

The Journal of the Association of National Park Rangers

RANGER

Stewards for parks, visitors & each other

The wild, grand life in our national parks



Vol. 41, No. 1 | Winter 2025

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Winter
2025

To get the job done, we need to *do* the job

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— Melissa DeVaughn

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On the cover: Grand Teton National Park Grizzly #399 and her cub of the year emerge from hibernation on May 16, 2023. Photo: NPS/ C. Adams

WELCOME TO 2025! INSIDE THE PAGES OF THIS QUARTER'S MAGAZINE, you will read a lot about what happened at Ranger Rendezvous 47. This is a way for us to let those of you who were not able to be there in person to learn more about what we accomplished during our five days in Rapid City, S.D. We attended presentations. We held meetings. We went on field trips, and we had social time with those we have not seen in years.

But notice all those past-tense words: *happened, accomplished, attended, held, etc.* That was the easy part.

As is often the case when attending professional conferences, we come away invigorated and enthused about actions we can take to improve our jobs and careers. Then we go back to our busy day-to-day lives, and those goals dissipate like smoke from a wood stove.

We do not want our lofty goals to languish. To that end, read on Page 7 about how ANPR has scheduled three listening sessions for our membership to help drive us forward. ANPR is seeking one primary goal to pursue in 2025, which will give our board members a singular focus. This hyper-focus on one (or possibly even two) goals will give us strength to make progress, rather than be overwhelmed by multiple small tasks. We'd love to hear from you, not only with ideas, but also with solutions and a willingness to be part of a committee, task force, or focus group to help make these things happen.

Meanwhile, we'd also like your editorial content for 2025. This quarter's issue of the magazine includes two special pieces — one from Bob Gerhard, who worked with Russ Wilson (both life members) to highlight the extraordinary career of Lee Henkle, while simultaneously trying to unravel and photo mystery that perhaps our reader can solve (See pages 14-15).

Seasonal Ranger Doug Crispin shares a "So There I Was" submission (pages 12-13) that is particularly timely given the recent, and saddening news, of the death of renowned Grand Teton Grizzly #399, who died after being struck by a vehicle in October 2024. Most of us can agree that one of the most treasured aspects of our national parks is the rich abundance of wildlife that call these places home. Amid the intricacies of managing all this wild life, sometimes angers get to slow down and just watch. Crispin's piece is a prime example, earning Grizzly #399 a space on the cover of this magazine.

As we head into the new year, ANPR invites you to be an active participant in your membership. We appreciate and value your membership fees, but even more so, we want your input. Send us stories, get involved, provide your input. Whether you are mid-career or long retired, your ideas, collectively, can help us better serve our members.

— Melissa DeVaughn
Ranger magazine editor

Members-only portal opens up new access

As part of your membership, you have access to the members-only side of our ANPR.org website. If you have not logged on yet, you are missing out! Here you can view our membership directory (and add yourself to it), peruse discounts and pro deals only open to members, read the most recent issue of *Ranger* magazine, manage your account, and get copies of your donations/payments to us. Visit www.anpr.org/members and follow the prompts to log-in.

Questions or problems? Email Melissa DeVaughn at mdevaughn@anpr.org.

RANGER

THE JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL PARK RANGERS
Vol. 41, No. 1 Winter 2025

Ranger (ISSN 1074-0678) is a quarterly publication of the Association of National Park Rangers, an organization created to communicate for, about and with National Park Service employees of all disciplines; to promote and enhance the professions, spirit and mission of National Park Service employees; to support management and the perpetuation of the National Park Service and the National Park System; and to provide a forum for professional enrichment.

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.

ANPR business address is 12675 N. Sunrise Shadow Drive, Marana, AZ 85658, anpr.org. Members receive *Ranger* as part of their membership dues. See the website or membership/subscription details.

FINAL DEADLINES

Spring issue Jan. 30
Summer issue April 30
Fall issue July 30
Winter issue Nov. 15



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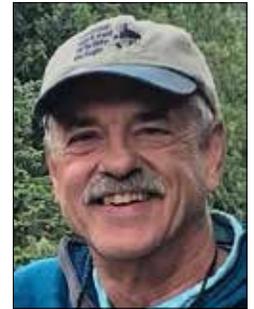
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A new year to meet the needs of our NPS fellows

President's message

— Rick Mossman

RANGER RENDEZVOUS 47 WAS A GREAT SUCCESS! WITH more than 80 registrants and numerous guests, a lively time was had by all. The lineup of programs was one of the best ever. For the first time in many years we had a pistol-shooting contest. All the contestants turned out to be retirees, and it appeared that the order of winners was also the reverse order of when they retired! The best stage was when we had to carry a large “endangered” trout and protect it from poachers as we shot one handed. See the picture below!



Walt Dabney gave his program on Americas public lands, which every American should watch. It is now available online on our website, via YouTube. Go to anpr.org and look under News and Media. Watch it! As Walt said, get it out to the public so everyone can see it.

Weather was great for the field trips, and a good time was had by all visiting Mount Rushmore, Wind Cave National Park, Minuteman Missile National Historical Site, and Badlands National Park.

The Board of Directors met all day prior to the start of Ranger Rendezvous’ main program, discussing usual business and ideas for the upcoming year. We decided to conduct an all-day working meeting via Zoom sometime in January and set a goal or goals to achieve in 2025. If you have any ideas or input, we would like to hear them.

The next four years may have some challenges, and we all need to be prepared to support the National Park Service and its employees.

And now that the new year has begun, please mark your calendars for Oct. 15-18, 2024, and join us in Virginia Beach, Va., for an even better Rendezvous 48.

— Rick Mossman, ANPR President

Bringing back the Rendezvous Pistol Shoot



David Stransky, above, won the competition, and a Benchmade knife. At left, Life Member JT Townsend shoots while carrying an “endangered” trout.

The pistol shoot tradition dates to Rendezvous’ early days with protection rangers who wanted to keep their skills sharp. Thanks to the Pennington County Sheriff’s Office firearms range and sheriff’s deputies Thomas Mossman and Baron Juhl who were the range-masters. All seven participants were retirees and current ANPR members. The event was set up with seven stages, which consisted of shooting and reloading at various distances and moving to various targets. Thanks to San Diego Police Supply and Thyrm LLC, for a variety of very nice prizes.

Your 2024 ANPR Photo Contest winners



Wildlife & Best in Show

Kahuzi-Biega National Park in
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
Photo by Kendra Balazs

MORE THAN 60 PHOTOS WERE ENTERED into the annual Ranger Rendezvous photo contest, with images representing seven categories. For the 2024 contest, ANPR included a new category called “Big Sky.” Winners in each category received a \$50 Amazon gift card, and the Best in Show received an additional \$100 gift card. Everyone enjoys the photos and is excited to participate in the voting. The “Name That Park” contest tests everyone’s ability to identify in which park the photos were taken. This year, Mike Pflaum, ANPR’s board member for government affairs, identified the most correct park locations.

The photo contest will be held again in Virginia Beach 2026. Get your cameras out and join the fun! And make sure all of your photos (with the exception of the Ranger Rendezvous category) are taken within a national or international park unit.

Congratulations to all!

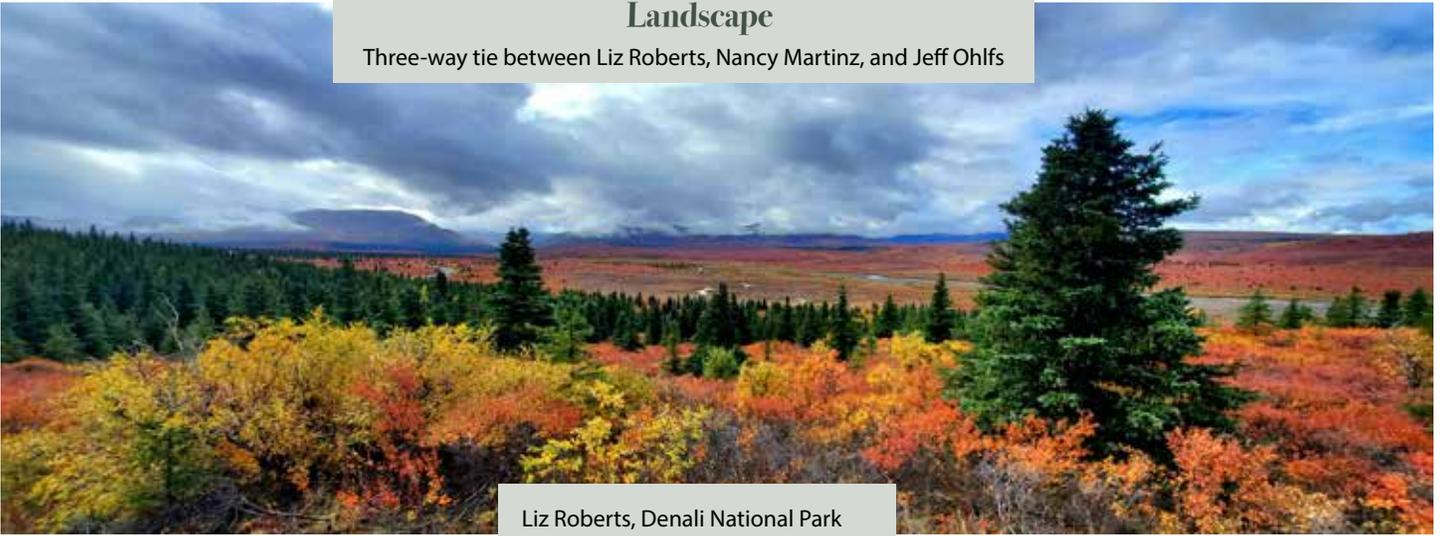
— Kendra Balazs

Winners

- **Landscape:** Three-way tie between Liz Roberts, Nancy Martinz, and Jeff Ohlfs
- **Wildlife:** Kendra Balazs
- **Human Connection:** Bruce McKeeman
- **Historical and Cultural:** Barbara Pflaum
- **In the Details:** Tie between Mike Pflaum and Nancy Martinz
- **Big Sky:** Kendra Balazs
- **Ranger Rendezvous:** Bruce McKeeman
- **Best in Show:** Kendra Balazs

Landscape

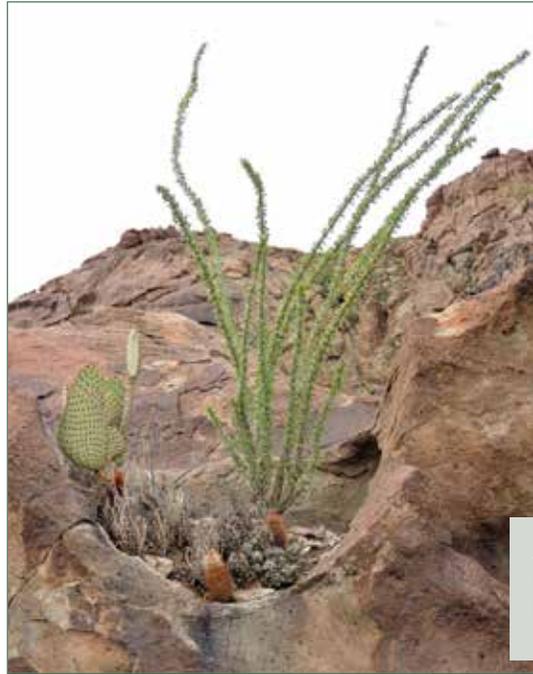
Three-way tie between Liz Roberts, Nancy Martinz, and Jeff Ohlfs



Liz Roberts, Denali National Park



Nancy Martinz,
Pu'uhonua
O Honaunau
National Historical Park



Jeff Ohlfs,
Big Bend
National Park

In the Details

Tie between Mike Pflaum and Nancy Martinz



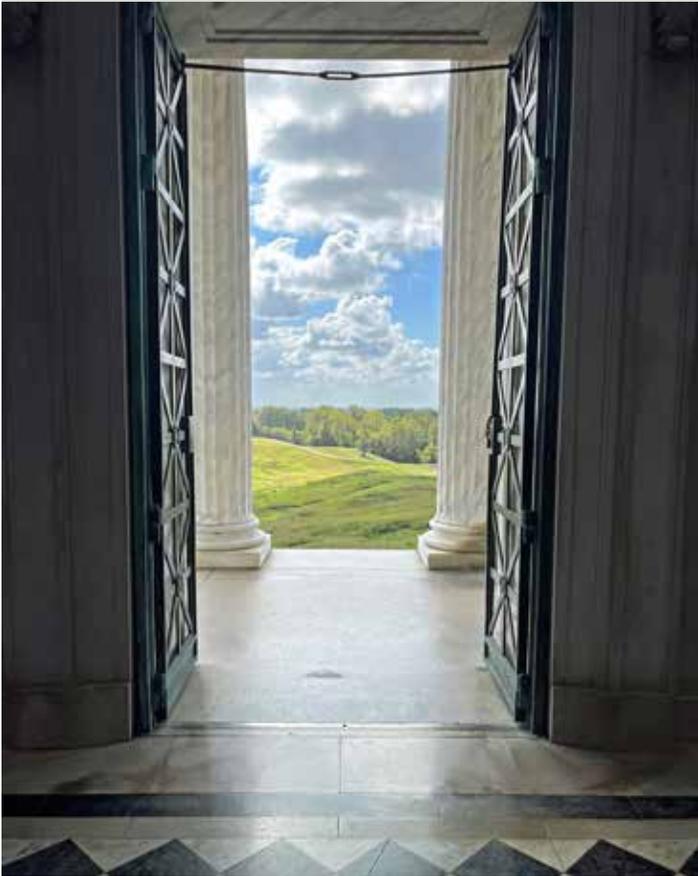
Mike Pflaum,
Badlands National Park



Nancy Martinz,
Big Cypress National Park

Historical and Cultural

Barbara Pflaum



Barbara Pflaum, Vicksburg National Military Park

The Human Connection

Bruce McKeeman



Bruce McKeeman, Camp Nelson National Monument

Ranger Rendezvous

Bruce McKeeman



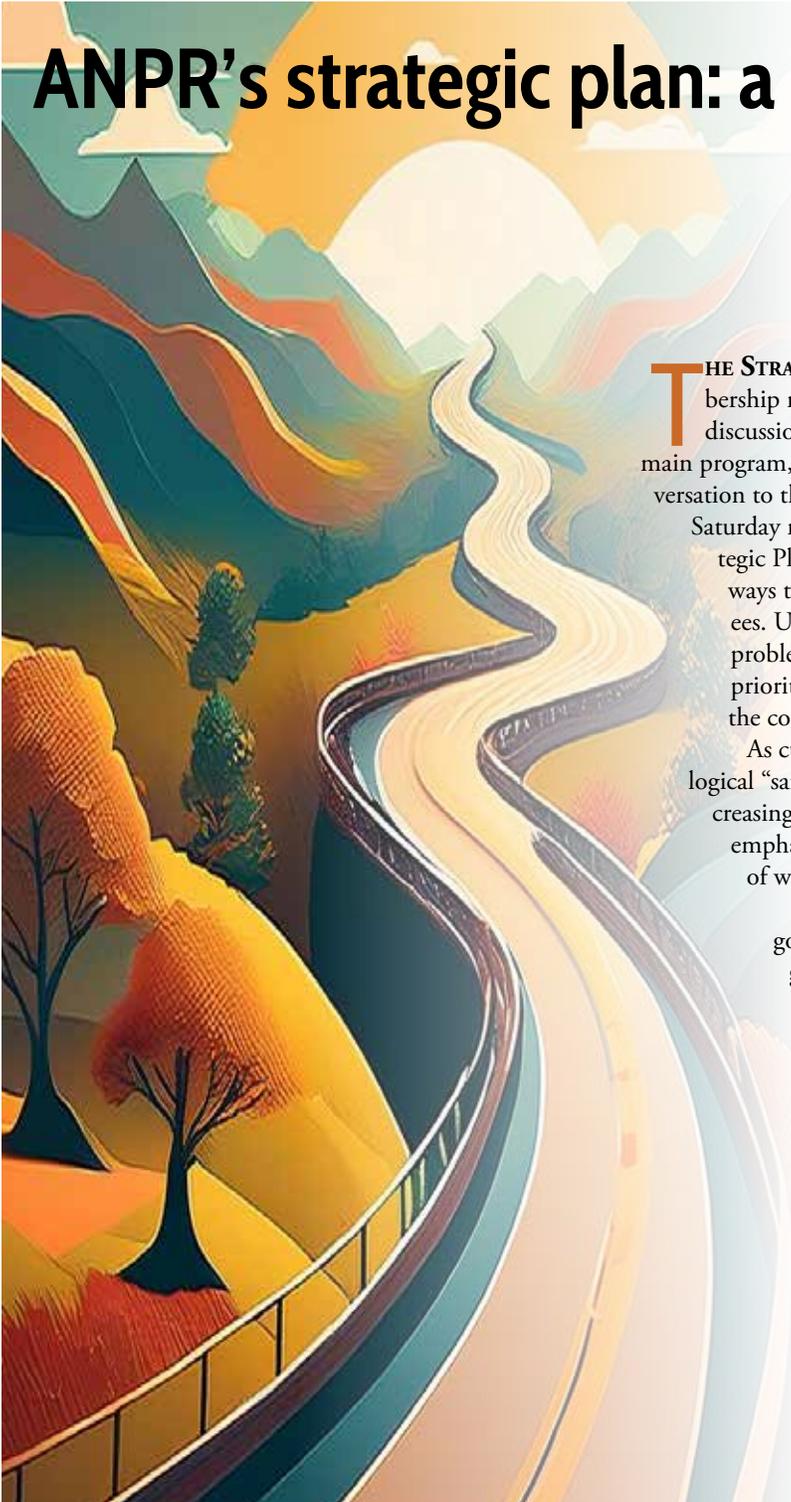
Bruce McKeeman,
Ranger Rendezvous 46,
Jacksonville, Fla., 2023

Landscape

Kendra Balazs



Kendra Balazs, Death Valley National Park



ANPR's strategic plan: a road map to success

Be part of the conversation
to help your association grow

By Lauren DeGennaro

THE STRATEGIC PLAN MADE A SPLASH IN THIS YEAR'S annual membership meeting at Ranger Rendezvous 47 in Rapid City, S.D.! After discussions at the Board Meeting held the day prior to the start of our main program, your board of directors felt it worthwhile to open the conversation to the larger group. During our regular membership meeting on Saturday morning, Nov. 9, Lauren DeGennaro (Board Member for Strategic Planning) led attendees in a small group discussion to identify ways that ANPR can actively engage on behalf of current employees. Using three tenants of our strategic plan, each group discussed problems and solutions pertaining to one of the following strategic priorities: hiring, housing, and training. A fourth topic was added for the conversation: wellness.

As current NPS employees can attest, we engaged in a psychological "safety standdown" and conversations around wellness are increasingly important. Tools like the wellness wheel were discussed to emphasize that occupation is just one of eight important dimensions of wellness.

The goal of this exercise was to identify one lofty, strategic goal for ANPR to prioritize in 2025. Upon identification of that goal, we will outline action steps, milestones, and expected outcomes. We will convene a full-day board meeting in January to work through that process. But before that, we'd like more data! What would our members like us to achieve on their behalf? If you have ideas, please reach out to Lauren DeGennaro at ldgennaro@anpr.org or 203-253-1048.

We also are hosting listening sessions over Zoom for current employees or volunteers who were unable to attend the Rendezvous. We'll ask the same questions posed during the Membership Meeting.

Considering ONE topic at a time:

- Share one example of a program or action that helped positively impact hiring, housing, training, or wellness.
- How can ANPR play a role in assisting current employees with hiring, housing, training, or wellness?

Help ANPR identify a guiding goal to tackle in 2025

The ANPR Strategic Planning listening sessions will include the following topics:

- Benefits of ANPR membership
- How can ANPR play a role in assisting current employees with hiring, housing, training, or wellness?
- Share one example of a program or action that helped positively impact hiring, housing, training, or wellness.

Session 1 was held in December. The dates for the remaining two sessions are as follows. Look for links to the sessions on ANPR Facebook, ANPR Instagram and in your membership portal.

Session 2: 6 p.m., Monday, Jan. 6, 2025 (MST)

Session 3: Noon, Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025 (MST)

**If sessions have already occurred by the time of magazine delivery, look for a synopsis of them on the members-only side of the website.*

Rendezvous

Recap

Rapid City Rendezvous 47 full of programs, presentations, and fun!

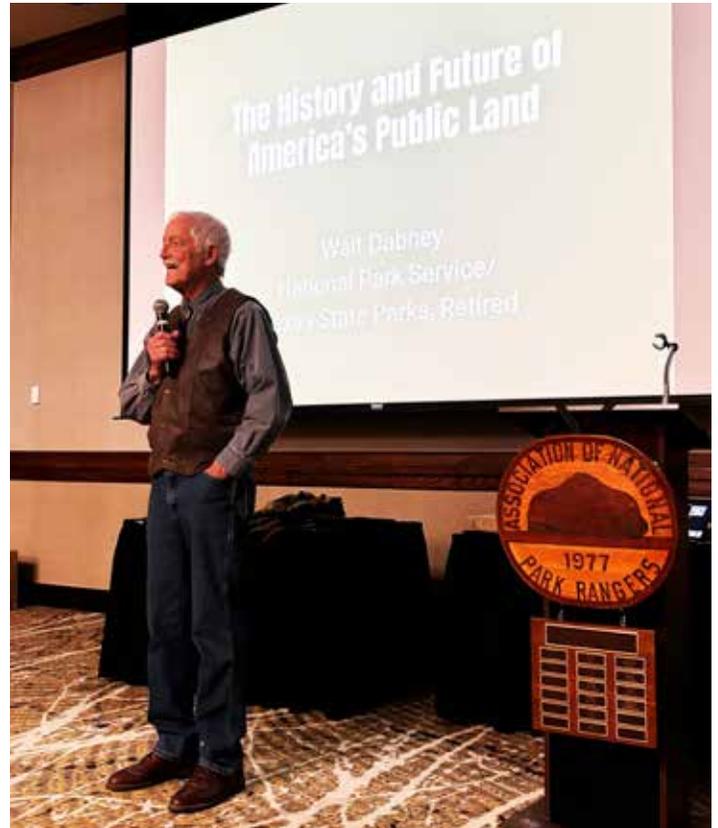
RANGER RENDEZVOUS 47 WRAPPED UP IN EARLY NOVEMBER, and once again, ANPR hosted another successful event! On behalf of the ANPR Board of Directors and our Rendezvous planning team, we would like to thank all of our incredible presenters for sharing their time, knowledge, and expertise with the ANPR community. For those who could not join us in Rapid City, here are some program highlights!

Ranger Rendezvous 47 kicked off on Nov. 5 with the opening of registration and one of our favorite annual events, NPS Trivia Night! Once again, ANPR member Jamie Richards served as our trivia quiz master, and approximately 20 participants enjoyed two rounds of trivia. Trivia night participants formed teams and tested their knowledge of geography, U.S. presidents, caves, bats, Midwest NPS sites, and much more!

On the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 6, we had a full day with engaging speakers. Rendezvous officially began with the posting of the colors by representatives from the Pennington County Sheriff's Office followed by a welcoming address by ANPR President Rick Mossman.

We learned important lessons in embracing adversity from David Vela, former NPS deputy director, exercising the authority of the director. David shared advice on leadership and overcoming challenging interactions from his over 30-plus year career in the NPS. During the partner panel, presenters John Garder, Cheryl Schreier, and Dan Wenk addressed many opportunities and challenges that the National Parks Conservation Association, the Coalition to Protect America's Parks, and friend groups like Katahdin Woods and Waters and the Mount Rushmore National Monument Society are working to tackle.

During breakout sessions, attendees engaged with Shannon Wilson and learned about mobility accessibility challenges and exciting new projects happening in national parks and on trails in other public lands. J.S. Bergeron shared how developments in satellite communications are changing how park rangers communicate with the public. Rick Mossman provided an inside look at challenges facing rangers and conservation professionals in Africa. Jeff Ohlfs and Rick Mossman shared NPS history you won't learn in ranger school, addressing important conservation areas not managed by the NPS, past NPS sites, and other places that have not made the cut. Tim Moore shared his knowledge and expertise as a hiring manager on building strong resumes, navigating USA Jobs, and some dos and don'ts when interviewing. Former NPS park rangers Tara Ross and Nancy Mar-



Walt Dabney's "History of Public Lands" presentation was one of the highlights of Ranger Rendezvous 47. Watch the documentary of his program by visiting the members-only side of anpr.org.

Photo: Melissa DeVaughn

Trivia Night, below, is always a fun way to kick off a Ranger Rendezvous.

Photo: Jamie Richards





Ranger Rendezvous participants enjoy the awards banquet with live music by The Song Pilots: Dan Wenk, retired deputy director and Yellowstone National Park superintendent; Mike Pflaum, board member for government affairs and new ANPR president-elect; ANPR President Rick Mossman; Kenny Putman of The Song Pilots; and John Garder, of National Parks Conservation Association. Photo: Margie Steigerwald

tinz provided an inside look at true crime stories in wild places through the “Crime Off The Grid Podcast.”

Rapid City-based photographer Paul Horsted took us on a photo and historic journey through the Black Hills while sharing details on Custer’s 1874 Black Hills Expedition. Paul also shared historic images paired with his photographic works taken in many of our national parks, like Yellowstone and Yosemite.

Later that evening, we were treated with a living history presentation by Casey Osback, chief of Interpretation & Visitor Services, Fort Laramie National Historic Site. This program focused on the history and impacts of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

On the morning of Thursday, Nov. 7, Alan Spears, NPCA’s senior director for Cultural Resources, provided information on “An Advocate’s View on the State of Our National Parks.” With more than 25 years of experience with NPCA, Alan addressed the importance of our cultural resources, the powerful connections people make to their national parks through our cultural resources, and how NPCA is working to advocate for our nation’s cultural resources and under told stories.

In the evening, Marc McConahy, Tom Pisarich and Terry Poole with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) shared information on how the DLA can help with the purchasing of supplies. The Defense Logistics Agency has suppliers through DOD and works to support federal agencies, including NPS and USFS, with many types of purchasing requests, from vehicle fuels to fire hoses, helmets, safety vests, specialized LE equipment, to heavy equipment and parts.

On Friday, Nov. 8, first-timers to Ranger Rendezvous were invited to join the ANPR board of directors for breakfast, where this year’s Supernaugh scholars and others learned more about ANPR. Following breakfast, we kicked off the day with a presentation by NPS Regional Director for Regions, 3, 4 and 5 Bert Frost. Frost shared updates from NPS leadership, including the RISE (Respectful, Inclusive, Save, and Engaged) vision for how we can all make the NPS a better place to work.

Dr. Joy James, professor in the Recreation Management pro-

Rapid City, Continued on Page 10

Save the date for

Oct. 15-18, 2025
Virginia Beach, Va.

R R 48

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF CONSERVATION professionals for training, roundtable discussions, and seminars on best practices to support staff who are constantly working to enhance productivity and efficiency in parks.

This conference will include work on conserved areas across the United States, and the organization is planning field trips to consult with staff from sites like Colonial National Historical Park and Yorktown Battlefield.

We will share information about the program and invite proposals from presenters in 2025 as it develops.

THE VENUE

The event is scheduled to be held at the Wyndham Hotel, Virginia Beach. Learn more about the venue on their website.

<https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/wyndham/virginia-beach-virginia/wyndham-virginia-beach-oceanfront/overview>

The Association of National Park Rangers Board of Directors selected this venue based on a competitive bid process that reduces costs for attendees. ANPR prioritizes selecting venues based on their proximity to national parks where staff can consult with attendees and demonstrate work practices in the field, the availability of efficient travel options, and to minimize overall cost to attendees.

SUPERNAUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

First-time attendees can submit competitive applications to be selected as Supernaugh Scholars. Selectees gain a number of benefits including:

- Training opportunities
- Free registration
- Free hotel room
- Transportation subsidy

Look for information in summer 2025 if you want to apply, and consider donating to support first-time attendee’s participation at Ranger Rendezvous 48.

Select Supernaugh Scholarship on the Association of National Park Rangers donation page: <https://www.anpr.org/donate>



ANPR board treasurer Rick Harwell and Ranger Rendezvous planning committee member Jamie Richards take a moment to thank Appalachian State University professor Dr. Joy James for her two presentations during Ranger Rendezvous 47 in Rapid City, S.D. Photo: Rick Harwell

gram at Appalachian State University, shared two programs. During “Soft Skills for Hard Conversations,” participants learned about how our word choices can drive conflict or can help mitigate a difficult situation. Through small-group exercises, we learned to be thoughtful when selecting different words to use in moments of conflict. In the presentation “Park Rx: Bridging Stewardship and Wellness Through Wellness, Research, and Partnerships,” Dr. James introduced different Park Rx and wellness programs that are happening across the country. She also shared ways individuals can help promote and champion parks and natural spaces as places for health and wellness.

Mary Wilson, North District ranger for the division of Resource Education and Youth Programs, Yellowstone National Park, shared the history of the Museum of the National Park Ranger and the historic building that is home to this incredible museum collection.

On Saturday, Nov. 9, we had another full day of engaging speakers and breakout sessions.

Jeri Kizer Frederick took us on a journey underground through Wind Cave and Jewel Cave and asked participants “Do You Have What it Takes to be a Caver?” Jeri shared what it was like to be a caver in the 1800s vs. what it is like today. While clothing and equipment have evolved, the human passion for curiosity, to explore tight spaces, and to discover the unknown remains constant. Rene Ohms expanded on this topic, sharing the history of cave management and exploration in Wind Cave, Jewel Cave, and other incredible caves around the world. In many cases, underground exploration has helped guide and influence the management of conservation areas on the land’s surface.

Walt Dabney, educator of park management and public lands, former NPS ranger and retired director of Texas State Parks, shared two impactful programs. First, Walt took us on his journey traveling with Freeman Tilden. Next, Walt took us through the history of America’s public lands, from pre-1776 to today and looking at the future of these important places. Walt’s full program is available online for free through the Canyonlands Natural History Association. Please help share this information with all who care about our nation’s public lands. Visit our website and search under news and media for the link to his compelling video on the topic. It also is linked in the membership side of the website.

Following Walt’s final presentation, ANPR President Rick Mossman shared his closing remarks and officially closed Ranger Rendezvous 47. We look forward to offering more great programming next October in Virginia Beach, Va., at Ranger Rendezvous 48!



ANPR Super Raffle winners announced

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO WON A PRIZE IN the 2024 Ranger Rendezvous Super Raffle. In case you did not see it in the newsletter, here are the winners and their prizes. Stay tuned for details on the 2025 raffle as we begin planning Ranger Rendezvous 48!

- **Kara Alterio:** GRAND PRIZE “Roll-Your-Own” Trip, valued at \$2,500
- **Wendy Lauritzen:** GRAND PRIZE Eight-day Grand Canyon River Trip for Two from  Canyoneers

- **Victoria Hamer:** Five-day whitewater rafting or sea kayaking trip from  ROW Adventures
- **Dave Lattimore:** Ranger Rendezvous Quilt made by Kendra Balazs
- **Cynthia Purcell:** Custom Ranger Carving created by Rob Arnberger
- **Rebecca Harriett:** Memory Quilt, custom-made by Liz Roberts
- **Elizabeth Lorenz:** Two-night Alaska Railroad Luxury Package including Princess  Lodging from Holland America

- **Sean J. McGuinness:** Signed Artist's Proof Print and “Horse of the Sea” Photography Book
- **Dave Lattimore:** San Diego Harbor Cruise
- **Celia Dubin and Tom Long:** Vintage Leather Carvings
- **Rick Harwell:** Five-day, four night San Juan Mountains cabin stay
- **Dan R Moses:** Fred Machetanz hand-signed print, “Fishing Rights”
- **Cynthia Purcell:** Metal Framed Images of Grand Canyon and Zion

From Supernaugh scholars to board members

By Troy Hunt, Board Member for Seasonal Perspectives

ANPR'S THREE SUPERNAUGH SCHOLARS for RR47 really stepped up to the plate at this year's Rendezvous. Not only were they invaluable to the running of Ranger Rendezvous 47, but also two of them ran for, and were elected to, our Board of Directors, where we are confident they will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to us in the coming three years.

Chosen from a highly competitive pool of 19 applicants, these three individuals proved themselves to be deserving of their selection for this honor.

Jennifer Cook, who is volunteering at Yellowstone National Park for the winter, joined us at the end of her summer spent in Zion National Park. Carter Humola joined us at the end of his season at Mount Rainier National Park, on his way to the East Coast. Crystal Muzik is a current employee at Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park.

The Supernaugh scholars served in a variety of capacities to help facilitate the success of the Rendezvous; from helping set up and manage the AV equipment, to handling the draw and announcement of the raffle prizes, and driving vehicles for the field trips to Badlands and Wind Cave national parks.

These young rangers engaged fully in the Rendezvous, bringing their ideas and energies to the meetings, asking good and challenging questions, and presenting a bright image of the kinds of dedicated workers on the rise through the ranks of the NPS.

The Supernaugh Scholar program is fully funded through donations from the membership of ANPR. The program is available to first-time attendees at the Rendezvous regardless of where they are in their career path. The scholarship pays for their lodging at the Rendezvous, provides them a free one-year membership in ANPR, and provides a \$300 stipend to help offset their travel costs. If you wish to help support this program, you can make a donation through our webpage (anpr.org) and choose to direct it to this specific cause.

NEXT STEP: THE ANPR BOARD

During Ranger Rendezvous, ANPR took nominations for three open positions: president-elect, board member for fundraising, and board member for membership services. Two of our Supernaughs, Jenn Cook and Crystal Muzik, stepped forward during nominations, showing that they are ready to help our organization grow.

Elections for these positions were held through Dec. 12, 2024, and winners were announced the morning of Dec. 13, 2024.

Congratulations to all candidates who volunteered to serve. ANPR counts on member involvement to be successful, and everyone matters! Additional thank-yous to our outgoing board members, who have served ANPR well:

President-Elect: Mike Pflaum (currently serving as board mem-



Supernaugh scholars Crystal Muzik, Carter Humola, and Jenn Cook run the daily raffle giveaway during Ranger Rendezvous 47. Photo: Margie Steigerwald



ANPR President Rick Mossman gifts Supernaugh scholars Crystal Muzik, Jenn Cook, and Carter Humola with Butch Farabee's "National Park Ranger: An American Icon." Photo: Margie Steigerwald

ber for government affairs; this position will be appointed as Pflaum shifts to president-elect duties).

Board Member for Fundraising: Jenn Cook (incoming), Wendy Lauritzen (outgoing)

Board Member for Membership Services: Crystal Muzik (incoming), Shannon Wilson (outgoing)

ANPR always welcomes, and is currently seeking additional volunteers to serve on committees and advisory panels. Please email Bill Wade at bwade@anpr.org if you'd like to help.



Grizzly Bear 610 stirs up the wildlife in 2023, chasing elk and geese, while her young cubs watch and learn. Photo: Doug Crispin

National Geographic, IRL (in real life)

Doug Crispin submitted this "So There I Was" essay in 2023, after watching Grizzly 610 of Grand Teton National Park as she pursued her next meal. On Oct. 24, 2024, Grizzly 399, perhaps the most well-known sow in the park, was struck and killed by a vehicle. Grizzly 610 was one of her offspring born in 2006, shown in the photo on the facing page. We felt it fitting to feature Crispin's piece in this issue, as a tribute to not only Grizzly 399, but to all wildlife calling our national parks home.

By Doug Crispin

I WAS SCHEDULED FOR A LATE SHIFT AT MY COLTER BAY/Grand Teton National Park duty station. Visitors had been reporting grizzly bear sightings about six miles away in the Elk Flats areas. I woke up at 7 a.m. and ate a leisurely breakfast. Then said to myself, "I think I'll grab my telephoto lens and drive down to Elk Flats just to see what's up."

When I arrived, it was already 8:30. Well past the prime early-morning wildlife viewing window in the park. Nevertheless, at a roadside bluff, I set up my camera. And a big lens. In a distant meadow, I counted a herd of 33 elk peacefully grazing. Females and calves. Then I spotted something moving.

It was large. Dark. With a shoulder hump. Definitely a grizzly. I counted three cubs-of-the-year with her. Instantly I knew it was Grand Teton Grizzly Bear 610, daughter of the even more famous Grizzly 399. This was the home range of both bears. Let me explain.

In the spring of 2011, Bear 399 came out of her den with three cubs. Her 5-year-old daughter, Bear 610, birthed two cubs. Later that spring the two mother bears apparently got together for a play date. Somehow a rare cub exchange occurred. In June, Bear 399 was now seen with two cubs, while Bear 610 was spotted with three. A mother bear with three young cubs. Spotted in Elk Flats. I had to be watching bear 610.

Suddenly, 610 started to sprint. Full speed, heading right towards the elk herd. The elk turned away and ran full speed – in the opposite direction.

Bear 610 was closing fast. A few slower elk straggled behind the panicked herd. Bear 610 caught up to those lagging elk. Raising her powerful arm, she took a swipe at one elk. Then another elk. But this time, she missed. The entire herd escaped, disappearing into the safety of the willow thickets.

A flock of about 20 geese raised their heads above the tall meadow grass. They watched the entire drama play out, probably chuck-

ling at Bear 610's misfortune. Suddenly, the bear changed course and headed full speed toward the geese. "Ain't nobody going to make fun of me," I imagined her thinking.

The geese wisely took flight. And just that quickly, this amazing national park wildlife moment ended. So there I was. I witnessed the whole event. But I wasn't alone.

The three young cubs of 610 were nearby, standing erect on their hind feet in the tall grass. They, too, witnessed the hunt ... learning good grizzly bear behavior. The cubs reunited with their mom. I imagine the teachable moment went something like this: "Cubs, this is how you separate slow, sick or young elk from the herd. If you're lucky, you can take one down and have a learned!

The grizzly bear family of four then sauntered off into the day.

Did I really just witness that? What I like to call a real National Geographic Wildlife Moment?

How special is the National Park Service lifestyle? How lucky am I to live it?

I imagined this is how the rest of the United States prepared to start their workday: Rush to get the kids ready for school. Rush to get all your personal items ready for work. Jump in your car. "Did I forget anything?" Stop to buy a calming coffee along the way. Mentally prepare for today's work projects. Fight traffic on an unpleasant, crowded car commute.

Not me.

That morning before work, I decided to be just a regular national park tourist. I went for a short drive. I watched an amazing wildlife event. Then I returned home to my cabin, imprinted with a special memory to thrill me for the rest of my Grand Teton season, and beyond. What a wildlife moment!



Grizzly Bear 399 and her three cubs, one of whom is 610, from 2006. Photo: NPS / R. Julian

Two hours later, now wearing my NPS uniform, I faced my normal onslaught of summertime visitors and their many questions: "Where can I see a Grand Teton moose?" "When is the next Old Faithful eruption?" "What time do the campgrounds fill?"

Later a visitor approached me with this observation: "Say Ranger, you get to live in a cabin in the woods at Grand Teton National Park. You certainly must have one of the best jobs in the world!"

No argument there, my friend!

Doug Crispin is a seasonal ranger at the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. He has submitted several pieces to Ranger magazine of his rangership career in the National Park Service.



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Photo mystery with NPS roots

By Bob Gerhard



This photo, which ran in an April 5, 2024, *New York Times* tribute to Lou Whittaker, identified Whittaker on the left, leading a search team, including his brother, Jim, right, up Mount Rainier in 1981. However, ANPR Life Member Bob Gerhard identified longtime NPS ranger Lee Henkle — not Jim Whittaker — as the man second from left. ANPR is also trying to identify the other NPS rangers in the photo. (The photo is credited to Barry Wong/The Seattle Times, via The Associated Press).

EDWARD (LEE) HENKLE WAS AN ASPARAGUS farmer from Sunnyside, Wash., but he was also so much more. And if it hadn't been for a miscaptioned photo in an April 5, 2024, *New York Times* obituary, this long-overdue tribute to a seasonal climbing ranger that I worked with at Mount Rainier National Park in the late 1960s and early 1970s would never have been written.

Lou Whittaker died on March 24, 2024, at age 95. The *NYT* obituary was about him. He was a founder and owner of Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., (now RMI Expeditions) and was a larger-than-life personality associated with Mount Rainier for most of his life. He climbed the mountain hundreds of times and assisted us on many, many rescue operations. His *Times* obituary included a photo of Lou and other climbers starting out from Paradise on a 1981 rescue mission. The caption for the photo identified the two lead climbers as Lou Whittaker on the left and his twin brother,

Jim, on the right.

I hadn't seen the *New York Times* article, but Russ Wilson (ANPR Life Member) did, and he was curious about who the other climbers were in the photo, especially those wearing NPS ranger caps. Russ started asking around, and his inquiries made it to me. When I saw the photo, I realized immediately that the *New York Times* had made a mistake: The climber beside Lou Whittaker was not his brother Jim, but was NPS seasonal climbing ranger Lee Henkle.

THAT BRINGS US TO A REMARKABLE NPS RANGER

Lee was an asparagus farmer. A fond memory of mine was him showing up for work each summer at the Paradise Ranger Station with a huge bushel of the best-tasting asparagus to share with all of us there. But, as he would say, his farming season ended early enough that he could come to Mount Rainier each summer for another of his passions: mountaineering and search and rescue. I don't

know how many seasons he worked at Paradise, but it must have been more than a dozen years, because he was there during my time at the park from 1968 through 1975, and he was still there in 1981 (at least), to be in the 1981 rescue photo above.

Most of us on the Paradise rescue crew back then were in our 20s or early 30s, but Lee was much older. We somehow knew that he had spent some time in a German prisoner of war camp during World War Two, but he never talked about it. I also remember that he worked winters as a ski patrolman at the White Pass Ski Area just south of the park. I just know that Lee was always one of the calmest, strongest and most competent members of our team, and he was a delight to work with.

I regret that I never got in touch with Lee after I left Mount Rainier in 1975. I thought about him many times over the years and should have reached out to him. But I didn't. He



Lee Henkle was a longtime climbing ranger at Mount Rainier based at the Paradise Ranger Station. As a P-38 Lightning fighter pilot in WW II, Henkle was shot down over Germany in April 1944. Badly burned, he was a POW at Stalag Luft III for more than a year and forced into the legendary "Long March" before being liberated in April 1945.

died in January 2015. Seeing his image in the *New York Times* obituary brought back a flood of memories and spurred me to look for more. I found a wonderful tribute to Lee written after he died in 2015 that captures who he was better than I ever could. I hope you will take the time to read this article: <https://beckysteimle.marketing/wp-content/uploads/The-Quiet-Hero-2016-Wings.pdf>. A PDF copy of the article is also available on the members-side the ANPR website.

And as for Russ Wilson's curiosity about who were the NPS rangers in the *New York Times* photo, we are still wondering. There are two ranger caps in the photo. I think the climber in the light-colored gear might be Rick Kirschner, but I don't know for sure. I don't know the name of the climber behind him. If anyone can identify those two for sure, we'd like to know.

If you know who the other rangers are in the photo at left, let us know! Email mdevaughn@anpr.org to help solve the mystery!

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ADMINISTRATION

The challenges of contracting in the NPS

ADMINISTRATION HAS MORE DISCIPLINES THAN YOU CAN count on one, and maybe even two, hands. Some, like Human Resources and Budget, are well known to all employees because they affect every one of us. Employees may also know that Contracting also falls under Administration but unless they submit projects for funding or work with another agency on an agreement, they may not understand the extent to which Contracting plays a role in almost everything we do.

Need to set up a task agreement so that a university can do research for the park? Talk to Contracting.

Want to spend project monies to rehab a visitor center? Talk to Contracting.

Looking to purchase a new vehicle? Talk to Contracting.

Taylor Jones is the acting supervisory contracting specialist for the Arizona Major Acquisition Buying Office (MABO). MABOs are teams across the system that assist parks and programs with all financial assistance and contracting needs. These needs may range from services and supplies to architect/engineering (A/E) and construction. Contracting also provides oversight and management of the charge-card program. The complexity a MABO works with runs the gambit from procuring an equipment repair just over the charge card \$2,500 ‘micropurchase’ limit to multi-million-dollar water pipeline projects.

Jones has been a contracting go-to for the SEAZ Group many years and is just an all-around good guy! We spoke recently of his experience in the NPS and just what is involved in Contracting.

Jones’s first NPS position was as a four-year term maintenance worker preservationist at Tumacácori NHP (TUMA) in southern Arizona. In 2012, when the Financial Business Management System (FBMS) came online as an administrative tool for budget and other functions, he answered a call for employees interested in working as a requisitioner in the pilot program. TUMA provided a unique opportunity in that he was able to split each pay period working in maintenance and as a requisitioner. This afforded him the opportunity to work with all disciplines, and that allowed him to better understand the workings and needs of overall park operations. This experience provided a great foundation for the success he’s had as a contracting specialist, and in the relationships he’s developed through his work.

Jones sees the contracting officer as the middleman/woman between the customer (the park unit) and the vendor (the contractor). When asked what he feels is one of the most important attributes needed to be successful in this position, he said without hesitation that is great customer service skills. And it’s not enough to be kind and patient! Contracting officers need to “speak two languages” to effectively communicate with both participants in the process. Finally, they need that zeal for continued learning throughout their career. This stuff definitely can’t be learned one-and-done!



Contracting officers — like the contracting staff at the Gateway Arch National Park, shown here — must be able to “speak two languages” to effectively communicate with participants on both sides of a project. Photo: Courtesy Marin Karraker

He emphasized that Contracting is not a cookie-cutter process and is certainly never dull. Directives from the NPS Washington Servicing Office (WASO) and higher up are always being updated, and personnel must keep up with the changes and incorporate them into their work. He says to expect lots of changes after an election year as new personnel, policies, and budgets are put into place.

Considering a career in Contracting? Jones suggests finding a mentor early on (I bet he could suggest a few!), get into all the cursory training offered on DOI Talent, and become familiar with what is involved with the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C). Contracting plays a huge role in the day-to-day operations of all of our units. Much thanks to these unsung heroes who help us achieve our NPS mission objectives!

— *Marin Karraker*, Administrative Officer, SEAZ Group

Want to learn more? Here are a few helpful links

- **Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) (Professional):** FAI.GOV
- **Federal Acquisition Regulation:** Acquisition.GOV

Welcome to the ANPR family



Here are the newest members of the Association of National Park Rangers
(updated 12/18/2024)

Cortney Balcer	<i>Swartz Creek, MI</i>
Fawn Bauer	<i>Eatonville, WA</i>
Leslie Belskis	<i>Hancock, ME</i>
Robert Berretta	<i>Gift subscription</i>
Jill Connors	<i>Gift subscription</i>
Jenn Cook	<i>Titusville, FL</i>
Russell Galipeau	<i>Newbury Park, CA</i>
Isabel Hawkes	<i>Gift subscription</i>
Nancy Hawkes	<i>Lynnwood, WA</i>
Randall Henderson	<i>Lake Wales, FL</i>
Carter Humola	<i>Wrightstown, PA</i>
Curt Jacquot	<i>Ashford, WA</i>
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The link is available to verified current members only, and can be found on the members-only side of the website (<https://www.anpr.org/members>). Log into to your account. If you have not set up a password yet, or need to reset your password, just click "forgot password" to receive setup instructions. *And please remember to check your spam filter if the email does not arrive promptly!* Once we confirm your current membership, you will be ready to explore! After enrollment, you will receive an email 60 days before your AT+ is set to expire to re-confirm that you are still part of ANPR and therefore still eligible for the benefit. Many thanks to AllTrails for this great opportunity!

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(Updated 12/18/2024)

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INTERPRETATION

Freeman Tilden and the prostitute

Interpretation's role in building empathy

TRIXIE TURNER STOOD ON A SIDE street flirting with men in front of their wives as her tour group gathered. As a madam from the Red Onion Saloon and Brothel Museum, she guides fun tours through downtown Skagway, Alaska, including Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (KLG). Women dressed as workers in “Houses of Negotiable Affection” guiding sneaker-wearing cruise passengers through Skagway’s historic streets, making every sordid joke you can imagine about “the world’s oldest profession,” are a routine part of life here. Many (including me) would never waste precious port time on something as seemingly trivial as a walking tour with one of the women from the Red Onion Saloon. But when I spent two weeks in Alaska this past summer volunteering at KLG, I wanted to experience all of it. And that’s how I met Trixie.

Trixie is a storyteller... and a good one. Yes, she’s loud, brash, and a little crude, but it’s all part of her adopted persona. She began with some basic Skagway history, of those who set off for the Klondike, of the few hundred who “struck it rich,” and of the few handfuls who became generationally wealthy. A popular Skagway joke says the best way to get rich in a gold rush is to sell shovels. Skagway boomed and busted on the backs of the hopeful, but it wasn’t only the merchants who “mined the miners.” Saloonkeepers thrived, often with the assistance of pretty young women who got gold-dusted prospectors to buy them watered-down drinks ... and received a cut of the sales in return. Con-men like Soapy Smith used all kinds of tricks to get money out of the chechakos (newcomers to Alaska). There were also kind women who made pies and hot meals and offered conversation and a smile in a rough-and-tumble wilderness.

And then there were those who sold the only thing they had – themselves – to stay alive. Trixie told how some of the women had small dogs that they walked at night to get around curfews that did not allow respectable women to be out at all hours. We learned



Trixie Turner uses great storytelling and interpretive skills to create empathy in those hearing about life in a brothel during the Gold Rush days in Skagway, Alaska. Photo: Gary Bremen

about other signals, like the smallest flash of a red stocking that let everyone know a woman’s availability. We stopped in front of the “cribs” behind the old cigar and candy store: the tiny buildings where the women plied their trade. I felt some dis-ease creeping in to my thoughts. I began to think of the women differently.

Freeman Tilden’s first principle of interpretation states that anything that does not relate to something within the personal experience of the listener will be sterile. I initially felt I had nothing in common with these ladies, but soon I began to think of my own life in retirement where I have a side-hustle of walking dogs. I see a woman wearing red socks and I’m transported right back to Skagway. But when do I think most about the lessons Trixie proffered?

IN PRINT

‘Trixie didn’t tell me *what* to think. She merely presented well-researched facts to build empathy in me.’

Stangely enough, I think of them when I’m in the cleaning-products aisle at the grocery store.

Trixie stops us in an unremarkable weed-lot down an alley, out of earshot of casual listeners. Her joking demeanor is gone. She speaks candidly about the reality of life for many women in Skagway. Early in its existence, Lysol disinfectant was marketed to women as a way of “cleaning up” after sexual encounters with men. Doctors (all men) refused to treat these women, and so they trusted what they read and took matters into their own hands. Though not stated explicitly, it was a “harmless” way to end a potential pregnancy. It caused burning, blistering, and bleeding. I felt the emotion welling up in me. I’m certain the marketing folks for Lysol were all men. Tears came as I thought about the women in my own life. What right did any man have to tell a woman what to do with her body? Trixie didn’t tell me *what* to think. She merely presented well-researched facts to build empathy in me. I reached the conclusions all on my own. And I thought: How much had really changed in the century-and-a-quarter since the Klondike Gold Rush?

I have absolutely ZERO evidence of the founder of the interpretive profession ever cavorting with a “Lady of the Evening.” But this past summer, one of those “ladies” taught this old man a great deal, reinforcing Tilden’s Principles of Interpretation in a completely unexpected way.

The things I learn in National Parks never stop surprising me.

Gary Bremen has been retired from the NPS for more than two years, but continues to work and volunteer in other capacities, always reminding visitors of the importance of the parks in American life.

When a Grand Canyon river guide becomes a Grand Canyon backpacker

By Rick Smith

WHEN MOST OF US THINK ABOUT A WALK IN A PARK, we’re talking about using the trails that the National Park Service has constructed and maintained, and unless we’re hiking the Appalachian Trail or the Pacific Crest Trail, we’re probably not talking about spending more than a week or so on the walk. Not Fedarko and his friend. They decide that they are going to walk the length of the Grand Canyon from Lees Ferry to the Grand Wash Cliffs. This is such a difficult hike that it’s been done only 10 times or so. They plan to add their names to this elite group.

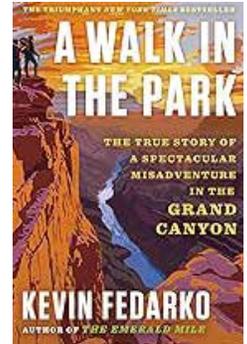
They were hopelessly ill-prepared for such an endeavor. Neither had much hiking experience. Fedarko was a river guide, and his friend, Pete, was a National Geographic photographer. Neither had experience in long-distance hiking. Both were not in good-hiking condition.

For those of you who may not be acquainted with the inner Canyon, a walk along the banks of the Colorado River might not seem like a big deal — long, yes, but pretty much on the level. The reality, of course, is much different. Shortly after leaving Lees Ferry, the cliffs of the Canyon dip into the river, forcing a hiker to climb up and find a way forward. The rock is very friable, and Kevin and Pete had to worry constantly about falling or getting stuck in a place from which it would be difficult to go down or up. Being away from the river also deprived them of the Canyon’s most precious resource, water. Since they did some hiking in the summer, it forced them to carry significant amounts of water with them, making the packs they carried all the heavier.

After reading the book, I am sure that Kevin and Pete would not have completed the hike without the assistance of more experienced long-distance Canyon hiking veterans. These people gladly shared their experience and knowledge with Kevin and Pete and hiked with them for significant parts of the trip to assure their safety.

I enjoyed this book. It is the second Fedarko book I have reviewed for *Ranger*, the first being “The Emerald Mile,” the story of the fastest trip through the Canyon on the Colorado when BOR released a virtual tidal wave of water through the Glenn Canyon Dam. He’s a good writer and his subject should be interesting to most readers of *Ranger*.

— Rick Smith, *Ranger* magazine book reviewer



“A Walk in the Park,” by Kevin Fedarko. Scribner, 2024.



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 12/18/2024)

- Dick and Mary Martin
- Nancy Hawkes
- George Bowen
- Liz Roberts
- Bill Brown
- Andrew Hower
- Jan Lemons

PROTECTION

Why vacancies in protection are bad: Part 4

Editor's Note: This is Part 4 of "Why Protection Ranger Vacancies are Bad," a multi-part series spanning several issues of Ranger magazine. This part picks up where Part 3 left off in the fall issue of Ranger.

THE PRIMARY ASSERTION OF THIS SERIES IS THIS: Allowing protection ranger vacancies to go unfilled, even for a little while, is B-A-D. Vacancies mean that at any time, parks have fewer rangers onboard than the number of rangers they ought to have, and that in turn results in at least some, and oftentimes a lot of, critically important work not getting done.

We've explored emergency response and patrol shortages, collateral duties going unfulfilled and challenges supervisors face amid shortages. Part 4 looks at where rangers must pick up the slack created when other positions are also left vacant, programs and functions that suffer when positions are allowed to lapse for lengthy periods of time, and how all of this directly affects *safety*.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES THAT RANGERS MUST DO WHEN THE ADMIN POSITION IS VACANT

- Generate travel authorizations
- Onboard seasonal rangers (heavy lift!)
- Additional mandatory online trainings
- Major SAR cost spreadsheets
- Payroll tasks
- Requesting medical exams and coordinating the logistics involved
 - Coordinating background investigations for rangers
 - Coordinating drug screenings
 - Serving as scribe at meetings and disseminating minutes

THINGS THAT SUFFER DUE TO VACANCIES

- Consequences: Adverse consequences of things "going sideways" during any emergency response, but especially during a law enforcement incident, have the potential of being dire, even fatal in the most extreme cases. This is not being melodramatic; it is being realistic. Having backup officers



Shenandoah National Park Protection Ranger Melissa Moses interacts with Maintenance Carpenter Dusty Goode during a recent physical security meeting, doing her part to keep professional relationships strong across different work groups. Photo: NPS / Luca Pfeiffer

nearby will never be an automatic guarantee of officer and public safety, but it certainly contributes to a higher degree of officer and public safety.

- Collective morale
- Boundary patrols
- Backcountry patrols in general
- Targeted backcountry patrols, such as those directed at intercepting wildlife and vegetation (ginseng) poaching, etc.
 - Relationships between supervisors and rangers (we simply have less time to give each employee because we're spread thin).
 - Relationships between rangers and their fellow rangers, simply because we see each other less often and have less interaction and communication with each other. When relationships between emergency response personnel become stressed, it's never a good thing. We absolutely must be able to trust each other, especially under tough circumstances and when things go sideways—strained relationships endanger this mutual trust.
 - Relationships between rangers and staff from other divisions, concessions staff, personnel from other agencies and volunteers
 - Fewer foot patrols through campgrounds and picnic grounds
 - Not as easy to release rangers for de-

tails, special assignments, wildfires, hurricanes, and other opportunities when we're short-staffed.

- When we're short-staffed, everything listed under the mandatory heading gets spread across the shoulders of fewer rangers.
- Many of the tasks listed above under the optional heading either don't get done on time or don't get done at all.
- When we're short-staffed, everything feels rushed, all the time. Even conversations feel rushed because we're trying to squeeze what should be a 20- or 30-minute conversation into 5 or 10 minutes so that we can move on to the next deadline that we're already behind on because we're spread thin.
- "District coverage" is often not coverage at all, but merely the "appearance of coverage." It's just a checkmark in a little rectangular box on a schedule. All it means is that a certain number of rangers—often only one—is on duty and required to "cover" a district containing miles of park roads, lodges, campgrounds and picnic grounds, hundreds of miles of trails, rivers, beaches, and boundary, and hundreds of acres of wilderness and other backcountry. An emergency might happen at the north end of a district when that district's "coverage" ranger is at the south end of the district, and the neighboring district's

“coverage” ranger is even further away. In cases where only one ranger is assigned for a particular shift, if that ranger calls in sick, there is zero coverage for that district unless other rangers from other districts can “cover,” which spreads those rangers even thinner, or a ranger can come in last-minute, neither of which is a guarantee. One ranger for all of this is *not* “coverage,” it only appears to be because there’s a checkmark in a box on the schedule.

- In many cases, we cannot rely on our cooperating agencies to “cover” for us. I’ve personally experienced calls where neighboring law enforcement agencies were either completely unavailable (they advised that they had no one due to their own staffing shortages), or they took over an hour to respond.

- Opportunities for rangers to participate in out-of-park assignments, such as acting details, wildfires, special events, all-hazards incidents, etc. and training courses, especially those lasting several days or weeks because “we don’t have enough coverage to let them go.” Rangers should never be denied these opportunities “because we don’t have the staffing to support their absence.”

- Supervisors’ ability to delegate tasks/assignments/investigations/acting details, etc.—When we’re short-staffed, supervisors simply have fewer people to whom we can delegate responsibilities. As a result, the same fewer rangers get more delegated tasks heaped upon their shoulders because we’re spread so thin.

- When we have a supervisory position vacant, it gives the chief ranger one fewer option for people to rotate through acting leadership assignments. If a park only has two district rangers, but should have three, whenever the deputy chief needs someone to serve as acting, he or she must flip-flop between only two district rangers; a third district ranger would give one additional option, which would spread out the burden of serving as acting deputy chief across a larger time frame.

- The quality of our work suffers. Doesn’t matter what kind of project, document, program it is we happen to be working on, the quality of it suffers when we’re short-staffed because there is never enough time to spend on said project to make the end-product as excellent as we’d like it to be. In other words, we could do higher-quality work if we had more time to spend on our work.

HOW ALL THIS RELATES TO SAFETY

The NPS preaches SAFETY, SAFETY, SAFETY, but many parks allow positions to stay vacant for extended periods. This is not safe.

- Response time with fewer rangers is longer for visitors in need, but also for fellow rangers in need.

- The rangers in the “quiet” areas of a park deserve the same backup availability as the rangers in the “busy” areas.

- Everything listed above thus far takes significant time.

- When we’re spread thin, we feel rushed to get things done (because there are fewer of us doing the same number of tasks) and being rushed is a common denominator of accidents.

- Responding to emergencies carries its own type of stress, but what causes even more stress on our protection ranger staff is being understaffed, resulting in fewer rangers shouldering the workload of a larger crew.

Supervisors carry a heavier workload; however, they are still law enforcement officers, red-carded firefighters, SAR technicians, EMTs, and incident commanders, and still required to drop their

admin duties when the tone goes out and respond to emergencies.

At the drop of a hat a ranger formerly on full duty might go on light duty due to medical issues. There are times when multiple rangers are on light duty at the same time.

Most collateral duties require a permanent Type 1 commissioned ranger to oversee and/or serve as coordinator.

Rangering in 2024 is different than it was in 1994 or even 2014: Administrative requirements continue to get more specific, which makes them more difficult to complete. Our collateral duties list grows each year, our society is more litigious than ever, etc.

Most administrative functions that all rangers, but especially supervisors, do are Internet-dependent, and the Internet is often excruciatingly, maddeningly slow at remote ranger stations.

When supervisory positions lapse, direct reports often must adapt to numerous new bosses over a short period of time. I know rangers who had to adapt to five new supervisors over just two and a half years! Adapting to a new supervisor, especially when he or she was your peer—and will be again soon, or even trickier, will answer to the ranger he or she just finished supervising—adds yet one more stress to our predicaments. These folks deserve a permanent supervisor, not a revolving door.

Many rangers do the jobs of at least two, and in some cases, three people for some time.

Retention: Having “X” percent of a park’s permanent staff vacant is bad enough, but how long will it be before they lose another ranger to transfer or retirement (or extended sick leave)? Every time another ranger leaves, short-staffing problems worsen. Rangers are more likely to stick around where they feel valued and have other incentives such as out-of-park, career-enhancing, skill-developing opportunities, all of which are more difficult to award when staffing is short. Rangers are also more likely to stay in a park where they feel they have backup close-by. We must do all we can to make rangers want to stay at their park. Let’s start by filling vacancies.

What ever happened to the “No Net Loss” directive from NPS Director Fran Mainella, circa early 2000s? This directive was a result of recommendations from a study completed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, backed up by another yearlong study by the Office of Inspector General, as well as the U.S. Ranger Fraternal Order of Police Lodge, National Parks and Conservation Association, and the Association of National Park Rangers. The underlying point of the directive was that the NPS must not allow the loss of any permanent protection ranger position that existed at the time. It was further recommended that the NPS should strive to *bolster* its permanent protection ranger numbers, not allow them to dwindle. This directive has largely been ignored service-wide, and today, the number of filled protection ranger positions has actually declined rather than remained static.

If parks do not get help soon in the form of vacancies being filled, it will be time to say “No” to some of the work that has traditionally been expected from rangers. It will be time to restrict some of the things we’re able to accomplish, including some visitor services.

Stay tuned for the spring 2025 issue of Ranger, where Part 5 will discuss steps rangers often take to help themselves, and it will reveal what I call, “The Grand Paradox.”

— Kevin Moses, supervisory ranger, Shenandoah National Park

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The other key pieces of Yorktown victory: Enslaved Africans and a Spanish diplomat

BRITISH GEN. CHARLES CORNWALLIS' MARCH 1781 VICTORY at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse (Guilford County, N.C.) had ravaged his army. So much that he abandoned the Carolinas and began a long march north toward the coast of Virginia. There he hoped to combine his forces with those of Gen. William Phillips and initiate new offensive operations against the Continental army that summer.

As Cornwallis moved north, Gen. George Washington was still in Connecticut and attempting to develop plans to lay siege to British forces occupying New York City. Washington knew, however, that his success in an overland campaign depended upon the presence of the French navy. But he had no information about the location, size, and plans of French Admiral de Grasse's fleet.

Nor was Washington aware that his French counterparts had no desire to support an assault on Manhattan. In fact, the French were focused on launching operations some 360 miles south in Chesapeake Bay.

In his book "In the Hurricane's Eye," historian Nathaniel Philbrick writes that when Washington received news that de Grasse's fleet was headed to Virginia instead of Sandy Hook, N.J., he unleashed "expressions of intemperate passion..." He then took his army on a long march of their own south along the roads that would take them to Yorktown and final victory.

But before the French fleet could sail from the Caribbean it needed two things: assurances that French possessions in the region would be secure in their absence and, most especially, money. The sailing force de Grasse planned to take to the Virginia Capes in August-September 1781, was comprised of 28 ships of the line crewed by more than 20,000 sailors and marines. These men needed to be fed, armed, and paid, and de Grasse's wooden-and-sail 18th-century battleships were in constant need of canvas, wood, and iron for repairs.

And that summer the French admiral was broke.

Enter Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis. In the summer of 1781, Saavedra was a 35-year-old Spanish official stationed in Cuba. A diplomat, military advisor, and (when the occasion presented itself) spy, Saavedra was sent to Cuba to establish bureaucratic efficiencies that would facilitate Spanish military successes against the British. Philbrick describes Saavedra as a "consummate fixer."

In August Saavedra first negotiated with Spanish naval officials to station their own ships of the line off the coasts of French possessions in the Caribbean to ensure their security when de Grasse's ships sailed north. Next, he traveled to Havana where, in a single afternoon, he raised 500,000 pesos from local merchants to support the French fleet.

It was rumored that the wealthy Spanish women of Havana gave Saavedra their gold rings to add to his haul of cash. And it must be noted that the wealth Saavedra was able to draw upon in Cuba was

Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis of Spain is credited with helping the French defeat the Royal Navy at the Battle of the Virginia Capes. (NPS photo of a portrait by Francisco Goya)

Below, American mortars at Yorktown Battlefield, in Colonial National Historical Park in Virginia.
Photo: Alan Spears



due almost entirely to the profits Spanish landowners had accrued from the labor of enslaved Africans toiling on sugar plantations.

That funding was transferred to the French and allowed de Grasse's fleet to extend operations just long enough to meet and defeat the Royal Navy at the Battle of the Virginia Capes on Sept. 5, 1781. The French victory at sea gave the allied Continental and French forces the security they required to lay siege to General Cornwallis' troops inside Yorktown. The surrender of British forces there in October 1781 was the "Final Victory" that began the process of ending the American Revolution on terms that would establish an independent United States of America.

Gen. George Washington is rightly regarded as the "military architect" of American independence. His ability to field and keep together an army for five long years kept alive the possibility of American independence, and for that Washington deserves full credit.

Still, an honest assessment demands that a Spaniard, Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis, and countless, unknown enslaved African men and women, share an equal if unheralded part in the winning of that final victory at Yorktown. Here's hoping that the commemoration of the semi-quincentennial (250th anniversary) of American Independence will elevate the full, accurate, and inclusive history of our glorious revolution by giving the Spanish and Africans their due place in our shared national narrative.

— Alan Spears, National Parks Conservation Association

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