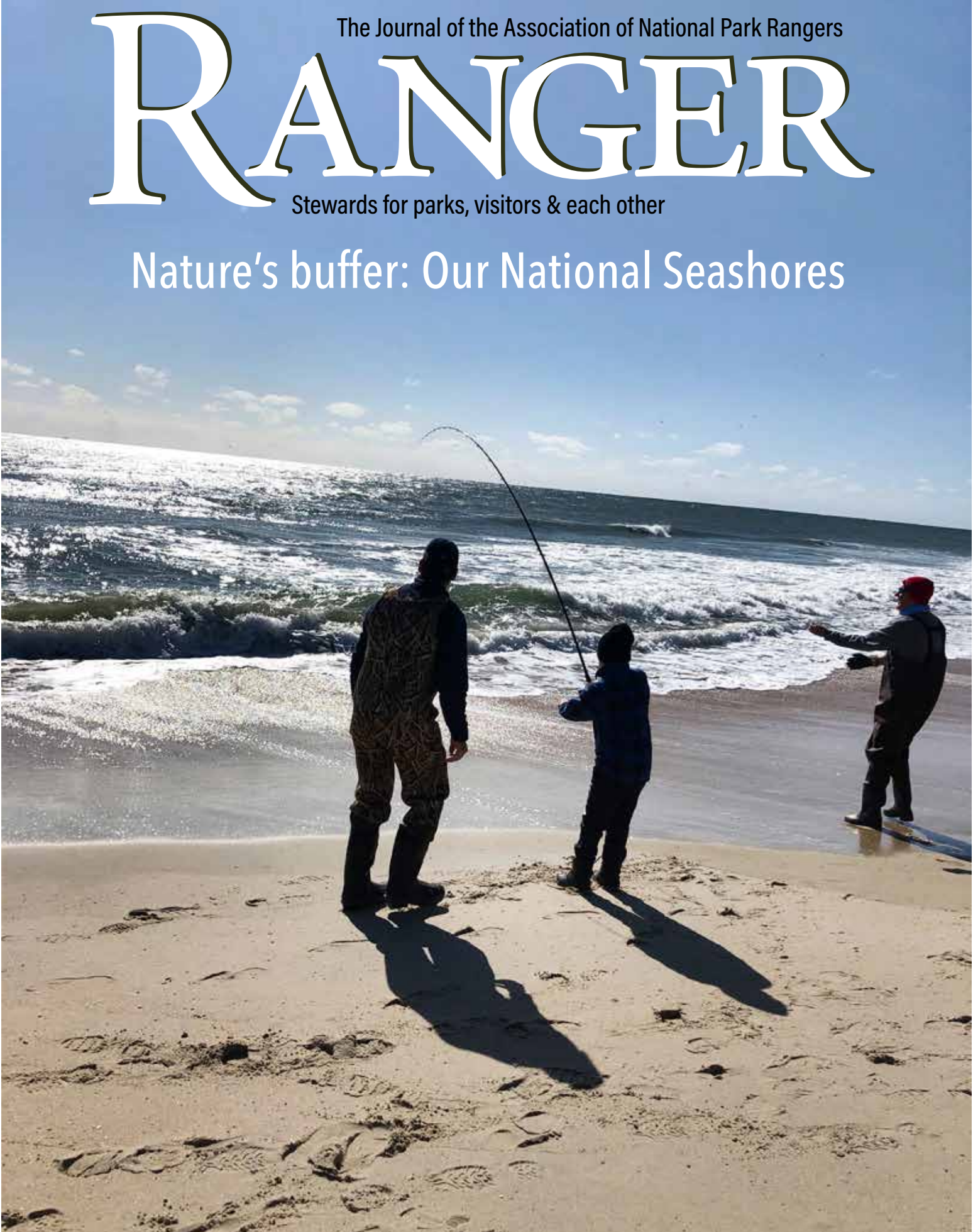


The Journal of the Association of National Park Rangers

RANGER

Stewards for parks, visitors & each other

Nature's buffer: Our National Seashores



Vol. 41, No. 3 | Summer 2025

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2025

Our national seashores are a slice of 'our land'

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ON THE COVER: Park Cape Hatteras National Seashore VIPs teach a learn to surf cast class to youth. There are 10 National Seashores within the NPS park unit system. NPS photo: Cape Hatteras National Seashore

THIS MONTH'S ISSUE OF **RANGER MAGAZINE** BEGAN AS AN ODE TO THE SEASHORE. Then, somewhere along the way, while editing content and connecting with ANPR members for their memories of working in these special park units, the Woodie Guthrie song, "This Land is Your Land" began to play on a loop in my brain.

Because right now, the fight for that land is heating up. National Park Service professionals, public lands supporters, volunteers, donors, and everyday Americans are raising their voices, waving signs, writing letters and insisting: **This land is their land** (Truthfully, this is ancestral land where indigenous peoples have lived for millennia before colonizers arrived; but there is broad agreement today: This land must be protected).

ANPR continues to be at the forefront of the battle to regain some semblance of sanity within the National Park Service. Our board members report their progress on this front on pages 16-18.

Of particular note is the generosity of you, our members, and those in the public who have found out about ANPR and want to help our rangers. With special thanks to ANPR Executive Director Bill Wade, ANPR has worked with two special donors to help grow our Ranger Emergency Relief Fund, which is available to ANPR members affected by cuts in the federal workforce. Read more on Page 4.

On the pages in between, though, take pause to appreciate the varied and unique attributes from our great-big forests (pages 5-7) to our wide-open seashores (pages 8-10). While wrapping up the final editing of this edition of *Ranger* magazine, I began communicating with ANPR Life Member Gib Backlund, who was among a group of ANPR members I sought out for comment about our national seashores. Backlund worked at Cape Hatteras in the '80s and '90s. His insight was helpful for the National Seashore article, but it was the letter he attached at the end of the email that drew my attention. If you read nothing else in this issue of *Ranger*, please go to Page 12. Originally written on Ash Wednesday as a personal letter to friends he once worked with at Hatteras, this unique, almost poetic So There I Was (pages 12-13) submission will have you smelling the suntan lotion and digging sand out of your shorts. Backlund captured the magical moments of rangers that perhaps gets lost in the day-to-day — moments that maybe aren't fully appreciated until long after those days are gone. Thank you, Gib, for this special contribution.

And finally, speaking of the seashore, get out your sandals and start planning for Ranger Rendezvous 48, set for Oct. 14-18, 2025, in Virginia Beach, Va. Now, more than ever, we need to connect, in person, and rally our energy. You are, as our 2025 RR theme describes, "resilient rangers." You are facing uncertain times, but connecting for a few days of programming and inspiration is just the way to fuel the future. We hope to see you there. Check our website often as the programming firms up. Additionally, registration is open, so sign up now. See you at the beach!



— Melissa DeVaughn
Ranger magazine editor

RANGER

THE JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL PARK RANGERS
Vol. 41, No. 3 Summer 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 *Ranger* for 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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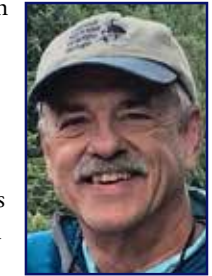
Unprecedented times in the National Park Service

President's message

— Rick Mossman

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IS GOING THROUGH CHANGES NEVER before seen in any of our lifetimes or in the history of the service. It's going to be challenging for all employees. It's hard to witness the amount of brain trust and institutional knowledge the NPS is losing. For you employees who continue working with the NPS, we thank you and wish you the best. Hang in there, stay with the mission and let ANPR know how we can help. We are glad to be the voice for problems and issues employees are having. We have money in our Ranger Emergency Relief Fund to help ANPR members who

have been removed from duty. Check our website. Right now, ANPR is fighting for you and the NPS through the media. In the last three months, ANPR staff has responded to more than 200 media requests, and we will continue to fight. Many of us are willing to go down fighting to keep our national parks and their keepers.



— Rick Mossman,
ANPR president

A few clues offered in photo mystery story

IN THE WINTER ISSUE OF RANGER MAGAZINE, WE PUBLISHED A STORY BY BOB GERHARD about a photo that accompanied an obituary for storied mountaineer and seasonal climbing ranger at Mount Rainier National Park, Lou Whittaker. His *New York 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.

But Gerhard and others say that photo was misidentified, and the man in the photo next to Lou was actually seasonal climbing ranger Lee Henkle. And who were the others behind them, Gerhard and his friends wondered? We asked you, our readers, and here are some of the responses we received.



Barry Wong / Seattle Times via The Associated Press

"I think the ranger in the NPS cap and light-colored gear is Garry Olson. It definitely looks like him. Garry was a long-time Mount Rainier ranger involved with many SAR incidents on the mountain, and he worked there throughout all of the 1980's. I worked with Garry for several years at Capitol Reef National Park where he moved when he left Mount Rainier around 1993-94." — ANPR member Tom Cox

Gerry Tays was Nisqually District Ranger at the time and is almost certain that the photo is from a June 21, 1981, massive ice fall that swept away 11 climbers. The rescue effort was massive. This was confirmed by ANPR member Tim Devine. Tays also thought the first ranger in the photo following Henkle could be Subdistrict Ranger Rick Kirschner. But Devine was able to confirm with Kirschner's daughter that it was not him; She thought it might be Steve Ross.

Bundy Phillips was Henkle's roommate at the time, and he and fellow retired climbing ranger Ed Thompson also ruled out Kirschner as the third climber.

So, the mystery remains. Is it Garry Olson? Steve Ross? Maybe some savvy ranger out there can help. If so, shoot an email to mdevaughn@anpr.org.

This land is your land

Unprecedented support for “Our People” buoys rangers in uncertain times

AS WORD BEGAN TO SPREAD ABOUT NATIONAL PARK Service employees being terminated, two unexpected and unsolicited sources of support to ANPR’s Ranger Emergency Relief Fund (RERF) emerged.

One was from **Eric Bennett** (www.bennettfilm.com) a nature photographer, who arranged for a collection of prints, called the “Sacred Lands” by other photographers who also donated their works for sale. Eric sold a number of these print sets and has donated the profits to ANPR’s RERF. The additional photographers who donated prints were: William Neill, Sarah Marino, Michael Frye, Adrian Klein, Charlotte Gibb, TJ Thorne, Alex Noriega, Jennifer Renwick and Joe Rossbach. Total donated from this fundraising effort and contributed to ANPR was \$33,000!

The other fundraising effort (still ongoing) that came to us was from **Celine Thackston** from “thehellointhere” foundation (www.thehellointherefoundation.org). This foundation, a 501c3 charitable organization was set up in honor of the late singer/songwriter John Prine. They get substantial funding from the Prine family but also have sponsors/supporters and donors. They developed a “pennant” in honor of Prine that they have sold and will donate the proceeds after production costs to our ranger relief fund. They did something like this a year ago and produced 600 pennants, which sold out almost immediately at something like \$60.

All of us who are members of ANPR express our sincere appreciation to Eric and Celine and all those who were also involved in these efforts to support “Our People.”

— Bill Wade, ANPR executive director

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- Robert Martin
- James Sehy

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- Meg Weesner

This Land is Your Land

This land is your land, and this land is my land,

*From California to the New York Island,
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf
Stream waters,*

This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking that ribbon of highway,

And I saw above me that endless skyway,

I saw below me that golden valley,

This land was made for you and me.

I roamed and rambled, and I followed my footsteps,

To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts,

All around me a voice was a-sounding,

This land was made for you and me.

There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me,

Sign was painted, said, “Private Property,”

But on the back side, it didn't say nothing,

This land was made for you and me.

When the sun comes shining, then I was strolling,

And the wheat fields waving, and the dust clouds rolling,

A voice come chanting as the fog was lifting,

This land was made for you and me.

This land is your land, and this land is my land,

*From California to the New York Island,
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf
Stream waters,*

This land was made for you and me.

— Woody Guthrie

**While this 1951 folk song has come under scrutiny for ignoring the indigenous people and cultures in North America that were here long before Guthrie’s time, it still stands as an American anthem to the right for all people to have access to public lands. Its message is more important today than ever.*

From the giant forests ...

Remembering Sequoia's bold land restoration efforts

By Matthew Enderle and Doug Crispin

IT WAS EXACTLY 99 YEARS AGO THAT A SEED WAS PLANTED, which eventually lead to one of the greatest land restoration efforts in the National Park Service. The story is told well in the book, “Challenge of the Big Trees,” by William Tweed and Lary Dilsaver. Welcome to Sequoia National Park.

Giants of the forest. The largest found anywhere in the world! Rising nearly 300 feet high, with massive diameters often more than 35 feet. These are the endemic Giant Sequoia trees of the Sierra Nevada mountains. They are iconic to the world — and the National Park Service. Today, every NPS ranger wears a Sequoia tree on their arrowhead shoulder patch, and Sequoia cones on their hat bands and belts.

In the 1920s, NPS Director Stephen Mather's idea was to invite folks into the parks, with proper development and nice visitor facilities. This decade also saw the growth of automobile tourism in America's Western national parks.

The Giant Forest area of Sequoia National Park has always been the heart and soul of the park. Even after the park later expanded to include Mount Whitney and the surrounding awesome mountain backcountry, most visitors came to see the largest trees on earth. True to Mather's development priorities, he approved a concession company with ties to Yosemite to continue adding visitor facilities in the Giant Forest area. By 1925, the Giant Forest Lodge complex included both wood and tent cabins that could accommodate 300 people.

In 1926, Mather invited Dr. Emilio Meineche to see the Giant Forest. Dr. Meineche worked for the U.S. Forest Service and was a recognized expert in plant pathology and forest health.

Meineche knew the Sequoia trees consumed large quantities of water through their shallow and fragile root systems. Meineche became concerned when he saw all the Giant Forest developments: cabins, camping areas, underground utility lines, roads and parking area, and trampled surfaces caused by foot traffic. Meineche produced a 19-page report detailing these concerns. He recommended structured paths and fencing leading to individual trees. He also saw the need to move camping areas away from the giant trees. This was the conservation and restoration seed, planted so long ago, that might just save the health of the Giant Forest.

Serving as park superintendent in the 1920s was Col. John White. Handpicked by Mather and his assistant Horace Albright, White was to become a legendary park superintendent, serving until 1947. Superintendent White also became concerned about over-developments inside the Giant Forest. In 1930 he wrote:

If we do not ... transfer the major part of the present activity away from the heart of the Giant Forest, the beauties



The Giant Forest Market gas station, market, and other developments as they appeared in around 1955. Photo credit Library of Congress

of that area — already badly tarnished — will be further tarnished.

When White shared his Giant Forest concerns with Mather, Mather always backed his concessionaire buddy. Both were pro-growth and pro-visitor facilities. In 1931, White convinced Mather's replacement, Director Albright, to institute a “pillow limit” of 200 within the Giant Forest lodge complex. This was a small win but foreshadowed what would happen decades later.

One hour north of the Giant Forest was General Grant National Park. Established the same week in the fall of 1890 as Sequoia and Yosemite, General Grant protected more giant Sequoia trees. In 1940, Kings Canyon National Park was established, creating a wonderful all-backcountry mountain national park. The General Grant area was folded into the new park, taking on the new park's name. Sharing a boundary with Sequoia and beginning in 1943, management of the new national park was combined under one general superintendent headquartered in Sequoia NP.

Meanwhile back in the Giant Forest, in 1952 a new 20-year concessionaire contract was signed, allowing the Giant Forest Lodge developments and facilities to remain. The park concession operation was secured, but the NPS had an opportunity to move their own facilities out of the Giant Forest.

The Lodgepole campground was four miles distant and located safely away from the fragile Giant Forest area. It had been around since the 1920s. In 1968 and 1969, the park began moving out of Giant Forest, concentrating park facilities now at Lodgepole. This in-

cluded moving three campgrounds totaling 152 campsites, the Post Office, gas station, park housing, and maintenance facilities. A new visitor center and camp store was also built at Lodgepole, marking a great start to the Giant Forest restoration.

In 1971 another new 20-year concession contract was signed allowing the Giant Forest operations, facilities and service to continue into the 1990s. The NPS began a new master planning process. In 1974, a draft Master Plan was completed, calling for the removal of all commercial developments from the Giant Forest. The draft plan was finally approved in 1980.

To replace lodge developments in the Giant Forest, plans called for building a new lodge complex. Waksachi Lodge/village construction began two miles north of Lodgepole in 1985. First came employee housing, a fire house, and water/waste water plants. The new lodge complex was fully operational by 1999.

Noted National Park Lodge architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood is responsible for designing classic early lodges in the NPS: Yosemite, Zion, Cedar Breaks, Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon, and Grand Teton. He also designed the Giant Forest Market in 1928. Over time the Market grew to also house the Fireside Tavern, a snack bar, dairy sales, and a whiskey locker. The bold park plan called for converting the Giant Forest Market building into a first-class museum/visitor center. Three additional buildings were to remain in the Giant Forest. Everything else was to go away.

GONE. GONE. GONE.

From 1997 to 1999, Giant Forest restoration was completed. A whopping total of 282 buildings were moved or simply razed! The demolished building lumber was run through a large wood chipper. No more rental cabins, motel, park offices, gift shops, cafeteria, restaurant, bar, registration desk, concession and NPS housing, parking lots. Even the paved road to Bear Hill: Gone. One million square feet of asphalt torn up, then removed. All were gone.

This massive restoration effort caught the attention of sitting U.S. President George W. Bush. Bush visited the Giant Forest in May, 2001. After first ascending nearby Moro Rock wearing his



The Giant Forest Museum as it appears in February 2025. Doug Crispin photo

slick-leather cowboy boots, Bush re-dedicated the Giant Forest in a formal ceremony held in front of the soon-to-be-repurposed Giant Forest Market. Seven months later, the market building became an NPS museum. The Giant Forest Museum was retrofitted with top-rate NPS exhibits and displays, all focused on the Giant Forest and the remarkable stories these trees tell. The museum building remains today as the largest and most visible holdover from the 1920s development period.



The Visalia Times-Delta published this photo on May 31, 2001, of Chief Ranger Debbie Bird and President George W. Bush as he applauded the restoration work and rededicated the area. Visalia Times-Delta photo

THUMB TACK HISTORY

Inside the museum is our favorite exhibit, just an unremarkable old-school display. A simple cross section/wedge of a large tree. It sits quietly in a corner. Now retired Sequoia Ranger William Tweed sat down one day with a magnifying glass. He painstakingly counted the tree rings. He marked each 100 years of growth rings using a thumbtack. Twenty one thumbtacks later, he revealed the age of the Sequoia wedge.

Today, park visitors like to count the thumb tacks and discover for themselves what it means to touch a Sequoia tree wedge that is 2,100 years old! Count just 2 ½ thumbtacks and you are back to the short time the USA has been a country. Cut that time in half and that is when Sequoia became America's second national park. Most of the thumbtack timeline represent times when native people lived lightly upon the land. These populations had thriving, rich cultures, with multiple languages and powerful spiritual beliefs. All inconceivable to the limited European mind. How could man possibly live so long and well without beasts of burden, metal, or written language?



Loaders and excavators remove entire buildings in the Giant Forest during a reclamation period from 1997 to 1999. NPS photo

An unusual piece of history found in park residence



Sequoia National Park VIP Doug Crispin examines the thumbtacks of history that age these behemoth trees. Matthew Enderle photo



A park residence recently underwent renovations, and workers found an unusual bit of history. Doug Crispin photo

IN THE 1990s, SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK UNDERTOOK A HUGE land restoration project. Nearly 300 buildings were removed, and 1 million square feet of asphalt was torn up and removed, improving the health of the Giant Sequoia trees for which the park was established to protect in 1890. Today in the Giant Forest area of Sequoia National Park, only three historic public buildings remain, and one historic park ranger residence.

Park staff are currently remodeling the interior of that lone park residence/building in the Giant Forest built in 1931.

Inside the residence is a porcelain toilet, with a wooden seat. A surprised Sequoia National Park worker recently lifted open the porcelain lid to the toilet tank, only to discover a hidden message unseen from 24 years earlier: “Used By George W. Bush 2001.”



A history-minded employee presumably left this message after Bush’s visit to Sequoia National Park in 2001. Doug Crispin photo

President Bush was indeed in Sequoia National Park on May 30, 2001. The purpose was to recognize the Giant Forest restoration efforts and to announce a new National Parks Legacy Project. Sometime during the visit to the park, it looks like he popped into the nearby park residence to do another type of Presidential “business.”

Apparently a history-minded NPS employee later recorded the bathroom visit using a black marker on the inside of the toilet tank lid! Whether this can be verified, I’m not sure. But it’s a light-hearted reminder that we are all just humans here, doing what we can to protect our parks.

— Doug Crispin

This is a story of how early park developments invited park visitors to come, recreate, stay overnight or otherwise marvel at the wonders of nature ... the world’s largest trees. It’s a classic story of a park being overdeveloped and loved near to death, threatening the very resources it was created to protect. Yet, it’s also a story of how the NPS took bold steps to change course and restore the land to its natural condition.

As we look back at the ambitious efforts to restore the Giant Forest, this success story is on par with some of the other monumental NPS restoration efforts: the removal of the Elwha and Glines dams in Olympic National Park, reintroducing grey wolves back into Yellowstone National Park, and removing all domestic livestock and saving the Channel Islands fox from certain extinction.

Today, park interpreters do their part to maintain the restored state of the Giant Forest by fostering stewardship with visitors, just as Col. White envisioned during his tenure as Sequoia superintendent. In his own words:

The expansion of museum, nature walks, and campfire lectures is the surest protection against degeneracy into jazzy amusements.

Matthew Enderle is the Lodgepole Subdistrict Interpreter in Sequoia National Park. His career has based him in several western parks since 2016, but the legacy of Sequoia and Kings Canyon has been a constant inspiration to him.



Doug Crispin is a seasonal ranger at the North Rim, Grand Canyon National Park. He spent last winter as a Volunteer In The Parks at Sequoia National Park. He is a frequent contributor to *Ranger* magazine.

... To the seashore waters

The scientific and cultural value of America's national seashores

By Melissa DeVaughn, Ranger magazine editor



Cape Cod National Seashore's Marconi Beach is a popular beach in Wellfleet, Mass. It has beautiful views, soft sand, and the surfing can be excellent. It is one of 10 national seashores within the NPS park unit system. NPS / Brittini Connell

A LONG THE EVER-SHIFTING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN LAND and ocean, America's National Seashores preserve some of the most ecologically rich, geologically dynamic, and historically layered landscapes in the nation. Managed by the National Park Service (NPS), these 10 protected coastlines are more than scenic getaways — they are living laboratories, climate buffers, biodiversity reservoirs, and vital records of human and natural history.

Stretching across the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts, National Seashores play a crucial role in buffering inland communities from storm surges and sea level rise. The barrier islands of Cape Hatteras and Cape Lookout in North Carolina, for instance, act as natural shields, absorbing the brunt of hurricanes that would otherwise devastate the mainland. According to research from the U.S. Geological Survey, barrier islands like these reduce wave energy by up to 80 percent during storm events. Their ever-moving sands also serve as a reminder of dynamic coastal processes that are essential to long-term shoreline resilience.

CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE

At **Cape Cod National Seashore** in Massachusetts, glacially formed kettle ponds and dunes harbor rare species such as the eastern box turtle and pitch pine-scrub oak forests. The area is also a model for coastal ecological restoration. Park scientists are restoring wetlands and allowing natural tidal flow to return, which helps combat the spread of invasive species and improves carbon sequestration — a key tool in mitigating climate change.

Cape Cod holds the distinction as the first NPS unit completely acquired through appropriated funds in Congress, said ANPR Life Member Anthony Bonanno. The entire park was superimposed over the towns in the area, and land ownership became complicated and sometimes contentious. Bonanno was chief ranger from 1986-1992.

“As chief ranger, I managed natural resources and protection, which included a diverse range of coastal resource issues, including endangered shorebirds, historic shipwrecks, off road vehicle use, fishing, beach access, six lifeguard protected ocean beaches, and

the list goes on,” he said.

With gorgeous seafront properties, the NPS worked out deals with many of the property owners. The residents agreed to the purchase of their property at fair market value, along with the understanding that they (and sometimes their children, etc.) could continue living there for an agreed upon number of years.

“The NPS paid the taxes and many other expenses resulting in the residents essentially living at the property for free. However, after the agreed upon number of years had passed (25 years for example), the tenant sometimes resisted leaving and the resulting ‘news’ coverage was not always favorable to the NPS.”

In addition to the “use and occupancy” arrangements, there were still about 600 private properties within the seashore boundaries.

“Beach access, roads, ponds management, etc. were an ongoing activity for the seashore staff,” he added. “This had been going on while I got there and was going on after I left. But it is a beautiful place.”

Fortunately, Cape Cod weathered that period and exists today to contribute to the maritime health of the region. On Cape Cod, investments were made as the result of a wetland restoration program called the “Cape Cod Tidal Restriction Atlas.” The report inventoried road crossings over tidal streams and identified undersized culverts, which choked off tidal exchange to upstream marshes. Since then, culverts have been replaced, restoring natural tidal exchange to more than 300 acres of coastal wetland habitat. Another project in Wellfleet involves nearly 1,000 acres of former salt marsh and is the largest tidal restoration project in New England.

FIRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

Farther south, **Fire Island National Seashore** in New York offers critical habitat for the piping plover, a federally threatened shorebird. The seashore's maritime forests and dunes serve as a living classroom for coastal ecology. Importantly, Fire Island is one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier islands in the region, offering a scientific control for understanding sea level rise and human impact

on coastal zones.

Scott Pfeninger was a law enforcement subdistrict ranger at FIIS from 1985 through 1988, after spending two summers at Cape Cod on seasonal horse patrol as a park technician. At Fire Island, he patrolled the popular beach area and vehicle access point.

“At FIIS, we also had horses, but I was more likely to be out on foot, vehicle or boat,” he said. “While there, we restored and relighted the lighthouse and created a new visitor center and public programs. Improving visitor services and providing educational opportunities leaving a lasting impact were my fondest memories.”

Pfeninger said working day to day in the national seashore environment brings to the forefront the need for protection.

“National Seashores protect coastal areas for public use that would otherwise be developed,” he said. “The shifting sands of these areas make them vulnerable to storms and overuse. They are valuable for people to get outdoors and unwind just like many other National Park areas.”

Pfeninger said these protections are more important now than ever.

“Climate change and overuse are the biggest issues” at these places, he said. “Storms are more intense, oceans are warming and rising, more public than ever are visiting the National Seashores. Fewer staff seem to be available to deal with and mitigate issues.”

ANPR Life Member Jim Tuck also worked at Fire Island as west district ranger from October 1978 through September 1980. He lived in an 1858 lighthouse keepers house and patrolled by boat, vehicle and horseback.

“It was pretty interesting – the seashore was designated partly to stop New York builder Robert Moses from building a highway the length of Fire Island,” he recalls. And thankfully, the effort was successful.

Today, Fire Island is home to diverse plants and animals, and features barrier island beaches that offer solitude just outside the bustle of the city.



ANPR Life Member Scott Pfeninger during his days on horse patrol at Cape Cod National Seashore. Courtesy Scott Pfeninger

Gib Backlund worked at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Wright Brothers National Memorial, and Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. He started as a volunteer from 1983 to 1985 after his wife, Connie Backlund, transferred to CAHA as district interpreter and he couldn't get a permanent position. When one opened up, he then served as a park technician from 1985 to 1992.

“Then later when the 026 series was changed to 025, I became a park ranger working in the RM&VP division – law enforcement, lifeguarded beaches, campgrounds, work-

ing with nesting shore birds, sea turtle nesting, special use permits, wildland and structural fire, EMS and more.”

It's been a while since he worked there, Backlund acknowledges, but once a ranger, always a ranger, and even during his time there, he knew there were challenges ahead.

“How to make them better? That's a tough question, but make them larger. Make sure all planning processes are well-conducted and adhered-to. Make sure that human activities and harms are mitigated. Ensure exceptional education and interpretation programs, starting at an early age in nearby schools.”

The list could go on, he said, adding that “seashores matter as all natural systems matter.”

Threats to the Hatteras area include invasive species/feral cats, the drawdown of aquifers, marine debris like plastic, fishing lines and nets; extreme development in areas adjacent to the seashore/septic systems; off-road driving; and structures washing down the beach from severe storms. It's a continual challenge – whether back in Backlund's day or today. Still, Backlund said, Hatteras is a special place.

“Those of us who worked at Cape Hatteras during that time all look back on it as an idyllic time. We had a great superintendent, Tom Hartman, and thanks to his leadership, and a high functioning management team, we felt like we were integral to the park's successful management and that we accomplished the mission of the NPS.”

KEEPING WILD SPACES OPEN

Seven other National Seashores play a vital role in the health of the American ecosystem.

On **Assateague Island National Seashore**, which straddles Maryland and Virginia, salt marshes, maritime forests, and coastal bays create a patchwork of ecosystems that support more than 300 species of birds and a population of wild horses that have adapted to the harsh barrier island environment. The National Park Service monitors marsh accretion and erosion rates here to understand how rising sea levels and storm intensity are altering these delicate systems. Salt marshes, like those on Assateague, are considered one of the most productive ecosystems in the world, storing carbon at rates many times higher than tropical forests.

Cape Lookout National Seashore, a 56-mile stretch of barrier



A green sea turtle hatchling in the Padre Island National Seashore faces the Gulf surf. NPS photo

islands along North Carolina's coast, plays a critical role in regional environmental health. In 2018, following Hurricane Florence, the National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS) conducted a comprehensive assessment of water and sediment quality within the seashore to evaluate the storm's environmental impact. The study revealed that while contaminants were present at all 20 surveyed sites, their concentrations did not exceed levels of concern according to sediment guidelines. Additionally, nutrient levels in water samples were found to be below thresholds established by North Carolina and EPA standards. These findings underscore the seashore's resilience and its importance as a buffer against environmental stressors, highlighting the need for ongoing monitoring to safeguard its ecological integrity.

Southward in Georgia, **Cumberland Island National Seashore** provides an unusually intact example of southeastern coastal ecosystems. With more than 9,800 acres of protected wilderness, it supports loggerhead sea turtle nesting and longleaf pine restoration efforts. Its undisturbed beaches and forested interior are crucial to studying the role of topography and vegetation in climate resilience and coastal hydrology.

On the Gulf Coast, **Gulf Islands National Seashore**, spanning parts of Florida and Mississippi, encompasses a diverse array of environments — seagrass beds, coastal dunes, and historic fortifications. The shallow waters and estuaries here act as nurseries for commercially important fish species such as red drum and spotted sea trout. Seagrass beds are particularly vital, stabilizing sediments, improving water quality, and capturing carbon. NPS scientists collaborate with NOAA to monitor these beds, which are sensitive indicators of environmental health.

Further west, **Padre Island National Seashore** in Texas protects the world's longest undeveloped barrier island. It is a stronghold for the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle, the rarest sea turtle in the world. Every summer, rangers and volunteers patrol the beach for nesting females and relocate eggs to protected hatcheries. Padre's extensive dunes and hypersaline lagoons offer insights into arid coastal ecosystems—rare in North America—and the species that thrive in such extremes.

California's **Point Reyes National Seashore**, though not a barrier island, sits at the meeting point of two tectonic plates and encompasses estuaries, tule elk herds, elephant seal rookeries, and tidal marshes. It lies within one of the world's most active upwelling zones, where nutrient-rich waters support diverse marine life. Re-

search conducted here contributes to our understanding of ocean acidification and its effects on shell-forming organisms such as oysters and crabs. Scientists also monitor the health of eelgrass beds, which provide critical fish habitat and are under threat globally.

Canaveral National Seashore in Florida lies adjacent to the Kennedy Space Center, but its value lies in its prehistoric shell middens, biodiverse mangrove forests, and nesting beaches for green, loggerhead, and leatherback sea turtles. The seashore's mangroves serve as natural storm barriers and fish nurseries, while its lagoons are among the most biologically productive in North America. The Mosquito Lagoon Research Observatory located here facilitates long-term ecosystem monitoring that informs broader coastal management strategies.

Together, these 10 national seashores represent some of the last relatively undisturbed coastal habitats in the United States. In an era of accelerating sea level rise, intensifying storms, and coastal development, their value as protected areas is more urgent than ever. According to a 2022 study published in *Nature Communications*, protected coastal wetlands in the U.S. may prevent over \$600 million in annual flood damages.

Beyond their ecological value, these seashores preserve cultural narratives: Native American heritage, Gilded Age ruins, colonial shipwrecks, and Civil Rights landmarks. They are spaces where science, history, and human connection converge.

In protecting the interface between land and sea, the National Park Service has done more than conserve beaches. It has preserved systems essential to life on Earth — barriers against disaster, archives of our past, and blueprints for a more sustainable future.

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A roseate spoonbill is surrounded by egrets in Canaveral National Seashore. NPS/Photo Steele

Ranger Rendezvous 48

Going Coastal

Oct. 14-18, 2025,
Virginia Beach, Va.



SOMETIMES LIFE THROWS A LOT AT YOU. ONE GREAT WAY TO navigate challenging times is to join together as a community, lean on each other, and strategize ways to address new challenges. We are thrilled that this year ANPR's Ranger Rendezvous 48 will be returning to the East Coast and hosted in Virginia Beach, Va. October 14-18, 2025.

This year's program theme is "Rising Tides — Resilient Rangers," where we will explore ways to remain adaptive and flexible while riding professional and personal tides.

ANPR is still accepting submissions for breakout and keynote presentations. Do you have a presentation idea focused on any of the eight aspects of wellness? Or do you have lessons to share on any aspect of environmental or professional resiliency? If so, we want to hear from you! See our developing schedule on Page 17.

RR48 kicks off Tuesday, Oct. 14, with the ever-popular **NPS Trivia Night**. Test your trivia knowledge and enjoy a night of fun.

New to Ranger Rendezvous? Want to learn more about what to expect all week long and what ANPR is all about? On Wednesday, Oct. 15, you are invited to get up early and join the ANPR Board of Directors for the **First Timers Breakfast**. This is an event not to miss!

Our first full day of engaging sessions will begin at 8 a.m. with the **Welcoming Address** in the main meeting room. ANPR President Rick Mossman and other special guests will help kick Ranger Rendezvous off right.

Thursday, Oct. 16, is **Field Trip Day!** You are invited to attend a field trip to a local NPS site or take time to explore scenic Virginia Beach on your own. After returning to the hotel, join us in the main ballroom for an engaging evening program.

Following the **Awards Banquet** on Friday, Oct. 17, your RR48 planning team is pleased to announce that **Seamus Kennedy** has been invited to join us for an evening of music and fun. Enjoy an evening of traditional Irish tunes, sea shanties, and so much more! Want to learn more? Visit seamuskenedy.com.

THE VENUE

Wyndham Hotel, Oceanfront Virginia Beach. Learn more about the venue at: <https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/wyndham/virginia-beachvirginia/wyndham-virginia-beach-oceanfront/overview>

The room rate is \$109 plus tax and a \$7 per day "resort fee." Room reservations may be accomplished by calling the hotel directly at 757-428-7025. Individual attendees must identify themselves as a member of the group in order to receive these special rates. Reservations must be received no later than Sept. 19, 2025.

TRANSPORTATION TO VIRGINIA BEACH

Virginia Beach is about 210 miles southeast of Washington, DC. The closest airport is Norfolk International (ORF), approximately 17 miles from the beach. From ORF, you can rent a car, Uber, or take a taxi. Other airports include Newport News-Williamsburg Interna-

tional Airport (PHF), 47 miles away, and Richmond International Airport (RIC), 104 miles away. There is also an Amtrak station in Norfolk. With the purchase of a train ticket to Norfolk, you can also purchase an Amtrak bus ticket from there to Virginia Beach.

SUPERNAUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

The Supernaugh Scholar program is open to anyone who has never been to a Ranger Rendezvous. Due to an increase in direct donations to the scholarship program, we are able to select six scholars to attend Rendezvous 48. Scholars receive five nights of shared accommodation, a \$500 stipend to defray their cost of attendance, free conference registration and a one-year membership in ANPR. Scholars will support various aspects of the Rendezvous through assigned duties. Applications for the scholarship are now open through Aug. 1. The link to apply is on the ANPR website.

DONATIONS FOR RAFFLE AND AUCTION

Raffle or auction items are greatly appreciated. Please contact our Board Member for Fundraising, Jenn Cook, at jcook@anpr.org.

PHOTO CONTEST!

Submit your photos for the 2025 ANPR Photo Contest! Start taking or looking through your photos for your favorites to submit! Rendezvous participants enjoy looking at the photos to identify where they were taken and voting for their favorites.

Categories include:

1. Landscape (Daylight images of land, sky and/or waters at a distance)
2. Wildlife (Wild animals in the image)
3. Historical and Cultural Resources (Image represents history or cultural parts of NPS sites)
4. The Human Connection (A person or people in the image)
5. Big Sky (Large sky in the image)
6. Ranger Rendezvous (Image taken at a Ranger Rendezvous)

HOW TO ENTER

All photos must be taken within a national park unit, international protected area, or at a previous Ranger Rendezvous. Contestants may enter only one photo per category. Printed photos should be unframed and recommended size of 8x10 inches.

Write your name, location of the photo, and the category on the back of each print. Drop off photos at the registration desk by end of day Oct. 14. If unable to attend, images can be sent to arrive no later than Oct. 1, 2025, to Bill Wade, 12675 N. Sunrise Shadow Drive, Marana, AZ 85658 or bwade@anpr.org. Winners will be selected from each category, and a "Best of Show" photo will take the top spot. All winners will receive a gift card, recognition at the Rendezvous, and have their photos published in *Ranger* magazine.



For a short time during his tenure at Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Gib Backlund's office was located on the second floor of the Keeper's Quarters, behind the Bodie Island Lighthouse, pictured here.

Kurt Moses / Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Sun, sand & seashore

By Gib Backlund, ANPR Life Member

Gib Backlund wrote this piece on March 5, Ash Wednesday, in response to the mass firings of young NPS employees on Feb. 14, which he saw as an attempt to sacrifice the dreams of young people.

WE WERE YOUNG PARK RANGERS. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL AND WE knew it. We loved who we were, who we dreamt of becoming.

Living on the ecotone, the line between ecosystems, between land and sea, earth and sky, the beginning and the end.

We were salty reptilians crawling from water to inconstant land, the beachhead for terrestrial life on earth, for the coming Anthropocene and the inevitable storm that will take us back to an earlier epoch.

Nineteen-eighties, the environment was threatened by presidential vandalism, and we were the last line of defense, protecting, rescuing, wrenching order from chaos. Soon after Ash Wednesday each year, we donned our raiment, our chain mail, our Aviators, and our steel-brimmed Stetsons to prepare for the frontal attack of the industrial tourists.

Patrolling in the classic Outer Banks Jeep Cherokee, equipped with AM radio so we could monitor the weather, push buttons and dials; far-left button set on New York, WNBC, "Imus in the Morning," and Howard Stern late afternoon — early days of the shock jock; after the jabber, a song, Tom Petty, "Into the great wide open, under them skies so blue..."

Cruising the beach in our rotting patrol vehicles, rust ruled the

internal combustion world, no stopping it, vehicles rusted from top down, a daily freshwater bath futile against oxidation, salt always in the air, always seeking ferrous metal, attaching and dissolving it, gravity in charge here, as everywhere on earth.

Spring and fall brought bluefish runs, fishermen and fisherwomen, swarmed the beach encapsulated in their four-wheel drives, Black Labs running round, waiting for that ferocious run, so deadly that gray trout would beach themselves to escape the razor teeth, fishing rods tipping, line spinning from the reel, and the snap back, hook set, 15-pound carnivores pulled ashore, and piled alongside the truck, sometimes wantonly wasted, abandoned on the beach, bending the predator/prey symbiosis in favor of the humans.

Charter boats sailed out of the Oregon Inlet Fishing Center, home of the \$1 Jimmy Dog, which we supplemented with a bag of chips and pack of M&Ms, Gatorade in the summer, tepid Styrofoam coffee in the winter; jiving with Satch and Jimmy at the harbor they called "the creek," a former tidal creek turned into a water parking lot for fishing boats.

After hours, we were naked in summer except for shorts, barefoot, always sand between our toes, in our shorts, sand in the house, sand on the hardwood, keeping it scrubbed. A couple of missionaries, white shirts, black pants rapped at the door one morning; when I answered in nothing but boxers, frightening them into rapid retreat, no need to talk them out of their mission. They left me alone to my sandy kingdom.

Nighttime, hanging out on the deck when the breeze kept the mosquitoes at a distance. Somebody made the five-mile run to 7-Eleven, Busch beer, \$5.19 a twelve-pack, returned and shoved a case into



A green sea turtle returning to sea in the morning after digging a nest – “eggs, soft as soft boiled, each the size of a golf ball” – and laying her eggs. Cape Hatteras National Seashore photo

the freezer, never enough time to freeze, always prepared for a fight, “Don’t get red-faced!”

Summertime innocents we, expectant and waiting, the next hurricane vegetating in our unconscious, our lizard hippocampus preparing us for impending death, for rebirth, for disaster, for surfacing from the roiling saltwater, the hurricane plan fixed in memory, and if all went well, we would survive to debrief, to prepare for the next. Superintendent Tom would say, “never ready, always prepared.”

Todd, daytime lifeguard, nighttime DJ at the Voice of the Outer Banks, played requests for Jimi Hendrix, “All Along the Watchtower” if he thought the manager wasn’t listening. During lunchtime trivia, we punched redial on the corded wall phone to win lunch for two at one of the local eateries.

June brought annual Beach Apparatus lifesaving training, crossing over Oregon Inlet on the long bridge, following the curvature of the earth, infinite vista to the sound and the sea, down through Pea Island, the memory of shipwrecks ever present, to the Chicamacomico Life Saving Station, and to the fire station training room for our annual convocation. At noon, thronging down the steps of the Chicamacomico Fire Station, John burst, “Drive me to lunch!” and Darrell jostled him from behind, “I’ll drive you, Johnny!” Our training indoctrinated us with the lifesavers’ mantra, “You have to go out, but you don’t have to come back.”

Early morning summertime turtle patrol, looking for turtle crawls signifying a nest, one time at midnight, finding a female, flippers pushing sand over the eggs, soft as soft boiled, each the size of a golf ball, 150 in a column a foot wide and two feet deep, that nourishing



Oregon Inlet Fishing Center: Once nicknamed “the creek,” a former tidal creek turned into a water parking lot for fishing boats.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore photo

mucus covering the column; returning in late summer to check for hatch success, and finding the loggerhead hatchlings, two or three inches long, crawling through coarse Hatteras Island sand, sunward, to the water’s edge, to freedom, to predators, to the terrible fate that we share.

Tom Petty again, on the Howard Stern show from New York, AM radio a straight line 500 miles across the Atlantic, New York City to Bodie Island, or Body’s Island, so named for the bodies washing ashore from the hundreds of shipwrecks, just off the bar, bringing lifeguard Anson’s breakup anthem, “*I’m gonna free fall out into nothin’, Gonna leave this world for a while.*”

Cruising four-wheeler Jeep Cherokee, always on the verge of catching fire, beach on Hatteras Island devoid of humans, driver’s window cranked open, pacing dolphins south, they conscious we were alongside, joyous, the pelagic mammals laughed with us, sharing secrets that only we could hear.

Autumn and the return of the fishermen, and we, the fishers of men, gliding in our capsules among them, “How’s the fishing? Catching anything? Got a leash for that dog?”

After hurricane season, late fall mornings 4 a.m. duck hunter check-in at Whalebone, the top of Bodie Island, chief ranger called me when I overslept, just once, I promise. Hunters impatient, anxious to get into the marsh before the birds awakened, and we eager too, to sneak in behind them, to catch them in violation, knowing, as game warden Earl trained us, “A man who hunts ducks is a man who will break the law.”

Winter solstice storms blasted the shingled house on stilts for weeks on end, the Nor’easter forcing its way inside, grinding the airborne quartz into our dreams of birth and redemption as the house trembled with fear and wonder.

One last request dialed in to Lifeguard Todd, Don Henley this time: “*Offer up your best defense, but this is the end, this is the end of the innocence...*”

Gib Backlund was born and raised in Pipestone, Minn, and his family often spent time at Pipestone National Monument, and took summer vacations in the western national parks. When he graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in English, his parents asked, “What are you going to do, teach?” He had no idea, until he got a summer job at Fort Vancouver NHS, and the journey began.

We are, all of us, rangers



A ranger and volunteer manage a bear jam in Grand Teton National Park. NPS /Grand Teton NP photo

Protecting parks through the spirit of 'Team Resource'

Story by Sue Consolo-Murphy

MIDWAY IN MY 40-PLUS-YEAR CAREER, A DYNAMIC maintenance staffer then stationed, like me, in Yellowstone National Park encouraged me to join a regional effort called “Team Resource.” A group of employees from various parks and “divisions” traveled occasionally to other units, promoting interdisciplinary cooperation to protect and maintain natural and cultural resources. Then and now, while respecting the varied NPS professions, I have supported the notion that the term “ranger” and this magazine represent the broadest possible spectrum of staff who protect, interpret, monitor, and manage park resources, not just commissioned law enforcement officers or those who wear a flat hat.

Once retired, my digging into things I lacked time to pursue while on the job turned into a book about administrative and biological change in my last park (see accompanying book review, Page 21). And while not the primary intent of my writing, in these days when some citizens question the value and work ethic of civil servants, my story provides past and present examples of how “park rangers,” peers, and partners support conservation and rich associated human experiences.

Before and since there was a “bear management office” at Grand Teton National Park, maintenance workers have strived to build or buy better bear-resistant trash cans and fence off attractants. Concession specialists work with hotel and restaurant operators to separate food and garbage from big and small pests that threaten human health and safety. Interpretive rangers demonstrate how to use bear spray and teach “leave no trace” principles to hikers and backpackers. Until the parks hired wildlife biologists, rangers trapped and monitored potentially troublesome animals, documented bear-human confrontations, and provided emergency medical assistance to injured people (as they still do). Today they join resource specialists, volunteers, and nearly anyone driving by in uniform who can stop to manage roadside “wildlife jams,” keeping animals and observers at safe distances.

WORKING TOGETHER

Visitors count on rangers for lifesaving and search-and-rescue skills, rightly so. At Grand Teton, climbing rangers have also happily lent their savvy to help physical scientists safely monitor park glaciers for ice decline. There and elsewhere, certified divers monitor underwater geological and archaeological features and search out threats like invasive zebra mussels.



Maintenance workers helped resource staffers design and install a “beaver deceiver” in a pond so the animals would not be displaced.



Climbing rangers and hydrologists work together to monitor glacial change. NPS /Grand Teton NP photo

When a busy beaver’s dam threatened to overrun a popular park road, prompting calls for the animal’s removal, a maintenance worker instead proposed a “beaver deceiver,” which his crew and resource specialists designed and installed in a roadside pond. Media specialists alerted the public; rangers enforced a temporary road closure, and soon visitors could safely drive by and watch the beaver “at home.”

Twenty years ago, it took a major park effort to move a unique collection of American Indian art and artifacts to the Western Archeological and Conservation Center (WACC)



Park interpreter Laine Thom and a specialist prepare museum exhibits for careful delivery to the Western Archeological and Conservation Center. NPS /Grand Teton NP photo

in Tucson, Ariz., for badly needed conservation treatment. Museum specialists from other parks packed an array of strangely shaped and delicate items. Commissioned rangers escorted the transport crew and guarded the objects day and night along the 1,000-mile journey. Interpretive specialists designed new visitor center exhibits to tell the story of the objects, their value, and the preservation journey. Administrative staff ensured that specialized supplies and equipment were available for everyone to do their jobs.

COLLABORATION RESULTS IN SUCCESS

In my career journey, teamwork bolstered the success of wildlife reintroductions — of swift fox at Badlands National Park and of wolves at Yellowstone, from building and guarding temporary holding pens to monitoring the animals’ release. I am not unique in having experienced countless examples of “rangers” and others of many job titles and specialties collaborating to protect and maintain park resources.

The history I compiled depended largely on the Grand Teton Archives, a collection that wasn’t amassed and cataloged until the 21st Century, when the park curator and regional archivists pulled together records of bear management and other programs from files in all park divisions, dating back to the 1940s. It was heartening to see employees turn over “their” files for posterity. Plumbing the depths of old records makes for rich reading! Similar efforts at documenting our conservation history exist across the nation — and must continue. How parks have been used and appreciated over time, how park employees and managers have variously responded and adapted, and how the very scenes and inhabitants on those landscapes have evolved, naturally and with the participation of human hands, is vital to preserve and share as part of the nation’s story.

From controlling invasives to restoring native species and decaying historic structures — and telling compelling stories about how and why those efforts are important, I urge park staffs to continually embrace the Service’s mission using the spirit of “Team Resource.” Such cooperative efficiency may be needed now more than ever.

Sue Consolo Murphy retired as Chief of Science and Resource Management at Grand Teton NP/John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway. She also worked at Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Badlands, and Grand Canyon NPs, Muir Woods NM, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and Manzanar NHS. She received the NPS Director’s Award for Excellence in Natural Resource Management in 2013.



Historic preservationists restore White Grass Ranch at Grand Teton National Park. NPS /Grand Teton NP photo

ANPR Board of Directors reports

BILL WADE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been a busy time since February, when up to 1,000 NPS probationary employees were terminated in the “Valentine’s Day Massacre.” Many more actions and decisions by the current administration have left the National Park Service crippled and its employees angry, fearful and demoralized.

Since that time, I have fielded more than 250 media inquiries from all over the nation and several from overseas. With what we know now, the harm is likely to continue, and the media interest is not dwindling.

I helped organize a strategic planning session, which took place on May 14 and 15 in Washington, DC. The meeting brought together representatives of the National Parks Conservation Association, the Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks, the Professional Employees for Environmental Responsibility, and several “at large” individuals. A report summarizing what has changed or is likely to change in the National Park Service and the national park system since January will be produced. Information from the report will be used to inform the public and key members of Congress about these changes, with hopes this will help develop actions to stop and reverse the harm. We will also develop a plan of the actions each of our organizations need to take for the next two-three years to meet the challenges facing the parks and their employees.

With BOD approval, I have signed a contract to return to the Wyndham Westward Look Resort and Spa in Tucson, Ariz., for Ranger Rendezvous 49. The dates are Oct. 27-31, 2026. The majority of attendees at the 2022 RR at this venue supported the idea of returning to Tucson. The tentative plan for RR50 (2027) is to return to the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo. An RFP will be sent there later this year to begin the discussions with them.

RICK MOSSMAN, PRESIDENT

The Board is working very hard with the current challenging chaos going on in the government. Since February 14, we have done over 200 media requests and interviews. ANPR has been quoted or interviewed in most of the national major newspapers, CNN, NPR, major networks, etc. We will continue to do this until the American public knows what this administration is trying to do to the National Park Service and its employees. We have opened the Ranger Relief Fund to ANPR members being fired and have received a lot of donations to that fund. We are working closely with PEER, NPCA and the Coalition to further our work as a joint cause. We also found out that the Ranger museum in Yellowstone will not be open this summer due to road work in Yellowstone and the chaos going on with hiring.

RICK HARWELL, TREASURER

With the help of our executive director, business manager and the board of directors, ANPR has recently approved the 2025-2026 budget. We have designated our First Internet account as the Bill Supernaugh Fund and will be transferring all monies in the current Supernaugh Fund to this account. In addition, we are searching for a money market account to move interest earned from our Fidelity investment account. Further, the board approved transferring \$5,000

from the First Internet account to the Ranger Emergency Relief Fund.

Thus, ANPR continues to be very sound financially and in a position to continue to help its members and to undertake initiatives to expand membership.

TROY HUNT, SEASONAL PERSPECTIVES

I am serving in the third year of my first term as the board member for seasonal perspectives, my primary work over the past year has involved the following:

1: Supervise and facilitate the Supernaugh Scholarship program, which saw large growth in applicants this past year. We were able to fund three fine representatives of the future of the NPS for RR47. And, due to the generous up tick in donations to the program from our members, we will be funding six Supernaugh Scholars for RR48.

2: I have routinely monitored the social media channels for seasonal employees to determine trends in concerns, needs, and directing them to resources as appropriate. This task has become more vital during the recent turmoil in federal employment.

3: I serve on ANPR subcommittees devoted to our relief fund, selecting folks for the cruise presentations, and other assignments as needed.

4: I have served as an integral member of the team developing the annual Ranger Rendezvous.

JENN COOK, FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

I have been focused on two fronts: Learning the foundations of my position, and establishing a plan of action for the auctions and raffles at Ranger Rendezvous in October. For the former, I have been in touch with numerous board members, past and current, to learn what the expectations should be for this position. I have worked with Lauren DeGennaro to revise my strategic goals to align with my strengths and objectives, and discussed general operations with Bill Wade.

For the latter, I have been continuously drafting and tracking communications with people, organizations, and businesses who have agreed to, or could potentially be, donors for RR48. I have been focused on brands who have worked with us in the past and/or brands whose mission and ideals align with ours. While any and all donations are certainly welcome, this year, I really want to hone in on offering raffle prizes that are meaningful and useful to our ranger community.

I also have been working with Greta Ketchner and a group of wonderful students at SFA University to brainstorm ideas for social media and give a boost to ANPR’s brand and voice. All the while, I am drafting a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the fundraising position for future use.

GRETA KETCHNER, INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

I have been working to keep members informed with the help of Executive Director Bill Wade to send out biweekly e-newsletters. ANPR members and board members can submit information they would like to be included by emailing me at gketchner@anpr.org.

To engage with our members and the public, I create messages delivered through our Facebook and Instagram social media platforms. Engagement with ANPR on social media has seen an increase in the past few months. ANPR’s focus is supporting rangers and those interested in becoming rangers as well as those who are retired.

I have been attending planning meetings for the upcoming Ranger Rendezvous in Virginia Beach. I am working to share information

with members as it becomes available.

I have been fortunate to create a support team to help with social media postings and vision. A talented group of students from Stephen F. Austin State University is assisting in this project, along with board members. If you can help with social media posts or have something you would like to get out there, please reach out to me!

MARGIE STEIGERWALD, PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

I've been trying to keep up with the DOGE imposed staffing reductions within the National Park Service. The various reductions have come at a pace that is unprecedented in the history of the agency. While there have been hiring freezes, Reductions in Force (RIFs), and support office consolidations under past administrations, NPS leadership has generally been involved in these difficult decisions. This is a new experience that has shaken the agency to its core.

In response, ANPR created the Ranger Emergency Relief Fund, available to any ANPR member who has been displaced or whose employment has been delayed or impacted by administrative decisions that have affected their financial situation. I've been on the committee to review applications for funding.

I'm also working with the RR48 Program Planning Committee. We have a framework for a great Rendezvous in Virginia Beach that will focus on employee wellness and resilience and should be lots of fun, too.

Finally, I'm now the liaison between ANPR and the Museum of the National Park Ranger at Norris Geyser Basin in Yellowstone NP. ANPR received word from Linda Young at YELL that the Museum

will not be open this summer due to staffing uncertainties and a likely road project at Norris Junction that will close off access to the Museum. If you are interested in visiting or volunteering at the MNPR, stay tuned for updates in 2026.

LAUREN DEGENNARO, STRATEGIC PLANNING

The BOD held a virtual all-day strategic planning meeting to update the Association's guiding principles and strategic priorities over the winter. Executive Director Bill Wade expertly guided the conversation using the Six Essential Questions for a Healthy ANPR. Discussions from the membership meeting at Ranger Rendezvous, virtual listening sessions, and this meeting helped us land on the focus of "wellness."

I met with each board member, the executive director, and the business manager to discuss their 2025 work plan. Every person identified specific ways to help move the strategic priorities forward, based on their passion and expertise. We also updated the structure of our board meeting agendas to more accurately capture how we are working together towards those goals.

As a member of the RR48 Program Planning Committee, we've begun brainstorming ideas to integrate training into every day of the meeting to ensure participants make the most of their attendance. The call for proposals will be circulating, but if you have any ideas or suggestions, please reach out!

ANPR Board Reports, Continued on Page 18



RR 48 schedule



* Ranger Rendezvous planning is still underway. The preliminary schedule below will be updated and available online closer to the event.

Registration is open now! Scan here to register

Tuesday, October 14

- 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: Board of Directors meeting (open to all members)
- 2 p.m.: Registration opens
- 7 p.m.-?: Hospitality suite open
- 7:30 p.m.-?: Trivia Night

Wednesday, October 15

- 6:30-7:45 a.m.: First-timers breakfast with board of directors
- 8-9:45 a.m.: Welcome addresses by ANPR president, area superintendents, regional director, local dignitaries
- 9:45-10:15 a.m.: Beverage Break
- 10:30-11:15 a.m.: Keynote presentation
- 11:15 a.m.-Noon: BOD reports
- Noon-1:15 p.m.: Lunch
- 1:15-2:15 p.m.: Breakout sessions
- 2:30-3:30 p.m.: Breakout sessions
- 3:30-4 p.m.: Beverage Break/ Raffle
- 4-5 p.m.: General Session
- 5:30-6:30 p.m.: President's reception
- 6:30 p.m.-?: Hospitality suite open
- 7:30-8:30 p.m.: General session

Thursday, October 16

- 7:30-8 a.m.: Announcements/ Raffle
- 8-9 a.m.: Keynote Speaker
- 9 a.m.-?: Field trips, personal time
- 6:30 p.m.-?: Hospitality suite open
- 7:30-8:30 p.m.: Breakout sessions

Friday, October 17

- 7:30-8 a.m.: Announcements/ Raffle
- 8-9 a.m.: Keynote Speaker
- 9-10 a.m.: Keynote speaker
- 10-10:30 a.m.: Beverage Break/ Raffle
- 10:30 a.m.-Noon: Membership meeting
- Noon-2 p.m.: Lunch/free time to explore
- 2-3 p.m.: General Session
- 3-3:30 p.m.: Beverage Break/ Raffle
- 3:30-4:30 p.m.: Breakout sessions
- 5-6 p.m.: Awards presentation (open to all)
- 6-7:30 p.m.: Awards reception (for ticketed guests)
- 7:30-10 p.m.: Live music, Seamus Kennedy (all invited)
- 6 p.m.- ? : Hospitality suite open

Saturday, October 18

- 7:45-8:15 a.m.: Announcements and raffle
- 8:15-9:15 a.m.: Breakout sessions
- 9:30-10:30 a.m.: Membership meeting
- 10:30-11 a.m.: Beverage Break/ Raffle
- 11 a.m.-Noon: Breakout sessions

Noon-1:15 p.m.:

- Lunch
- 1:15-2:15 p.m.: Keynote speaker
- 2:15-3:15 p.m.: General Session
- 3:15-3:45 p.m.: Beverage Break/ Raffle
- 3:45-5 p.m.: Closing Keynote speaker
- 6 p.m.- ? : Hospitality suite open



Richard Dorbin photo

ANPR BOARD REPORTS, CONTINUED

MARK RUGGIERO, MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

I just came on board in this newly created position in May of 2025. I have been involved with various board members on exactly how to define this new role and what we need to do to increase membership within ANPR — especially important with all the challenges arising with government employees being eliminated and cuts within all the federal agencies.

Park employees have lost jobs and are seeking help and how to get up-to-date information. ANPR has a role in this as we can reach out and recruit new employees and current ones who do not understand what ANPR is and what it can do to help get through this. There are many past members and current members who are not involved or are unaware of the strength of ANPR.

ANPR can reach out with this new growth position by re-energizing current and past members to get out and re-engage. This will include new ideas and recruiting methods, with an outreach initiative program, blanket communications and getting out in parks big and small to spread the word. I am working on ideas in all these areas to move forward to increase the footprint of ANPR and get more folks involved.

CRYSTAL MUZIK, MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The 2025 ANPR strategic plan has been implemented, and goals for membership services include: brainstorming ideas for ANPR brochures, fliers and for a future engaging impact report with statistics and visuals to be shared with members. Retention of membership is critical, and renewal reminders have been sent out. I also have been identifying new pro-deals with a focus on health (mental and physical) and familiarizing myself with existing deals (AllTrails, Expert Voice) to be able to communicate that to members. Expert Voice marketing team members were able to produce a flier that explains the process and benefits to signing up for their program. I also created a draft template to use to verify ANPR membership and Pro Deals/Benefits programs.

TODD JOHNSON, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Most of my time has been focused on tracking the wide variety of actions and decisions that have been implemented by the new administration and how it's impacting the National Park Service. This onslaught of Executive Branch activity, with its focus on cutting the federal workforce and resources, is unlike anything the National Park Service has experienced in its storied 108-year existence.

Looking forward, I'll be focusing time on assisting board members with developing and consistent messaging when engaging with federal leadership and other key stakeholders. In addition to this effort, I will also help the organization with strategy development.

RAE EMERSON, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

This report focuses on the accomplishments and the difficulties facing this position in these challenging times for the National Park Service and its staff.

In the first quarter of 2025 the request for mentorships has quadrupled. Last year, mentee request focused more on how to write a résumé, interview for a position, and have a successful career. This year, mentor requests are much more complicated — focusing on how to be more resilient in an ever-changing work environment, or how to stay focused in a work environment that is constantly changing coupled with a lack of communication. Every mentee receives an individualized and focused approach to their identified needs, goal setting, and career development.

Ranger Rendezvous training and education this year is now being incorporated into the main body of RR48, rather than host trainings preceding the event. We are also exploring having a webinar and or Zoom experience for members who cannot attend in person, yet would like to participate. In the latter half of the year we are planning several workshops on topics dealing with wellness using the zoom format.



Welcome to the
ANPR family

Here are the newest members of the
Association of National Park Rangers

(updated 6/3/2025)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Donald Burnette | <i>Fort Collins, CO</i> |
| Kathleen Harter | <i>Hancock, MI</i> |
| Timothy Sorrill | <i>Sitka, AK</i> |
| David Vekasy | <i>Universal City, TX</i> |
| James City County Police | <i>Williamsburg, VA</i> |
| John Broward | <i>Hilo, HI</i> |
| Noel Lopez | <i>Alexandria, VA</i> |
| Julia Gehring | <i>Beulah, MI</i> |
| Sandra Bryson | <i>South Lake, CA</i> |
| Ian Bellows | <i>Seattle, WA</i> |
| Diane Chung | <i>Port Angeles, WA</i> |
| Colton Boydston | <i>Davis, OK</i> |
| Ron Heeren | <i>Friday Harbor, DE</i> |
| James Sehy | <i>Lincolnton, NC</i> |
| Tomas Hendrix | <i>Jacksonville, FL</i> |
| Clara Peterson | <i>Florissant, CO</i> |
| Trenton Berrian | <i>Klamath Falls, OR</i> |
| Gina Kolnity | <i>Claremont, CA</i> |
| Giles Blumer | <i>Easley, SC</i> |
| Brandi Siebertz | <i>Niland, CA</i> |
| Annalise Whitaker | <i>Denver, CO</i> |
| Dave Panebaker | <i>Rangely, CO</i> |
| Alexus Chappa | <i>Argyle, TX</i> |
| Lauren McBride | <i>Weatherby, MO</i> |
| Wilson Bell | <i>Jacksonville, FL</i> |
| Wyndeth Davis | <i>Laurium, MI</i> |
| Lora Hein | <i>Edmonds, WA</i> |
| Morgan Smith | <i>San Pablo, CA</i> |
| Dirk Wiley | <i>Simpsonville, SC</i> |
| Jen Karpowicz | <i>Lacombe, LA</i> |
| Bruce Mellberg | <i>Lincoln, NE</i> |
| David Hatfield | <i>Clarksville, TN</i> |
| Lydia Jones | <i>Interior, SD</i> |
| Adam Prato | <i>Winchester, VA</i> |
| Cynthia VonHalle | <i>Kanab, UT</i> |
| Suzette Runyon | <i>Carlsbad, NM</i> |
| Mark Washam | <i>Florence, KY</i> |
| Carolyn Rohdenburg | <i>Kula, HI</i> |
| Olivia Ford | <i>Baker, NV</i> |
| Eric Valeriano | <i>Port Angeles, WA</i> |
| Heidi Vidal | <i>Pahala, HI</i> |
| Jacob Frank | <i>gift membership</i> |
| David Colavincenzo | <i>gift membership</i> |
| Lee Rademaker | <i>gift membership</i> |
| Madi Duff | <i>gift membership</i> |
| MJ Hendren | <i>gift membership</i> |
| Roger Singer | <i>gift membership</i> |
| Spencer Morgan | <i>gift membership</i> |
| Laura White | <i>gift membership</i> |
| Kaytlyn Sandoval | <i>gift membership</i> |

INTERPRETATION

Water-based interpretation: It's fluid

WHEN STEPHEN MATHER BROUGHT EUROPEAN-STYLE NATURE guiding to Yosemite around 1917, most interpretation happened in forests, mountains, deserts, and canyons. Boat tours began on Crater Lake a few years later, and today we have over 80 national park sites that are ocean, coastal or Great Lakes parks that offer interpretive boat tours, paddle trips, float trips, beach walks, snorkeling tours, and more. There are underwater trails, underwater webcams, and rangers giving programs using underwater communication devices. Most of Earth's surface is water, and fresh water is an increasingly valuable commodity, so interpreting the watery world makes sense from the standpoint of self-preservation. But what makes water-based interpretation different?

Biscayne is the National Park System's largest marine park, and makes a good case study. Exploring a marine park is tough. Boat tours are expensive, and owning a boat is exponentially higher. Weather can impact any kind of interpretive program, but boating in the rain is a different animal entirely ... especially in more tropical locations where rain can be torrential and there is no shelter from wind or lightning. Underwater visibility is poor when there is no sun, birds hunker down in the wind, and kids shiver when wind and rain conspire against them. Mechanical problems abound. Many captains will agree that a boat is simply a hole in the water into which money is poured. All these things can lead to a less-than-pleasant experience for park visitors.

On the plus side, unlike more traditional parks where most people flock to a few trails and overlooks, marine parks are often wide open for exploration by those who have their own boats. Biscayne's 173,000 acres receive about 550,000 visitors a year, about three times the number of visitors per acre at the other three South Florida parks (2 million acres in Everglades, Big Cypress, and Dry Tortugas) combined...but it rarely feels crowded once you are out in the park itself. That's great for visitors, but it's tough for rangers to keep an eye on what's going on.

Interpreting resources in such a dispersed area is also hard. Logic might say to get folks at the bottlenecks created at access points like mainland marinas, but c'mon...if you are trying to get out and recreate in your national park, do you really want some guy in a funny hat talking about manatees slowing you down?

So, what's an interpreter to do? Creative solutions are key. One might not think of picking up marine debris as an interpretive opportunity, but over the past 10 winter seasons, volunteers at Biscayne have removed 147 tons of trash, including 5,730 balloons, from the park's islands every year. Rob and Kris Castillo have been profoundly impacted by these programs.

"I don't think most people realize their individual actions, or



Over the past 10 winter seasons, volunteers at Biscayne National Park have removed 147 tons of trash, including 5,730 balloons, from the park's islands every year. It's interpretation on a live scale, an opportunity to teach, while being proactive. Photo courtesy: Gary Bremen

inactions, contribute to the problem," Rob said. "If they did, we wouldn't be in this mess, literally." Kids who made it to all five of the park's Family Fun Fest events each year were rewarded with a free boat trip out into the park. That kind of incentive meant that kids rarely let their parents forget the monthly events.

If boaters don't want to learn at the boat ramp, how about meeting them at the Miami International Boat Show, the largest such event in the world? I recall one particularly cantankerous man who believed the NPS was just out to ruin his day on Biscayne Bay coming up to the park's booth back around 2003. No amount of pleasant explanation from me was swaying him or convincing him that running a boat aground in shallow water caused any lasting harm. But he kept glancing at the aquarium that was part of our display ... a seagrass tank loaded with critters to emphasize the nursery-like nature of the park's underwater meadows. I realized this was my hook. We both hunkered down in front of the tank and watched. I pointed out shrimp and crabs and seahorses. He spotted a skinny, inch-long fish, pointed at it and snapped, "What's that?" I was taken aback. Surely this old salt who spent so many years fishing in the park could clearly see that that was a barracuda. "I ain't never seen a barracuda that small," he scoffed. "Everything's little sometime," I said. I'm not entirely sure I convinced him of the value of seagrass meadows, but I'm pretty sure his mental wheels were grinding as he walked away.

Retired interpretive ranger Gary Bremen was born in the sign of water, and it's there that he feels his best.

PROTECTION

Why protection vacancies are bad – the finale

Editor's Note: This is the final installment of "Why protection ranger vacancies are bad," a six-part series spanning the last year and a half in Ranger magazine.

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 parks have fewer rangers onboard than they should, and that results in at least some — and oftentimes a lot of — critically important work not getting done.

Part 5 discussed steps we rangers often take to help ourselves, and revealed what I call, "The Grand Paradox" as it relates to allowing "essential" positions to remain vacant.

Part 6 continues where Part 5 left off and closes this larger, very sobering subject on a positive note.

Most protection rangers I know LOVE their job!

We feel that rangership is more of a "calling" than merely a job. It's a way of life and a huge part of our individual and collective identities.

We feel blessed x10,000 to have such jobs.

I'm a year out from retirement, and when I look back to the beginning of my grand rangership adventure, I reflect fondly on how stoked I was the first time I donned my NPS uniform. I'd dreamed of being a ranger since I was 11 years old. Thirty years ago, that dream came true for me, and I felt exponentially blessed to have the opportunity to serve my country as a U.S. ranger. Three decades later, I feel blessed still.

Fully knowing how blessed we are to have our protection ranger positions, we remain keenly aware that said positions also bring with them inevitable stresses and challenges. We do not shy away from these challenges; rather, we embrace them with galvanized resolve.

But — and yes, there most certainly is a "but" in this platform — all these stresses and challenges are also severely exacerbated when unacceptable percentages of our permanent and seasonal protection staff, including supervisors, are vacant.

If we do not get help soon, something or someone will eventually break under the weight of these stresses and challenges. We're not sure how that breaking might manifest itself, but we do know that it has potential of being dire.

We are sincerely grateful every time we acquire approval to fill protection ranger vacancies—THANK YOU, management, for each of those approvals. But, they're not enough. We need to continue filling remaining vacancies with the high sense of urgency and unre-



Two park medics at Helo Hoist training. Leaving too many vacancies in the rangership profession is not safe; being fully staffed allows rangers to thrive at jobs they love. Photo: Mike Damkot

lenting speed that these vacancies demand.

Over the course of these six columns, I've tried diligently to speak for the greater, collective cause of protection rangers throughout the NPS. My tone in this document is not intended to sound accusatory, adversarial, confrontational, plaintive, sniveling, whining, or otherwise negative. Rather, the entire thing is intended to be informative and educational—devoted to communicating to management how we rangers spend our limited and precious time—the noble work we do, alongside some of the highest-caliber people we've ever had the honor of serving with, amidst some of the most magnificent and glorious scenery and austere environments in the United States.

To reiterate, we love our jobs, our calling, but we need help. We're asking for help so that we will not break under these stresses and challenges, but rather will endure each stress and rise to and meet each challenge with the collective intestinal fortitude of one of the best outfits in the world: National Park Service rangers.

A closing note on this critically important subject: Leadership is a four-letter word; C-A-R-E. Leaders must care about their troops. Caring means providing for the needs of the troops. Right now, in the NPS, field rangers need more field rangers and enough supervisory rangers to effectively lead them.

Bottom line.

— Kevin Moses

Supervisory Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

IN PRINT

The intriguing lives of Teton's beautiful bears

By Rick Smith

DURING MY 11 SUMMERS AS A SEASONAL RANGER IN YELLOWSTONE National Park, I often spent at least part of my lieu days in the Tetons. The bars were better in Jackson, the food served at the Grand Teton Lodge was far better than anything I could get near the Lake Ranger Station where I worked, and I knew I would never climb the Grand if I did not attend the Exum Mountaineering School so that I would be qualified to participate in a guided climb of the mountain. One thing, though, puzzled me on these visits. In Yellowstone, while on road patrol, we spent a lot of time dealing with massive bear jams on the roads. Yet, once in the Tetons, I saw few bears and I don't believe I ever saw a grizzly. Why the big difference?

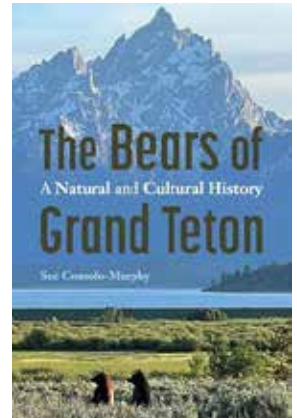
Sue Consuelo Murphy, chief of science and resources management in the park from 2003 to 2019, tries to explain the difference. Although bears certainly existed in what is now Grand Teton National Park, they were often controlled by the ranchers and dude ranches that dominated the area until the Rockefeller family bought

them out and donated the land to the National Park Service.

As the park lands began to recover from human use, its wildlife began to reappear, including bears. While grizzlies were relatively common in the sister park to the north, the most famous grizzly bear in the NPS, #399, was a Teton bear. It's the only bear that I know that is the subject of a coffee tabletop book, a lavishly adorned publication, with a narrative written by Todd Wilkins, a former writer for the Jackson paper, and a series of outstanding photographs of 399 and her series of cubs. Murphy mentions 399 several times in the book. The bear unfortunately died when hit by a car outside the park last spring.

If bears intrigue you, this is a good book to buy or get from your local library. Murphy is a typical science writer with lots of information for the reader to consider. Because of my time in Yellowstone, I found the recounting of the Teton bears especially interesting. My guess is that most NPS employees, Yellowstone or Teton alums or not, will find it equally interesting and informative.

— Rick Smith, Ranger magazine book reviewer



"The Bears of Grand Teton, A natural and Cultural History," by Sue Consuelo Murphy. University of Nebraska Press. 2025

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Roberts' quilt selected for Obama Library

ANPR MEMBER LIZ ROBERT'S "NPS Centennial" quilt has been accepted by the Obama Presidential Center Museum staff within the Obama Foundation. It will be displayed in the Obama Presidential Library. Roberts sent the quilt to the museum last summer so it could be presented to the selection committee for consideration. In February, she received the official notification that it was accepted.



Roberts worked for the National Park Service for 32 years, retiring in 2017. She worked within the Administrative Division, and served the staff of seven parks as well as the National Interagency Fire Center.

Roberts is also a quilter, and as the NPS approached its 100th anniversary, she wanted to create something special to mark the event. The design was her own. She took the mountain, trees, and bison components of the NPS Arrowhead and placed them with a grassy meadow in the foreground and blue sky beyond. Then she hand-embroidered the names of the 59 national

parks that existed at the time of the 2016 centennial and placed them as a border around the main panel. In addition, she added another border that captured all the different types of park units the NPS protects along with national parks, as they are all equally important and critical to the story of our nation's heritage. Lastly, Roberts embroidered our enabling legislation/mission statement across the meadow.

She then hand-quilted the layers together, stitching grass tufts in the meadow, swirling breezes in the sky, etc. (Kim Tucker, another quilter and NPS employee, contributed the quilting of the lower sequoia trunk.)

The quilt is 9 feet wide and took seven years to complete. It was included in an art exhibit celebrating the NPS Centennial on display at the Atlanta airport in 2016-17 and also for a few months at Joshua Tree National Park and Homestead National Monument.

Roberts always hoped her quilt would have a wider audience than in her living room, but it wasn't until she visited the Clinton Presidential Library and saw quilts there that she thought of donating it to the Obama Library.

"Having this quilt accepted is the absolute honor of a lifetime," Roberts said.

Bill Wade Award to recognize member contributions

THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED BILL WADE AWARD WAS created this year to recognize "significant contributions to ANPR over an extended period of time."

"During my 48 years as a member of ANPR, I've seen many members who have made important contributions to ANPR over a number of years without receiving much, if any, recognition for them," said Wade, ANPR's executive director. He'd like that to change.

The ideal candidate, Wade said, would be "someone who has 'stuck with' ANPR and given time, effort, and expertise to the Association over a number of years, although not necessarily continuous years." Those who have served as board members, on committees, attendance and support of the Ranger Rendezvous', advisors, or a combination should all be considered.

"I think members look to ANPR for information, education, opportunities to network, and for some, an opportunity to give back to their profession," Wade said. "They can give back by donating to the various funds, of course, but more importantly, by being willing to serve ANPR in some official capacity, such as on the BOD, a committee, RR management, and recruitment of new members."

If you have a candidate in mind, don't hesitate! Get in touch with Wade at bwade@anpr.org. Or contribute to the Bill Wade Award Fund at anpr.org/donate.

— *Melissa DeVaughn, Ranger magazine editor*



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 6/3/2025)

- Jonathan Shafer • Troy Hunt • Rick Harwell



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CULTURAL RESOURCES

Thank you all, proud rangers

THE BUZZ HAD BEEN BUILDING ALL MORNING.

THE KLAN WAS coming to Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

It was the summer of 2006 and the National Park Service and valued partners such as the Jefferson County (W.Va.) National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and my own National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) had joined forces to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the second meeting of the Niagara Movement, which had taken place at Harpers Ferry.

Founded by W.E.B. Dubois and William Monroe Trotter, the Niagara Movement called for an immediate end to racial segregation, racial violence, and full manhood suffrage for Black Americans. Espousal of such principles in 1906, stood in stark contrast to the more practical (some would argue accommodationist) leanings of Dr. Booker T. Washington, the leading Black voice regarding race matters in the United States.

Meetings were held on the campus of Storer College. African American women like Ida Bailey and Gertrude Wright Morgan helped to define strategy and implement tactics for the group.

Then, to commemorate the courage and convictions of John Brown, a White man who had given his life for Black freedom, the attendees walked from Camp Hill to the Murphy Farm where John Brown's "fort" had been relocated after being returned from exhibition in Chicago. Once on-site they doffed hats and shoes as a sign of respect and marched reverentially around the structure.

The Niagara Movement is rightfully considered the precursor to the NAACP. And it was because of this connection (one assumes) that the Klan decided to visit Harpers Ferry National Historical Park that anniversary weekend.

A panel of African American barrier breakers was set to present on Saturday morning. NPCA had recruited noted author and historian John W. Franklin to moderate the event. My job was to host my colleague, and now with news that white supremacists were on their way to the park, help ensure his safety.

The U.S. Park Police helicopter arrived first conducting slow, lazy eights over Camp Hill. Next came two unmarked, white vans, which disgorged dozens of U.S. Park Police officers in full riot gear. Then came the Klan.

Prohibited from wearing hoods or swastikas about 20 men and women arrived dressed in black fatigues. From a distance they looked like roughhewn folks ready, eager even, for trouble.

They split into smaller groups. Moved through the vendor's area smirking at the books on African American history. Posed for photographs in front of Freewill Baptist Church. One man interested in what the barrier breakers panelists were saying walked inside the large tent NPS had erected for the event and sat down. A young



The narrative behind secession and then the Civil War following Abraham Lincoln's election read one way and ended another. After four years of bloody battle, those who said they were fighting to keep slavery insisted the war was not about that at all. The story of the Jan. 6 Riots is eerily similar. Photo: Alan Spears

African American man immediately – and defiantly – sat down next to him.

The Klansman moved to another seat. The young African American man followed. On this went for two minutes and maybe five or six seats before the tension between the two men, already building, began to boil.

It was then that a ranger, a young White man in green pants, gray shirt, and flat hat, intervened. He sat down behind the Black man, leaned forward and in a voice that carried from the rear of the tent to the front of the stage said calmly but firmly "This is exactly what they want."

The young Black man took the ranger's words to heart. The Klan guy left the tent. A confrontation was avoided and the barrier breakers panel continued forth.

I've attended trainings and taught at the Albright Training Center in the Grand Canyon. I know little about the course of instruction that NPS provides its personnel. What I never saw at Albright was a class on how to manage the peace when the Klan shows up to an event your park has organized with community partners from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. That's because no such class exists.

But this is what rangers do. They manage the quotidian and the unexpected. They go the extra mile, and interpret, manage, and preserve our shared natural, scenic, recreational, cultural, and historic resources for the benefit, enjoyment, and inspiration of the public. And they excel at the work.

To that unknown ranger at Harpers Ferry, to all those rangers and NPS staff still serving, and to all those impacted by the firings, RIFs, and buyouts, I just want to say, "Thank you for your service!"

— Alan Spears

National Parks Conservation Association



**ASSOCIATION OF
NATIONAL PARK RANGERS**

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rmossman@anpr.org

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jcook@anpr.org

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mruggiero@anpr.org

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Margie Steigerwald, Retired
msteigerwald@anpr.org

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thunt@anpr.org

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tjohnson@anpr.org

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ldegennaro@anpr.org

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Mike Pflaum, Retired
mpflaum@anpr.org

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Bill Wade, Retired
bwade@anpr.org

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