, before the building and land became part of Yellowstone National Park.

"The museum came about as part of the celebration/commemoration of NPS's 75th Anniversary in 1991," said Linda Young, Yellowstone chief of the Division of Resource Education and Youth Programs, who was involved in the establishment of the museum. "In the years prior to the anniversary, several sites around the National Park System were identified as having significance relative to the establishment and history of the NPS."

Norris Soldier Station, as it was known at the time, was one of them. The former soldier station was built in 1908 when the U.S. Army was in charge of Yellowstone, and renovated and moved to its current location to serve as the museum.

"Norris Soldier Station is actually part of the Fort Yellowstone Historic Landmark District," Young continued. "The structure was deteriorating and needed preservation treatment and restoration. The idea grew to restore the structure and develop it into a small museum interpreting the evolution of 'rangering,' from the days of Army-era soldiers to the establishment of NPS rangers, who were modeled after their soldier predecessors."

It took two years to ready the structure for its new identity as a museum. A dedication was held in 1991, in time for the anniversary. At the time, ANPR members helped raise money to assist with the project – fitting since today, ANPR manages the Lifetime Harry Yount Award, which honors rangers who embody the "art and

science of rangering." Yount is long established as the 'first ranger' from his years in Yellowstone. The original bronze bust of Harry Yount is also housed in the museum.

"The Museum of the National Park Ranger, located in America's first national park, is a fitting tribute to the dedication, professionalism, and contributions of national park rangers in protecting all of our National Park Service areas," said ANPR President Paul Anderson. "Those efforts have connected the American public with their special places, and have resulted in 150 years of successful protection and visitor use."

The ranger museum is a small building, and due to that lack of space, the exhibits are generalized of necessity, Young said. However, "a variety of other interpretive services, tools, and media provide the rich and complex details of the story."

One half of the museum showcases the building's history as a soldier station, and the other half shows the establishment and evolution of the NPS and rangers.

"Most of the objects on display come from Yellowstone's museum collection, but a few items were donated by other NPS units and individuals," Young added.

The Museum of the National Park Ranger was closed in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 concerns, but with the commemoration of the park's 150th anniversary – and barring anymore COVID interruptions – staff and volunteers are planning to re-open this summer.

Contributions to help with the upkeep of the museum are always appreciated. Look for donation boxes at the museum or call 307-344-7353 (in season only) for additional information.

RECOLLECTIONS

NPS 'brats' experienced *all* of Yellowstone

By Leslie Spurlin

BEING A PARK SERVICE “BRAT” IN YELLOWSTONE during the 1950’s held a certain charm.

Brenda Guiltner, daughter of Chuck and Ronnie Budge, changed schools 10 times in 12 years growing up as the child of a National Park Service family.

“It was a special childhood if you were lucky enough to be born into a family where one of your parents had chosen to serve in the National Park Service,” she said.

One of those highlights, she said, were her years in Yellowstone National Park. As the park commemorates its 150th year in 2022, Brenda reflected on her time there, when she was just a grade-schooler.

The Budges moved to Mammoth Hot Springs in 1954 but were soon transferred to Bechler River Ranger Station in the park’s remote southwest corner. For two summers, they lived in a house that had no indoor plumbing, a real ice box, minimal electricity, and bats in the attic.

“Once in awhile one flew through the house scaring Mom to death— me too actually, but curiosity took over,” Brenda said. “Dad and I went up a ladder into the attic in the daytime when bats sleep to investigate, and for him to study and document.”

A fall move to West Gate in West Yellowstone, Mont., introduced neighbors, which included Karl and Ruth Gilbert and their young children, Karla and Paul. The Gilberts had moved to Yellowstone in the fall of 1952, when Karla was 4 and her brother just a baby. The girls became friends, and both Brenda and Karla remember a bitter winter morning when Chuck Budge had to walk the kids to school when his vehicle wouldn’t start at -52 degrees.

Brenda said that it would get so cold that when her mother hung their laundry outside to dry (they had no indoor dryer), the “jeans would come off the line so frozen that they’d stand on their own.”

The fur coat of her teacher Mrs. Smith is what Karla recalls of those cold days.

“A couple memories I have of those years at school were a field trip to the fish hatchery where (classmate) Rosemary Rider fell in one of the ponds,” she said. “Mrs. Smith wrapped her up in her fur coat while they dried out her clothes somewhere. Another thing I remember was Junior Schoolcraft getting sick at school. Mrs. Smith brought green leather chairs from the office and made him a bed in



Above, Karla Gilbert took this photo in about 1956, of the house she lived in during her family’s time at Mammoth Hot Springs. At right, the Gilbert family tradition included creating family photo holiday cards that were sent from the parks in which they were living. This one is from the Yellowstone years. Courtesy Karla Gilbert



the back of the room and covered him up with her fur coat.

“Oh, the memories! I don’t ever remember being cold, even on those 52-degree-below days,” Karla said. “Our snow suits kept us warm, even wearing dresses to school.”

After two summers at Bechler, the Budges transferred to Canyon, located almost in the middle of the park, and where it was not unusual for bears to be nearby when children were playing.

One afternoon, the neighbor boys and Brenda went out to play.

“There was a bear sitting on our back porch with only the screen door to keep it from coming right inside the apartments,” she said.

It was always a shock to the system, when after their remote postings, the Budges returned to Mammoth Hot Springs and civilization. They lived near the hotel, commissary, barns, administration offices, and maintenance shop, and Brenda attended class in a schoolhouse that had three grades in each room. The gym offered space for community games, church services, dances, and parties.

The Gilberts also experienced this dichotomy. One of their first postings, in the spring of 1953 was at South Gate Ranger Station, where they spent two summers and one winter – snowed in. The big, two-story duplex had a coal stove and furnace, but electricity was available only in the evening by means of a generator.

“The women planned washing, ironing, sewing and vacuuming for nighttime so the men could have light to read or work by,” Karla said.



Welcome to the ANPR family

Here are the newest members of the Association of National Park Rangers (updated 2/18/2022)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Thomas Parker | Santa Barbara, CA |
| Sheridan Steele | Highlands Ranch, CO |
| Vickie Sciacca | Danville, CA |
| Gary Bremen | Wilton Manors, FL |
| Brian Quigley | Moab, UT |
| Nichole Haines | Valparaiso, CA |
| Morgan Ruelle | Philadelphia, PA |
| Timothy Pagano | Sandyston, NJ |
| Leroy Olson | Custer, SD |
| Greta Ketchner | Shavertown, PA |
| Chad Johnson | Seattle, WA |
| Karyl Yeston | Santa Fe, NM |
| Jody Cottingham | Cullman, AL |
| Joe Spillane | Ashford, WA |



Kudos List

These people have either given someone a gift membership to ANPR or recruited a new member. Thanks for your help and support! (updated 2/18/2022)

- Ed Rizzotto
- Tom Banks



Chuck and Ronnie Budge, and their daughter, Brenda, enjoy a tailgate picnic on Fall River at Bechler Station in the '50s. Brenda Guiltner has fond memories of growing up in the park. Courtesy Brenda Guiltner

Most necessities were ordered by catalog, and groceries stocked early for winter. Root vegetables were stored in sand in the basement, and Karla's dad hunted outside the park to supplement their diet with goose, duck, venison, and elk. With no snow vehicles for transportation, they occasionally received visits from Felix and Lila Budd who flew in by snowplane from Flagg Ranch.

In the fall of 1954, the Gilberts moved to West Yellowstone (in time for Karla to begin first grade), and the summer of 1956 to Old Faithful, where a popular attraction was watching the bears feed at the garbage dump – a practice that park managers long ago eliminated.

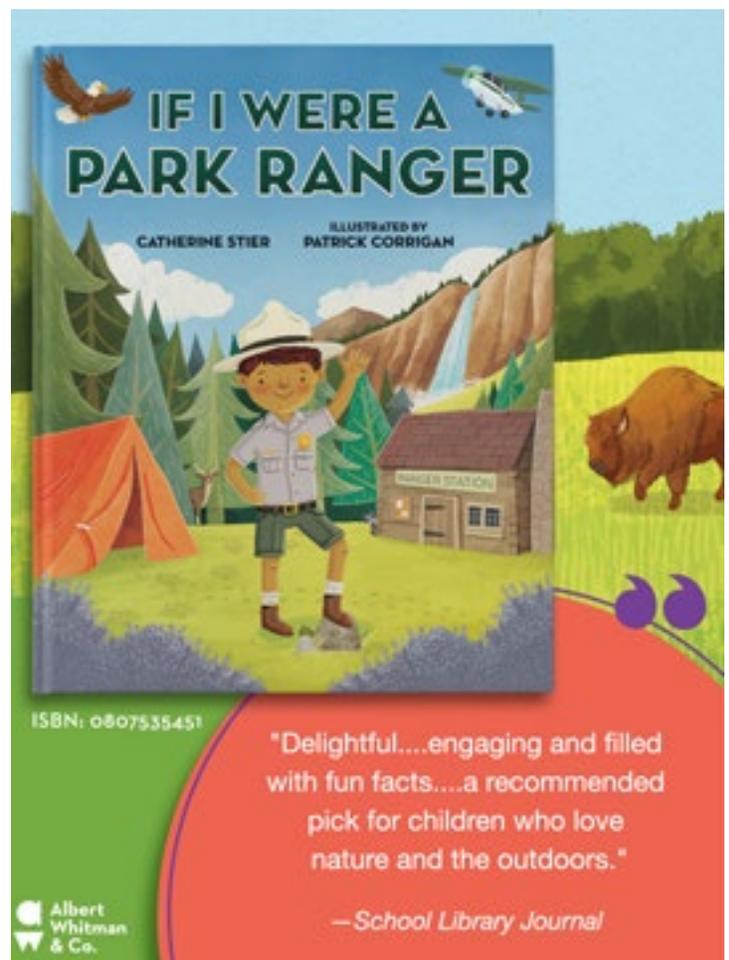
“Early in the evening, humans gathered and were shut in a large, sturdy cage made of tall rusty poles and heavy wire mesh, which provided protection,” Karla said. “Garbage was dumped into a pit some distance from the cage front. We waited quietly, and it was not long before several bears came cautiously out of the woods, sniffing the air. They ambled toward the pit and began feasting on tasty garbage morsels. We were close enough to hear grunting and growling, but I don't remember any fighting while we were watching.”

Caretaker Dunny Dunlap would sort through the trash coming from the hotels, salvaging silverware that had been inadvertently tossed. The Gilberts had a set of “dump silverware” – including “three sterling silver cocktail forks with the initials Y.P.H., which probably stood for Yellowstone Park Hotel” that traveled with them from park to park and into retirement.

“The pieces were not all perfectly matched but were great for picnics and to supplement when we first encountered dishwashers and stopped hand washing after every meal,” she said.

Now, nearly 70 years later, neither Brenda nor Karla regrets their free-range childhoods – it shaped their entire lives. In fact, they agree they wouldn't trade those experiences for the world.

Leslie Spurlin, the daughter of Dwight and Mickey Hamilton, began her National Park Service brat career in Mount Rainier, then on to Colorado National Monument, Dinosaur, Hawaii Volcanoes, Glen Canyon, Grand Canyon, and Rocky Mountain. She currently lives in Grand Junction, Colo., where she bikes the same trails her park service father first carried her on in the Colorado National Monument.



Donor Recognition list

(Updated 2/15/2022)

Denali Peak \$1,000 and higher

Jack Morehead

Cliff Palace \$250-499

Ed Rizzotto
Dick Martin

Devil's Tower \$100-249

Gregg Fauth
Noemi Robinson
John Sacklin
John Case
Barbara Goodman
Stephen Hurd
Mike Murray
Carroll McGuffey
Dick Anderson

Appalachian Trail \$50-99

Jerry Case
Warren Bielenberg
Jeanette Meleen
Elsa Hansen

Little Rock Central High School \$25-49

Deny Galvin
Mark Flora
Tom Banks

Liberty Bell Up to \$25

Tim Moore
Steven Moore
Maya Seraphin
Larry Frederick
Nancy Ward
Karyl Yeston
Reghan Hedrick
Jody Cottingham
Demmy Vigil

In remembrance

Former Denali Park Ranger Craig Stowers, 67, passed away in Anchorage on Feb. 10, 2022. Stowers was a ranger at Denali (then Mount McKinley) National Park from 1977 to 1982, part of the 1977 national intake ranger program. He left the NPS in 1982 to attend law school, returning to Alaska as an attorney, later moving into the judiciary. He became the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, but always cherished his roots as a park ranger, proudly displaying his flat hat and other memorabilia in his chambers.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

ANPR to offer new training opportunities

A new ANPR Education and Training Committee will begin meeting quarterly, online, to gather and disseminate information to members about in-person and online short-course training opportunities that are accessible to anyone — whether you're a student, volunteer, seasonal or full-time employee. These training opportunities can help build your NPS career. Contact committee chair Tom Banks at tbanks@anpr.org to offer your ideas or suggestions.

ANPR also offers a mentorship program. More than a dozen ANPR members are currently receiving mentoring from experienced NPS employees and retirees who offer advice and counsel for pursuing or building your career. To add your name to our list of mentors – or to receive mentoring – email tbanks@anpr.org or click on ANPR's website at <https://www.anpr.org/members/mentor.php>.



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INTERPRETATION

No replacement for in-person engagement

Informal interpretation and roving rangers remain viable options in parks, historic sites, and museums

By Randy Turner

READING THE ARTICLE “THE RANGER ROOST” BY DOUG CRISPIN in the Fall 2021 issue of *Ranger* about the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park brought back fond memories of my early days as a park ranger, circa the early 1970s to the mid-1980s. Second only to giving campfire programs, roving interpretation was my favorite assignment as a young park ranger. I enjoyed interacting with visitors at the Pinnacle Overlook at Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, along the seawall at Fort Pickens in Gulf Islands National Seashore, and walking around the base of the Statue of Liberty National Monument.

Like many others, I am an avid user of my iPhone, iPad and computer-based programs. Thankfully, park staffs had options for reaching visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic. I attended several “Coffee With a Ranger” programs on ZOOM, and I watched ranger- and volunteer-led walking tours on my computer. However, it was heartening to read that in addition to technology, traditional personal service interpretation was being used at NPS units such as Grand Canyon National Park. With reduced staffs, canceled tours, closed visitor centers and museums, it was even more of a challenge for park staffs to engage with visitors virtually and on site. I was pleased that roving interpretation was being offered in some parks.

As a visitor to parks, I like having options. My most two memorable solo experiences in a park were: being in Gettysburg National Cemetery at sunset in late July 1997 and walking across the Edmond Pettus Bridge at the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail in March 2013, the week after the March 7, 1965, anniversary of Bloody Sunday. I knew the overall stories at both sites and did not need much more than the locations. I experienced chills down my back both times.

With my membership at the nonprofit Bonnet House in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., I have been on about 10 docent-led guided tours over the past 10 years. With COVID-19 restrictions, guided tours of the house, art studio and grounds were canceled. Later on, guides were stationed in each major room, and on my last visit in a small group, I learned new things about the site and its residents and we were able to ask more personal questions. We all wore masks and practiced social distancing, and I did not miss a guided tour.

I hope that tours and personal services will continue to be hallmark NPS interpretation programs. I also acknowledge that interpretation in the NPS and other agencies must evolve. Current and future technology must be appropriately incorporated in programs, written materials, exhibits and media. Freeman Tilden’s first principle should



Retired NPS ranger Randy Turner is a consultant for parks, historic sites, museums, nature centers and heritage areas. Courtesy Randy Turner

guide interpretation: “Any interpretation that does not somehow relate to what is being displayed or being described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.”

Parks and interpretation must be relevant to visitors, whether virtual or on site. Visitors should have options from solo experiences, to self-guided tours with or without brochures, wayside exhibits, cell phone tours, podcasts and whatever new technology is available and affordable for the park and the visitor.

Before retiring in 2011, I would frequently remind staff that social media accounts, podcasts, cell phone tours, and the ever-evolving media options for interpretation and visitor services could be *in addition* to traditional programs. Informal interpretation and roving interpretation can often reach more visitors than guided programs, and in some parks can reach more visitors than in visitor centers.

Informal interpretation can be more flexible than staffed facilities. A bag with laminated photos, hand-held props and original or reproduction museum items can be used as supplements. Volunteers and docents can be trained to be successful roving interpreters in various park locations. In efforts to adapt interpretation to new technology and methods, I hope roving interpretation and informal interpretation continue to be part of park interpretive programs. I know the challenges staffs face with reduced budgets and staffing. Good luck!

Randy W. Turner is a Life Member of ANPR. He specializes in planning, training, facilitation, evaluations and other consulting work for parks, historic sites, museums, nature centers and heritage areas. He became a consultant in 2011 after retiring from a 35-year NPS career that included serving at 13 NPS units. His last assignment was as superintendent of Morristown National Historical Park in New Jersey.

PROTECTION

A numbers conundrum: they matter ... but only to a point

I'VE LOST COUNT HOW MANY TIMES OVER MY ALMOST 30-YEAR rangering career spanning five parks someone somewhere has asked me and my fellow rangers to get them "our stats." The stats (statistics) to which they're referring boil down to the number of incidents rangers at any given park deal with over the course of a defined period of time, for example, in an average year.

These incidents might be the number of physical arrests, the number of Violation Notices issued, the number of use-of-force encounters, the number of wildfires, the number of structural fires, the number of BLS runs, the number of ALS runs, the number of Major SARs, the number of Minor SARs, the number of traffic stops, the number of motor vehicle collisions (MVCs), the number of aviation-related SARs, the number of fatalities, the number of protracted backcountry searches, numbers, numbers, NUMBERS.

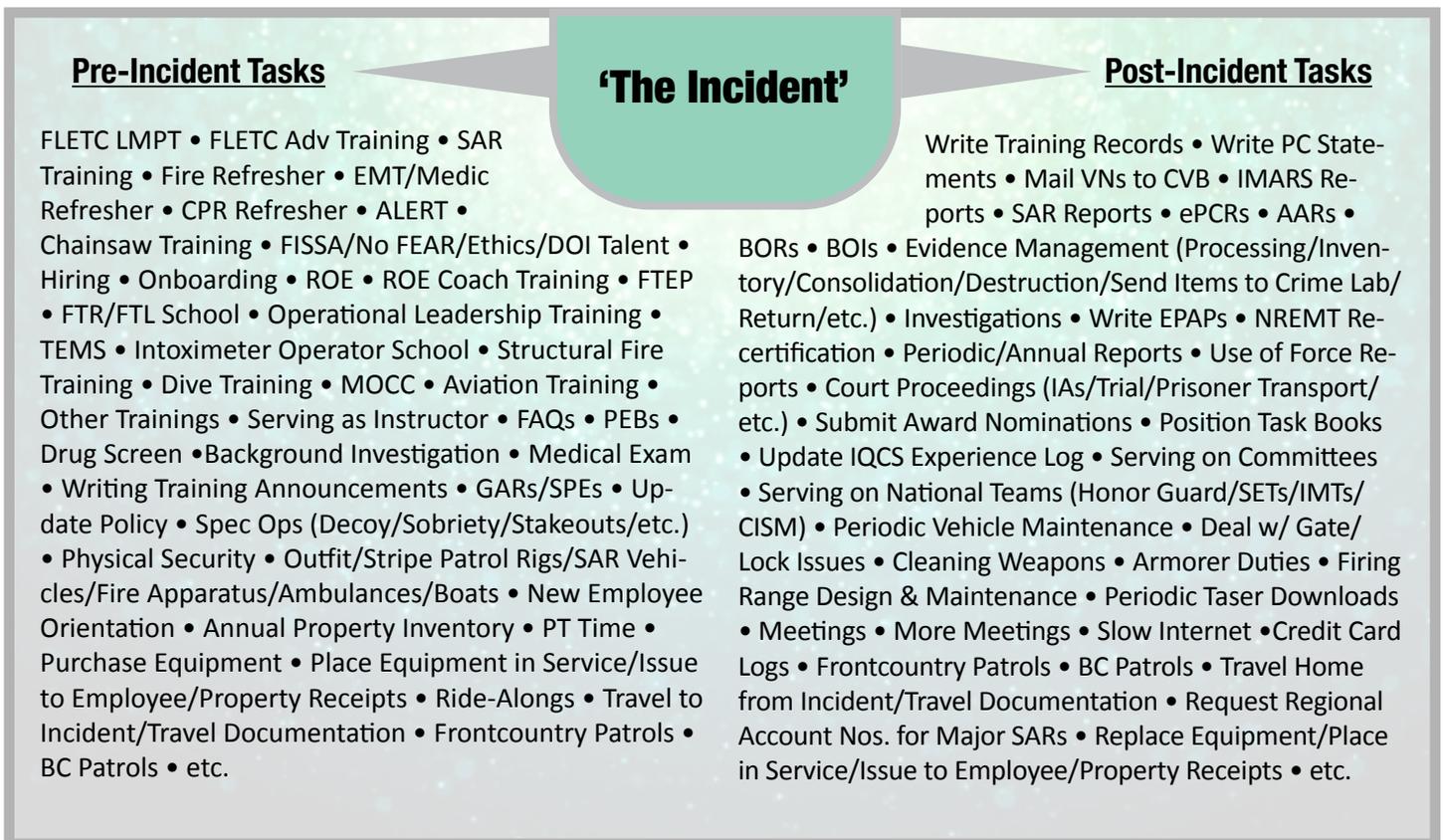
The reason that such numbers are being requested typically centers around our having to justify our existence, or justify our claim that we need more rangers, or at a minimum, need to fill the vacant

positions on our organizational chart. Numbers, in this sense, are certainly important, and they do help us build a compelling argument that a robust protection ranger staff is vital to a park's ability to "protect the people from the park, the park from the people, and the people from the people," which captures the very essence of what it is we rangers do, or worded differently, why we exist.

I agree that we have a responsibility to determine the "perfect number" of protection ranger positions any given park needs (and once that magic number is identified, I rigorously expect parks to keep that number of positions filled rather than just taking the easy route and allowing them to lapse ... again). My problem with it is this: I believe the magic number of ranger positions too often relies almost solely on that other number—our statistics—our incidents—and though that number is an important piece of the puzzle of determining how many rangers we need, it remains just that—one piece of the larger puzzle.

Other pieces of the puzzle exist, too, and in some ways are actually more important than the number of incidents with which we deal. These other pieces of the puzzle help shed light on a five-fold fallacy about how vital a role statistics should play in the larger picture. For starters, when measured in units of time—let's say hours—each individual statistic represents only one unweighted incident number AND only a tiny fraction of where rangers spend the lion's share of their time, yet it seems to be the one unit of time that garners the most recognition.

I'll elaborate with hopes of clarifying: In terms of time, our typical incident ranges from 15 minutes (a traffic stop resulting in a Violation Notice) to 15 days (a Type-1 wildfire assignment), with



Courtesy Kevin Moses

many incidents falling in between, such as an hour-long MVC, a 12-hour carryout rescue, or a four-day search. Each of these incidents counts as ONE statistic, regardless of whether it takes 15 minutes or 15 days of our time. That's **fallacy No. 1**: One, two-week fire assignment takes a lot more of a ranger's time than does one traffic stop, yet both get counted as *one* statistic.

Fallacy No. 2: The vast majority of our time is spent not *on* an incident, but rather *before* and *after* the incident, yet the thing counted, and the thing given the most credence is only the incident, the almighty statistic. Refer to the graphic on the facing page. It illustrates the hours, days, cumulative weeks, and months of time rangers spend attending to tasks, many of which are mandatory requirements of our job, that need to happen before and/or after any given incident. *This* is where we spend most of our time, not on the actual incidents, which are just a blip on the radar screen. Yet, we typically aren't asked to count these hours (and even if we were, I'd personally have a hard time squeezing out the time for such a mundane task given the hundreds of other duties to which I must attend). It's important to note, too, that my little accompanying graphic merely scratches the surface; I'm sure I omitted important tasks that I simply failed to remember.

Fallacy No. 3: More often than not, multiple rangers end up responding to *one* incident (two or three rangers for an arrest, a dozen rangers for one SAR or wildland fire, two or three for an EMS call, etc.), yet how many incidents (stats) get generated in our beloved IMARS? One. Lots of rangers' time often equals a single, solitary statistic.

Fallacy No. 4: More often than not, we are asked to provide our "stats" after a long period (years!) of suffering multiple vacancies. Given this, I pose the question: If we have fewer rangers proactively patrolling (which is how at least some of our stats are generated) should we expect to have more or fewer stats? I'll respect my reading audience by not beating a dead horse on this subject — you get the point. Fewer rangers equals fewer stats, thus any snapshot in time in terms of stats must be viewed through the lens of "how many rangers were on staff at the time these so-called stats were measured?"

Fallacy No. 5: In a similar vein as fallacy No. 4, if any given park has *fewer* rangers scheduled during any given shift, are those said rangers *more* or *less* likely to "go digging" for violator contacts knowing that their backup is either a long distance away or simply nonexistent? Of course, they'll be less likely, which results in another reason stats might be lower than they would be had more ranger positions been filled and more backup was readily available. It's a dog chasing its own tail. I won't overstate the obvious, but I'd be remiss if I at least did not shed light on this seemingly apparent, yet often overlooked truth.

There you have it, folks, five reasons why the number of our incidents — our stats — does not in and of itself tell the whole story.

Numbers are important, they're just not everything.

Let's stop acting like they are.

—Kevin Moses
Central District Ranger
Shenandoah National Park



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Yellowstone no walk in the park for the unprepared

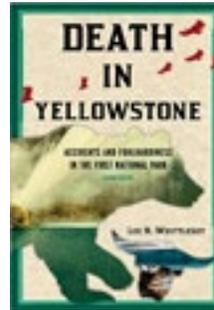
By Rick Smith

‘DEATH IN YELLOWSTONE,” FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1995, AND updated in 2014, is a bit dated for a typical *Ranger* review, but fitting for an issue dedicated to Yellowstone’s sesquicentennial. Author Lee Whittlesey was a longtime Yellowstone employee, working for the concessionaire, then as a park historian.

Whittlesey divides his book into two sections. The first he calls “Death by Nature.” Anyone who has worked in Yellowstone has heard of such incidents. I worked in Yellowstone for 11 summers, and while I was not familiar with Whittlesey’s accounts of deaths from eating poisonous plants or breathing poisonous gas, other fatalities are surprisingly common. The number of people who have died from falling into hot pools, not keeping track of their kids, diving in to rescue their pets, or employees choosing the wrong pool to “hot pot” is significant. Death from thinking park wildlife is tame is another large number. Drowning in lakes and rivers is more common because of the short survival time in the park’s cold waters. Falling rocks and trees have taken their toll. Yellowstone’s notorious cold winters have killed many, as have some avalanches. I was surprised at the number of deaths that Whittlesey counted from falling into the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River, particularly at the Upper Falls. The edge must hold a morbid attraction for some.

The second section of the book Whittlesey calls “Death by Man.” Here, the author reaches back to encounters between Euro-Americans and the indigenous tribes that occupied parts of the park seasonally. He acknowledges that he found history of the former killed in battle, but the latter lacks specific documentation. He calls these encounters “clashes of cultures.” Surprisingly enough, his research only turned up one death from a fight, which occurred during the Civilian Conservation Corps days between an enrollee and one of the supervisors. The enrollee did not survive.

Before the takeover of Yellowstone by the automobile, visitors arrived by train and traveled through the park in stagecoaches. Whittlesey recounts a number of runaways. Some soldiers who protected the park prior to 1916 were killed, either by being kicked or thrown from their horses. The author details several accidents involving Yellowstone buses, including one that killed the bus driver. Eight



“Death in Yellowstone: Accidents and Foolhardiness in the First National Park,” by Lee Whittlesey

airplane accidents causing 22 deaths have occurred in Yellowstone; 10 of those deaths came in the first accident, the 1943 crash of an Air Force B-17.

Some of the most depressing parts in the book come in chapters recounting accidental or self-defense shootings, murders, suicides — even deaths by explosions, fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. All in all, Whittlesey counts violent deaths in Yellowstone from 1839-2012 at over 350. He chose not to include automobile accident deaths, which would no doubt add another 200 or so. The author’s last chapter is his plea to visitors to pay attention and not ask that wilderness be sanitized. His final paragraph probably sums it up best:

So while we are loving the Yellowstone wilderness, while we play in it, indeed revel in it, taking it on its own terms and helping to protect it, we foolish mortals must always remember to respect it. For not only can it bite us, but, indeed, it can devour us.

I didn’t find this book quite as intriguing as I did the similarly structured books “Over the Edge,” about deaths in Grand Canyon, and “Off the Wall,” documenting deaths in Yosemite. Maybe it was the plodding historian’s approach to these incidents or maybe dying from a gas stove accident doesn’t race one’s pulse as does a fall from El Cap. I certainly salute the author’s time he must have spent in the park archives and in the back editions of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming newspapers. I agree with his plea to not sanitize wilderness. Numerous court cases have found that the NPS has the duty to warn but not prevent. A park can be found guilty in the case of an accident only if it is negligent.

Still, it’s good to have this book in print. Of all the books I’ve read about Yellowstone, this is the only one that deals with the people who perished there, even those who disappeared and were never found. No doubt others will be lost but not found in the future.

Rick Smith worked in six parks, two regional offices and WASO, and ended his career as the Acting Superintendent of Yellowstone.




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MADE IN AMERICA

CULTURAL RESOURCES

NPS has opportunity to think critically about race

IN THE WEE HOURS OF SUNDAY AUG. 28, 1955, A 14-YEAR-old African American boy named Emmett Till was taken at gunpoint from his Uncle Mose Wright's house in Money, Miss. Because the teenager had allegedly flirted with a white woman at Bryant's Grocery Store a few days before, Till was driven around the Mississippi Delta, beaten, tortured, and shot. A few days later his bloated and badly mutilated body was fetched out of the Tallahatchie River.

The white men who killed Emmett Till were arrested, tried, and acquitted; it took an all-white, all male jury less than 75 minutes to find the pair not guilty. They later confessed to the crime. Till's murder shocked and angered the nation, and the decision by Mamie Till-Mobley to hold an open casket funeral for her son served as the catalyst that launched a new, more determined era of civil rights activism.

Efforts are well underway now to designate a new national park commemorating this painful chapter in American history. Should the National Park Service be given the responsibility for interpreting a Till site, it will need to follow in the footsteps of Mamie Till-Mobley and be brave enough to show the world what hatred did to a 14-year-old boy. I think NPS, with support from the community, is well capable of managing this important task.

But, there are forces emerging across the country now who may demand, on this and other matters, a comfortable narrative over a truthful one simply to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. We must, however, ensure that no one white-washes or bans this history simply to feel better about themselves and the country. We must allow our historians and interpreters the freedom to think critically about the roles that race and racism have played in our past and continue to play in our present.

An uncritical approach to American history acknowledges that bad things have sometimes happened to innocent people. But that these events are random and that the country is almost magically inclined towards self-correction. Or, as some have suggested Winston Churchill once quipped, Americans will "always do the right thing once all other possibilities have been exhausted."

Lincoln freed the slaves. Women got the right to vote. We elected an African American president. Progress.

A critical analysis of race and racism tells a different story, one that begins with the African slave trade. A phenomenon of European origin and one of this country's original sins, the enslavement of millions of people of African descent was so obviously and immensely immoral that an entire mythology had to be created to sustain it.

Races were invented and assigned qualities of superiority and inferiority based on skin color. A large expanse of land encompassing a rich diversity of peoples and cultures became known as the monolithic "dark continent." And its people were ascribed characteristics that portrayed them (me) as ignorant, sub-human and thus a threat to other people's way of life. No matter how great the profit margin,



Emmett Louis "Bobo" Till (July 25, 1941 – Aug. 28, 1955). The 14-year-old Chicago boy was staying for the summer with his uncle, Moses Wright, in Money, Miss., when he was killed. Below is a 2018 bullet-riddled sign at the spot where Till's body was recovered from the Tallahatchie River. This sign, the second to mark the spot, was replaced by a third marker, which was then also vandalized. A fourth sign has been erected along with remote-sensing security cameras. Photo courtesy Alan Spears



it remains a challenge for one human being to subjugate another. When, however, you manage to convince yourself that the people in chains have no history, no culture, no religion, no art, no science, no affinity for friends, or love of family; that they can "claim none of the rights and privileges..." of citizens or human beings, slavery and all its barbarity might seem like a reasonable outcome for such wayward souls.

The off-products of white supremacy were the economic, social, and political policies, laws, and practices that ensured black inferiority. Slavery, lynching, Jim Crow, separate but equal, red lining, and racial profiling have all served the function of keeping black people in their place while simultaneously stoking white fears of Negro/Black/African American otherness. That's why it meant nothing that morning in August 1955 for two grown men to torture and kill a black teenager they thought had stepped out of line.

Understanding the central role of race in our lives is critical to gaining a genuine and accurate understanding of our history. That means facing hard truths critically, comfortability be damned.

— Alan Spears

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