



NPCA Weekly Media Report

Date	Headline	Outlet
07/18/2008	Study Blasting bad for Glacier National Park July 17	Missoulia, The
07/18/2008	Cost of link between U.S. 12 and Spirit Lake Memorial Highway estimated at \$140 million	Daily News
07/18/2008	Lawsuit targets Duke Energy's illegal construction at Cliffside	YubaNet
07/18/2008	Study Blasting bad for Glacier National Park	Yahoo! News
07/18/2008	Study Blasting bad for Glacier National Park	Forbes - Online
07/18/2008	Study Blasting bad for Glacier National Park	CNBC - Online
07/18/2008	Groups set conference on Flamingo facilities	Florida Keys Keynoter
07/18/2008	Study: Blasting bad for Glacier National Park	Associated Press (AP)
07/19/2008	Park study opts for snowsheds for railroad	Billings Gazette - Online
07/19/2008	Park gun possession remarks still wanted	Northern Virginia Daily - Front Royal Bureau
07/19/2008	Not so fast on westward sprawl, state tells Dade	Miami Herald
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07/19/2008	Rancor greets water agency	San Bernardino Sun
07/21/2008	Discussion, not division, becoming the norm	Missoulia, The
07/21/2008	Manager hired for Cades Cove shuttle tour	Daily Times, The
07/21/2008	Manager hired for Cades Cove shuttle tour	Daily Times, The
07/21/2008	A Climate of Change	Calibre MacroWorld
07/21/2008	Threat to parks seen in EPA plan	Las Vegas Sun
07/21/2008	The Spiritual and Cultural Significance of National Parks	Calibre MacroWorld
07/21/2008	Mountain air not so fresh	Tennessean, The
07/21/2008	National Parks Group Applauds Support of Science and Discovery in Great Smoky Mountains National Par	U.S. Newswire
07/21/2008	Mountains hazed over in the midst of lawsuit	Tennessean, The
07/22/2008	Park Service agrees to keep Yellowstone pass open	Yahoo! News
07/22/2008	NACD Announces 2008 Director of the Year Award Winners Andrew J. McKenna, David C. Phillips, Sally J	Digital50
07/23/2008	Great Lakes Advocates Urge Congress to Act Quickly on Historic Protections for Lakes	Business Journal Serving Greater Milwaukee, The
07/23/2008	National survey rates Hawaii's volcanoes	KHNL-TV
07/23/2008	Report Invasive species hurt Volcanoes park	KHNL-TV
07/23/2008	Park's natural resources rated 'poor'	Hawaii Tribune-Herald
07/23/2008	Public comment sought on guns in national parks	Carlsbad Current-Argus
07/23/2008	Report Invasive Species Hurt Volcanoes Park	KITV-TV
07/23/2008	Supervisors approve conditional use for ARC	Montgomery Newspapers
07/23/2008	National Park Service Cleared in U.S. Department of Interior Inspector General Rep	U.S. Newswire
07/23/2008	New Report Identifies Key Threats Facing Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	U.S. Newswire
07/23/2008	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's funding shortage is showing	Honolulu Advertiser - Hilo Bureau
07/23/2008	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's funding	Honolulu Advertiser - Hilo Bureau

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07/23/2008	shortage is showing TO CULTURAL RESOURCES, THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION RANKS	K5 News at Nine PM - KFVE-TV
07/23/2008	NEW STUDY BY THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION SAYS,	KGMB9 News at 10 PM - KGMB-TV
07/24/2008	APPEALS COURT REJECTS AIR ACT CHALLENGE AGAINST PERMIT APPLICATION	Clean Air Report
07/24/2008	Report Invasive species hurt Volcanoes park	Associated Press (AP) - Honolulu Bureau
07/24/2008	Park Service skewed data on oyster farm	San Francisco Chronicle
07/24/2008	Letter: Stop UDB projects	Miami Herald - Online
07/24/2008	Zoning appeal contests Valley Forge development plans	Philadelphia Inquirer
07/24/2008	Showdown over packing heat in national parks	MSNBC.com
07/24/2008	White House reverses experts on Yellowstone policy	Washington Post - Online
07/24/2008	Invasive plants and animals threaten to overwhelm Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	KPUA-AM
07/24/2008	FOLEY, MARK	News Journal - Online
07/24/2008	Glacier rejects bombing snow chutes near rail tracks	Hungry Horse News
07/24/2008	Valley Forge hearing goes into the night	Philadelphia Inquirer - Pennsylvania Suburban Bureau, The
07/24/2008	New report identifies key threats facing hawaii volcanoes National Park	YubaNet
07/24/2008	Letter: Assateague Island offers memorable experiences	Delmarva Media Group
07/24/2008	White House reverses experts on Yellowstone policy	Associated Press (AP) - Washington DC Bureau
07/24/2008	NATIONAL PARK BUT THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, SOME	Ten O'Clock News - WTXF-TV
07/25/2008	Park Service loses to businesses	Winston-Salem Journal
07/25/2008	National parks will be affected by warming	News Tribune
07/25/2008	SLOW DOWN FOR LOBSTERS	South Florida Sun-Sentinel
07/25/2008	Legal battles go on	Times Herald
07/25/2008	An \$8,500 Ticket to Yellowstone	New West Blog

Headline: Study Blasting bad for Glacier National Park July 17
Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: SUSAN GALLAGHER Associated Press
Media Outlet: Missoulian, The
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1511929825&z=950239508>

HELENA -- Glacier National Park officials, citing concerns about wildlife habitat, have rejected a BNSF Railway proposal to use explosives for preventing avalanches that could send snow onto railroad tracks.

Instead, the railroad should spend millions of dollars to build more snowsheds n canopies over segments of track n to keep snow from blocking the route along the parks southern edge, according to an environmental document released Thursday by park officials, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and the Montana Department of Transportation.

A few years ago, BNSF asked Glacier for a permit to use explosives for avalanche control in a canyon where snow blocked the tracks for 29 hours. A series of avalanches occurred, derailing an empty freight train and just missing cleanup crews. One of the slides hit a truck on U.S. 2 below the railroad.

Besides creating a hazard, snow on the tracks delayed commerce, said the railroad, which obtained an emergency, three-day permit for explosives in 2006 and used a helicopter in setting off 10 charges. The effect was minimal, and the operation was canceled.

Last year, BNSF withdrew its proposal for a permit, saying the National Park Service had overstated how much shelling would be needed for avalanche work. The railroad said it would submit a new proposal, but did not. The Park Service decided to complete work on an environmental impact statement anyway.

Apparently distinguishing between the 10 charges in 2006 and long-term use, the document says that explosive use for avalanche reduction would be an unprecedented action in (Glacier), and the park has many serious concerns about impacts to park values, including winter wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, natural sound and recommended wilderness. The impact statement also said some of the cost of extending snowsheds and building new ones would be offset by losses BNSF faces if avalanches continue to disrupt rail transportation. The railroad would be entirely responsible for the cost and had raised expense as a concern when snowsheds were discussed previously.

The Park Service said the proposed snowsheds would span a fraction of the 72 miles of BNSF track along the parks southern boundary.

Will Hammerquist of the National Parks Conservation Association called the decision a victory for people who love the park and a victory for park resources. Railroad spokesman Gus Melonas said Thursday that company officials were reviewing the document and declined further comment.

The environmental impact statement, which will be listed in the Federal Register, will be submitted to National Park Service Regional Director Mike Snyder in Colorado. For the document to be implemented, Snyder must sign a record of decision. nnn On the Net:

Avalanche Hazard Reduction Program: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkId>

Headline: Cost of link between U.S. 12 and Spirit Lake Memorial Highway estimated at \$140 million
Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: LaBoe, Barbara
Media Outlet: Daily News
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1512104968&z=950239508>

CHEHALIS — Despite a price tag of \$140 million, backers are cautiously optimistic about renewed efforts to connect Spirit Lake Memorial Highway with U.S. 12, they said here Thursday.

Supporters met with Lewis County commissioners about a plan to build a 16-mile road from Coldwater Lake to U.S. 12 near Riffe Lake and between Morton and Randle. Plans are still in the discussion phase, but so far have been promising, said Mark Smith, owner of the Eco Park Resort along the Spirit Lake highway near Mount St. Helens.

The estimated \$140 million cost of the plan, though, will be a major hurdle.

In 2000, when two routes were studied by the state Department of Transportation, it was estimated to cost \$35 million to build a road connecting to two highways. Thursday, though, a DOT official pointed out those estimates were to build a Forest Service road. Building a state highway could cost “quadruple” that amount to about \$140 million, said Brian McMullen, DOT southwest region program manager. The route also would require seven bridges.

Transportation dollars in the state are “very tight” right now, McMullen said. And he also warned that maintenance and keeping the high country road open year-round could be “difficult.”

Smith, though, is undeterred. He said the boon to tourism and access to public lands that the road would bring is important to the region and the state. In addition, connecting Mount Rainier with Mount St. Helens would link “the state’s two largest natural wonders.”

“The money side, I think, can be figured out,” Smith said. “The hardest part is figuring out is this the thing to do?”

Federal dollars may be available to extend the Spirit Lake Highway, also called State Route 504, because it currently dead ends at the Johnston Ridge Observatory. Smith also said it’s possible the road be paid for with tolls or that a private company be allowed to construct and charge access.

Lewis County backed a previous plan of building a road through the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument to Windy Ridge. That plan stalled when environmental and cost concerns were raised.

Thursday, commissioners said they liked the idea of the second route. Also supportive were Cowlitz County Commissioner Axel Swanson, who attended with Van Youngquist, a former Cowlitz commissioner who backed the original road plan.

Jessica Walz, conservation coordinator for the Gifford Pinchot Task Force, also said environmentalists and conservationist are more likely to back the Riffe Lake road plan rather than the Windy Ridge one. The Riffe Lake road does not cross any part of the 110,000-acre volcanic monument, a main area of concern with the previous plans. Sean Smith, regional director of the National Parks Conservation Association, also said the plan to link to two mountains made sense for tourists.

The matter will be studied by the Congressional Mount St. Helens Advisory Committee, which includes Swanson, Mark Smith and Lewis County Commissioner Lee Grose. Adding the road could become one

of the committee's recommendations to the state's Congressional delegation, Grose said.

The next step, Smith said, is to talk to area legislators about possibly funding the transportation and economic studies needed to see if the road is feasible. He also hopes to informally talk to the private land owners involved, including Weyerhaeuser Co., about the potential plans.

No deadline was set for those talks, which Smith said he'd conduct as a private citizen for now.

Headline: Lawsuit targets Duke Energy's illegal construction at Cliffside
Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: YubaNet
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1512375330&z=950239508>

Chapel Hill, July 16, 2008 - Environmental organizations will sue Duke Energy Carolinas today over Duke's construction of a new coal-fired power plant at the Cliffside Steam Station that was not designed to meet legal limits on its emissions of hazardous air pollutants, such as mercury, arsenic and dioxins. The lawsuit will be filed in federal district court in Asheville, NC by the Southern Environmental Law Center and the Natural Resources Defense Council ("NRDC") on behalf of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Fund, the National Parks Conservation Association and NRDC. It seeks to stop construction of the new Cliffside plant until regulators determine that the plant will meet legal pollution limits and until Duke's permit for the plant includes the pollution limits as conditions of operation.

"Every day that Duke continues to build this plant it flouts the law and exposes the public and its shareholders and ratepayers to unnecessary risk," said John Suttles, Senior Attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center. "The Clean Air Act is clear: A properly performed analysis could change the way this plant is built and operated, and Duke must examine the best way to control mercury and other pollutants before it begins construction. By continuing to build this plant without meeting these Clean Air Act requirements, Duke creates an unacceptable choice-build a plant that exposes people and the environment to excessive levels of toxic air pollution or put its shareholders and ratepayers on the hook for the cost of fixing a plant that threatens people's health."

The Clean Air Act requires Duke to control its emissions of mercury and other hazardous pollutants to the maximum extent possible in order to protect people and the environment from the serious adverse effects of toxic air pollution. At a minimum, Duke must show that the proposed Cliffside plant will meet the pollution control level of the best performing similar plant in the nation. Duke must then implement controls that meet or exceed that level of control. In addition to mercury, Duke must analyze and determine the most stringent level of pollution control achievable for all hazardous air pollutants the facility would emit, which include 66 other toxic substances such as hydrochloric acid, arsenic, dioxins, and other heavy metals. These pollutants can cause serious and irreversible adverse effects to people's health, including cancer, heart disease, stroke, and neurological impairment. In fact, one of those pollutants, dioxin, is among the most potent carcinogens in the world. The assessment, if performed correctly, will result in the most stringent emissions limitations achievable for mercury and the other hazardous air pollutants at the new unit.

"We remain disappointed in Duke's lack of leadership on environmental issues," stated Stephen Smith, executive director of Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. "Building a coal plant with today's knowledge of global warming and the threats of mercury is simply irresponsible."

At the state's request, last month Duke agreed to take a "voluntary" look at its hazardous air emissions. But the company did not agree that it had to comply with the Clean Air Act's stringent legal requirements designed to control toxic air pollution and refused to halt construction of the unit in the meantime to make sure that it was constructing its plant in a way that would maximize reduction of toxic air emissions, as the law requires. Furthermore, Duke only allowed two weeks for the analysis. The Secretary of DENR has estimated that a proper MACT analysis would take between 3 and 6 months.

"Duke's proposal to voluntarily look at toxic emissions simply does not fly," says Patrice Simms, a senior attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council. "An effectively standardless and unenforceable voluntary assessment is no substitute for the mandatory provisions of the Clean Air Act, which not only

require rigorous analysis and stringent limits on mercury and all other hazardous air pollutant emissions, but ensure the public's right to full participation in the standard-setting process."

"Mercury pollution poses serious health risks - especially to women and unborn babies," Molly Diggins, State Director of the North Carolina Sierra Club added. "A rushed analysis puts us all at risk. We need to be sure we have the best possible plan to protect our communities from mercury pollution."

In early February, a federal court ruled that EPA violated the Clean Air Act when it removed oil- and coal-fired power plants from the list of hazardous air pollution sources that are subject to the Act's most stringent air pollution controls. The appeals court ruling confirmed that air permits for new coal plants such as the new Cliffside unit must be based on a case-by-case analysis of the maximum achievable control technology for mercury and other hazardous air pollutants and that the analysis be performed in advance of construction. Duke, however, has not heeded the ruling and has instead forged ahead with construction of the new Cliffside plant without the required analysis, which could require fundamental changes to the plant's design.

"It's hard to understand why Duke Energy believes clean air laws don't apply to them," said Michael Regan, southeast climate and air director with Environmental Defense Fund. "There is absolutely no question Duke has an obligation to provide maximum protection from harmful mercury emissions that threaten our children's health and welfare."

"Travelers to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park expect healthy wildlife and clean air when they visit," said Program Analyst Bart Melton from NPCA's Southeast office. "Duke cannot be allowed to illegally shower toxic mercury and other pollutants over the Smokies. Americans deserve to breathe clean air when they visit parks, and expect the government to enforce clean air laws to make that happen."

Headline: Study Blasting bad for Glacier National Park
Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Susan Gallagher
Media Outlet: Yahoo! News
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1512735444&z=950239508>

HELENA, Mont. (AP) -- Glacier National Park officials, citing concerns about wildlife habitat, have rejected a BNSF Railway proposal to use explosives for preventing avalanches that could send snow onto railroad tracks.

Instead, the railroad should spend millions of dollars to build more snowsheds -- canopies over segments of track -- to keep snow from blocking the route along the park's southern edge, according to an environmental document released Thursday by park officials, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and the Montana Department of Transportation.

A few years ago, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. asked Glacier for a permit to use explosives for avalanche control in a canyon where snow blocked the tracks for 29 hours. A series of avalanches occurred, derailing an empty freight train and just missing cleanup crews. One of the slides hit a truck on U.S. 2 below the railroad.

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Apparently distinguishing between the 10 charges in 2006 and long-term use, the document says that 'explosive use for avalanche reduction would be an unprecedented action in (Glacier), and the park has many serious concerns about impacts to park values, including winter wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, natural sound and recommended wilderness.' The impact statement also said some of the cost of extending snowsheds and building new ones would be offset by losses BNSF faces if avalanches continue to disrupt rail transportation. The railroad would be entirely responsible for the cost and had raised expense as a concern when snowsheds were discussed previously.

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Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Forbes - Online
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1512747418&z=950239508>

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Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: By SUSAN GALLAGHER
Media Outlet: CNBC - Online
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1512775763&z=950239508>

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Headline: Groups set conference on Flamingo facilities
Date: 7/18/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Florida Keys Keynoter
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1513270249&z=950239508>

Several conservation groups are inviting the public to a conference on the headquarters of Everglades National Park.

The National Parks Conservation Association, South Florida National Parks Trust, and Everglades National Park announced they will host a two-day Flamingo visioning event on Monday and Tuesday, August 4 and 5.

This event builds directly on the Flamingo Commercial Services Plan (CSP), expected to be approved by the National Park Service soon. Many of you have been instrumental in the CSP process over the past 18 months, helping to shape the new vision for rebuilding and reestablishing Flamingo as the major visitor destination in Everglades National Park, the groups said in an announcement.

During the event, the Urban Land Institute will conduct a technical assistance panel to discuss issues related to rebuilding the Flamingo area of Everglades National Park. ULI is a non-profit research and education organization whose members will address issues of reestablishing a sustainable Flamingo.

The emphasis of the plans will be on sustainable design, resource conservation and restoration, enhancement of visitor experience, connectivity with the nearby gateway communities, creation of a successful business model and strong financial plan, the groups spokesman said.

On Monday, August 4 from 2 to 3:30 p.m., panelists will meet with interested parties and other members of the public to gather more information about the history and needs of the site. The discussion will be driven by questions the panelists pose to the audience.

On Tuesday, August 5 from 3-4 p.m., the panelists will discuss their preliminary findings and suggestions with the public.

Both meetings will be held at the Campbell Agricultural Center Auditorium (UF/IFAS facility) located at 18710 SW 288th Street in Homestead.

Reservations are not required, but participants can RSVP and get directions and more information by contacting Jill Horwitz at (954) 961-1280 extension 201 or <mailto:jhorwitz@npca.org>.

Headline: Study: Blasting bad for Glacier National Park
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Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Associated Press (AP)
Attachment Link: <http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/apwire/b3e0c5e632886f6bcdfad1649faf6fc0.htm>

NEW YORK (Associated Press) - Glacier National Park officials, citing concerns about wildlife habitat, have rejected a BNSF Railway proposal to use explosives for preventing avalanches that could send snow onto railroad tracks.

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Headline: Park study opts for snowsheds for railroad
Date: 7/19/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: The Associated Press
Media Outlet: Billings Gazette - Online
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1514073025&z=950239508>

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Headline: Park gun possession remarks still wanted
Date: 7/19/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: King, Robert
Media Outlet: Northern Virginia Daily - Front Royal Bureau
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1514033970&z=950239508>

The U.S. Department of Interior has extended a public comment period on proposed regulations that would allow national park visitors to carry loaded firearms.

The comment period will continue until Aug. 8, in part to allow the public to digest a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down a handgun ban in the nation's capital.

Visitors now can take firearms into national parks, but the guns must be unloaded and properly stored.

Shenandoah National Park has recorded roughly 79 firearms offenses in the past five years, Karen Beck-Herzog, the park's management assistant, has said.

The proposed change would allow visitors to carry loaded firearms if they visit a park in a state that allows the possession of concealed weapons.

The department says the change would bring regulations in line with state laws. Some states allow concealed weapons at their parks.

The National Rifle Association, a gun rights group, has been lobbying heavily for the change.

Ashley Varner, an NRA spokeswoman, has said concealed weapons are already allowed on U.S. Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands. The new law will end confusion, and give visitors a way to protect themselves if they encounter a violent criminal.

Many opposition groups counter that the proposed regulations will hamper ranger efforts to halt poaching and other crimes.

Park ranger groups, such as the Association of National Park Rangers, say authorities often use firearm violations as probable cause to search for evidence of other infractions.

The department's decision to extend the period was influenced by last month's ruling that struck down Washington's handgun ban.

'We had heard from some people that they wanted to offer comments particularly in relation to the recent [U.S.] Supreme Court ruling,' said Chris Paolino, a Department of Interior spokesman.

Paolino said the department does not view the ruling as having any potential impact on the proposed regulations. 'We don't want to prohibit people from expressing that viewpoint or making the case that they are related,' he added.

The National Parks Conservation Association, a nonprofit group that aims to preserve national parks, lobbied for the extension.

The Supreme Court ruling came down two days before the original June 30 deadline, said Bryan Faehner, the association's legislative representative.

'It doesn't necessarily look like it will have a huge impact [on the proposed rules] but we are still looking at

that,' Faehner said.

The department will review the comments before making a final decision, Paolino said.

Comments may be sent by mail to Public Comments Processing, Attn: 1024-AD70, Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203. They also may be submitted online at www.regulations.gov. The rule change is identified as 1024-AD70.

* Contact Robert King at rking@nvdaily.com

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Headline: Not so fast on westward sprawl, state tells Dade
Date: 7/19/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Pinzur, Matthew
Media Outlet: Miami Herald
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1514233884&z=950239508>

State regulators put the brakes on two developments in far west Miami-Dade County and a plan to invite more residential construction along the Miami River on Friday, saying the city and county skirted their own growth-management rules in approving the projects.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs also found that the local governments violated state land-use guidelines.

"They're saying responsible growth is important not just in Miami-Dade, but all over the state of Florida," said Sara Fain, Everglades Restoration Project Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association.

The highest-profile project is a Lowe's home-improvement store and a charter school eyed for adjacent land at Southwest Eighth Street and 137th Avenue. The company has fought for years to build on the site, which is outside the county's urban development boundary.

The County Commission signed off in April, rejecting the recommendations of its own staff, and then overrode a veto by Mayor Carlos Alvarez. It also approved a shopping center at Southwest 167th Avenue and Kendall Drive, along with new roads the developer promised.

The pendulum swung back with the state regulators' rejection, which blocks the projects from moving forward and likely kicks off months of legal wrangling.

While settlements of such cases are not uncommon, the state order lists only one solution: rescinding the commission's votes.

"In most cases, we're open to talk, to see if there's a way to resolve the differences through a settlement rather than leaving it to lawyers and a judge," said Jon Peck, spokesman for the community affairs department. "But a lot of that is entirely up to the local community as well."

A spokesman for the shopping center could not be reached late Friday, but an attorney for Lowe's said this latest setback would not make the company quit. Lowe's has never been closer than now, even with the state's opposition.

"Lowe's and the charter school operator are committed to bringing needed services to the area and, thus, we are obviously disappointed," attorney Juan Mayol said in a written statement. "We feel confident that the decision will be overturned."

Many of the state's objections revolved around the same point: According to the county's own analysis, there is still enough land inside the development boundary for commercial growth.

"There is no need for additional commercial land," wrote Mike McDaniel, chief of comprehensive planning.

In his order, McDaniel also fretted that the land set aside for the charter school could legally be used for other nonresidential purposes. Moreover, the Lowe's site is considered wetlands and the shopping center is now zoned for agriculture -- both designations the county is supposed to avoid developing.

The state decision also augurs poorly for Parkland, a planned mixed-use development outside the boundary that is so large it would essentially be a new suburb. The project, by Lennar and developer Edward Easton, is taking preliminary steps this summer toward approval.

Environmentalists and anti-sprawl activists cheered the state's decision and took steps toward officially being a part of the settlement talks. They have long argued that expansion in the county's western reaches will harm the environment, clog traffic arteries and spread ever thinner county services such as police and fire.

"This is a great victory for the people who care about quality of life and protecting our cherished environmental resources," said Michael Pizzi, a leader of Hold the Line, a coalition of groups that opposes expanding the boundary. "It's a victory of common sense over urban sprawl and greed."

Supporters, however, said the state was imperiling development that had the support of neighbors. By providing more roads, new stores and a large school, they said, traffic and the environment would actually improve because residents would not need to drive as far.

"It was a positive for schools. It was going to help the traffic situation and bring jobs," said Commissioner Joe Martinez, who voted for both projects. "Congratulations to them for all that."

A spokesman for the county school district said Superintendent Rudy Crew was not counting on the charter school. Killing or delaying plans for one school in one neighborhood "is probably not going to have an effect on us," spokesman John Schuster said.

On the Miami River, the state's action -- for now -- negates a May City Commission vote that eliminated significant protections for the river's dwindling marine industry.

For example, commissioners removed the word "port" from a planning section dealing with the river. Another change made adding residential development a priority.

Industry advocates feared the vote would hasten the replacement of well-paying shipping jobs with high-rise condos and apartments. Since 2000, nearly half of the marine-industrial land in the city has been gobbled up through rezoning, according to the Miami River Marine Group, a private association of marine businesses.

Andrew Dickman, an attorney representing the group, called Miami a city "addicted to land development."

"They know no other way of planning," he said. Thanks to the state, "the working river's definitely a lot safer than it was yesterday."

Even in a sputtering economy -- Florida leads the nation in job losses for the past year -- city officials have largely been dismissive of river businesses. "That river is dead," City Commissioner Angel Gonzalez said in May.

Economic studies tell a different story. The river is credited with creating an estimated 6,106 jobs, with combined earnings of \$338.9 million. And once the river's in-progress dredging is complete -- perhaps as soon as this year -- commerce is expected to spike.

On Friday, Mayor Manny Diaz reiterated the city's long-held position that it is the westernmost, county-controlled portion of the river that is the industry hub.

"We are not affecting one single job on the river," Diaz said. "Our point here is that we're not going to sit here and let properties sit vacant and sit abandoned for years."

However, an April county-performed breakdown of the river's marine operating permits -- used by large

shipping facilities, marinas and the like -- showed 57 percent of the active permits lie in the city's portion of the river.

The state rulings now move to the Department of Administrative Hearings, which handles certain government disputes in a court-like system. Unless there is a dramatic political shift, both the city and county appear unlikely to back down.

"Our vote was done to help the people," said Miami-Dade Commissioner Jos "Pepe" Diaz, who also voted for both projects. "Especially now, in these trying times, more than ever, this makes sense."

Headline: Anger erupts at water meeting
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YUCCA VALLEY - The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power ended years of silence on some of the details surrounding a proposed path of power lines Saturday at a public meeting with High Desert residents that quickly turned hostile.

David Nahai, general manager of the LADWP, the largest municipal utility in the nation, attempted to placate the audience, which occasionally hissed, as he assured them that Green Path North would only be used to transmit renewable energy.

Opponents say the project threatens pristine desert habitat and have questioned whether the motivations behind the plan are truly 'green.'

'People are watching what we're doing,' Nahai said of balancing land preservation with the task of reducing greenhouse gases.

'We're at the forefront of a debate that is going to sweep the state if not the nation. Let us show them that it can be done.'

More than 300 people attended the two-hour meeting at Yucca Valley High School.

Although the meeting was held in Yucca Valley, the proposed power line path could impact more than just the communities along the Highway 62.

The power lines could traverse more than 200 miles of land in San Bernardino County, impacting a number of cities, in an effort to link two power stations - one in Desert Hot Springs, the other near Hesperia.

Six alternate routes were submitted to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in May.

Opposition has been mounting against

the first proposed route, which cut north through the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and Bighorn Mountain Wilderness. The route would then skirt the northern boundary of the San Bernardino National Forest.

Another proposed route would run along the southern foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains and be visible to residents from Banning to San Bernardino before crossing the Cajon Pass to reach Hesperia.

Community activists and elected officials have been pressuring the LADWP to use an existing route along the 10 Freeway that is operated by Southern California Edison.

Nahai avoided answering budgetary questions about the cost of building the project and the amount of money that has gone into it so far.

Asked how much the LADWP would profit from operating the transmission conduit, he said, 'I don't know. We don't think of it as standing to profit.'

'We're there to provide a service.'

A preliminary study found the corridor along the 10 Freeway is not wide enough for the proposed transmission lines, Nahai said. Approximately 3,500 houses would need to be condemned to accommodate Green Path North, he said.

'Clearly, we would need to come up with another alternative,' he said.

Even though the transmission lines will be a part of Southern California's energy grid, they will only have enough capacity to carry geothermal energy from the Salton Sea and local renewable energy projects, Nahai said.

A number of environmental and energy policy groups addressed Nahai at the emotionally charged meeting.

One woman broke into tears as she presented Nahai with photos of her community and asked him not to destroy it. Nahai hugged her.

In recent years, the agency has earned a reputation for not disclosing information to the media or public, a reputation Nahai is attempting to redeem.

Still, Mike Cipra, a program manager with the National Parks Conservation Area, scolded the LADWP for not responding to a letter he sent the agency with concerns about the proposed path's impact on Joshua Tree National Park.

'Since I never heard back, I have to assume you didn't read it,' he said.

Headline: Rancor greets water agency
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Media Contact: McSherry, Lauren
Media Outlet: San Bernardino Sun
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'Since I never heard back, I have to assume you didn't read it,' he said.

Carrie Hyke, a San Bernardino County planner, read a strongly worded statement reminding the LADWP that the Board of Supervisors is opposed to a project that cuts through environmentally sensitive habitat.

In addition to Los Angeles, Burbank, Glendale, Azusa and Banning plan to use energy from the project, said Bill Carnahan, executive director of the Southern California Public Power Authority.

April Sall, chairwoman of the California Desert Coalition, reminded Nahai that his agency has a 'reputation for steamrolling communities in small rural areas.'

'We have a lot to protect here,' Sall said. 'And we have a lot to fight for.'

Headline: Discussion, not division, becoming the norm
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Media Outlet: Missoulian, The
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KALISPELL - Polite diplomacy appears to be trumping the historic conversation of conflict between Canadian officials intent on mining energy resources and downstream residents worried the development could taint Montana waterways.

"The nature and the tenor of the discussion are absolutely changing," said Louisa Willcox, senior wildlife specialist at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "I think it's become far more civil, courteous and honest - and hopefully more productive."

Her group recently sent nearly 35,000 letters to Canadian Federal Minister John Baird, asking Canada to protect rather than pollute a major river drainage just north of Glacier National Park. And that high-level contact, she said, is not an isolated effort.

"People are realizing diplomacy is the only way this issue is going to be resolved," Willcox said. "There's no resolution from escalating the conflict by threats or chest thumping or poking people in the eye."

The past three decades, however, are full of chest-thumping examples from both sides of the border, as British Columbia and Montana have squared off over the future of the Flathead River.

That river's headwaters are located atop a field of coal and, perhaps, coalbed methane, some 40 miles north of Glacier National Park. Waters flow south through a wilderness valley, over what is thought to be a vast energy deposit, before crossing the international line about 50 miles north of Columbia Falls.

Called the North Fork Flathead River in Montana, it forms the western boundary of Glacier National Park before draining into Flathead Lake.

Since the 1970s, Canadian coal companies and politicians have promoted the idea of developing energy reserves there, and downstream interests have joined Canadian opponents in claiming the area is far too sensitive for large-scale industrialization.

A binational team of scientists concluded in the 1980s that coal development north of the border would affect water quality and fisheries in Montana. Since then, concerns have only grown, and now include not only aquatic species but also the large mammals that migrate between the two countries.

At times, the rhetoric has been heated from both sides, with politicians jockeying hard for position.

"But this is a true international issue," Willcox said, "and it will require international diplomacy."

In fact, her group's recent contacts with the Canadian federal minister have been bolstered by peacemaking efforts at the National Parks Conservation Association and the Wilderness Society. The presidents of those two groups met July 15 with Michael Wilson, Canadian ambassador to the United States.

"Our organizations," said Wilderness Society President William Meadows, "have a long history of open communication with the Canadian Embassy on transboundary environmental issues."

This particular transboundary dispute, Meadows said, puts at stake one of the most intact, diverse and

connected ecosystems in the temperate zones of the world. It is home to several sensitive animal and plant species, and has a rich cultural history of indigenous peoples.

And yet a proposal by Cline Mining Corp. would remove an entire mountaintop in the wild headwaters, producing some 16 million tons of waste rock every year for the coal mine's 20-year lifespan.

Local politicians have opposed the effort, as have state and federal officials. The U.S. State Department even weighed in, saying the mine would cause "significant adverse impacts to Glacier National Park."

And in recent months, the Canadian federal government has become concerned, announcing the project would be subject not just to provincial study, but also to a Canadian federal analysis.

Then, when a second proposal emerged - to drill coalbed methane in the region - the provincial government announced the Flathead Valley would not be explored due to "environmental sensitivity."

"Everyone is realizing that we have to get along," Willcox said. "They know a true give-and-take is going to be the only way to get anything accomplished."

That, in fact, appeared to be exactly the sentiment behind a May 12 letter from Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer to Gordon Campbell, provincial premier in British Columbia.

"I remain grateful for your willingness to commit to an ongoing dialogue between our two jurisdictions," Schweitzer wrote, adding that "I agree with you that we have a choice before us, for both governments to look beyond old 'worn-out approaches' to a shared future."

Schweitzer did not elaborate on what "worn-out approaches" must be transcended, but his latest letter, Willcox said, seemed to reflect a new type of dialogue.

"I am very optimistic," Schweitzer said Friday. "First, because we are coming closer together toward a middle position, and second because Premier Campbell and I are building a very good personal relationship."

That relationship, the governor said, has much to do with the changing tone of the debate.

While Schweitzer has long pushed for dialogue and intergovernmental meetings, he also has firmly insisted on "not backing down" in the dispute.

As recently as January 2007, the governor - dismayed that efforts between the state and province had stalled - predicted the conflict would land "in the lap of the State Department," because British Columbia's officials "just keep rolling and rolling and rolling toward development" despite Montana's objections.

Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., agreed, and ratcheted the rhetoric by saying that "no matter how they present their proposal to mine or drill upstream from Glacier Park, the answer is always going to be 'no.'"

Canadian politicians responded with equally hard-line positions.

But Schweitzer believes that sort of "absolutist" approach is changing.

"We have no legal authority on that side of the border, and they have no legal authority here," Willcox agreed. "So we're going to have to talk it out."

Thus the meetings with the minister and the ambassador, as well as Schweitzer's letter.

In that letter, the governor noted that "now a foundation has been laid from which I believe we can construct a mutually beneficial solution."

His solution remains largely undefined, but most agree it must include economic opportunities as well as land-use protections. Obstacles remain, Schweitzer noted, and pollution already has been documented from mining in nearby drainages, but he said he is nevertheless encouraged by recent Canadian acknowledgements of the area's environmental significance.

"Recent events have led me to believe that, for the first time in 30 years, this conflict can be resolved," Schweitzer wrote. He went on to suggest "that we both would like to move this discussion from one of conflict resolution to one of looking at mutual opportunities," and added that "our federal partners are eager to help bring about solutions that will also benefit British Columbia."

He said Friday he's aiming for a fall meeting with Campbell, perhaps on-site in the Canadian Flathead.

And NPCA President Tom Kiernan, who met with Ambassador Wilson early this week, said he remains hopeful such efforts will encourage his neighbors to the north to "implement a land-use plan that protects the world-class ecological values of the Flathead Valley."

"Now is the time," Kiernan said, "for Canada and the U.S. to show true leadership, and together craft a long-term solution."

The time, Schweitzer agreed, could not be better.

"In 2010," the governor wrote, "Montana and the United States will commemorate the century anniversary of Glacier National Park, and British Columbia will be on the world stage hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics. Nothing would please me more than to celebrate these events by announcing with you that we have resolved to protect the Crown of the Continent to the benefit of both jurisdictions."

Headline: Manager hired for Cades Cove shuttle tour
Date: 7/21/2008 12:00:00 AM
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Alex Roch, a Knoxville resident with previous experience in the tourism industry, has been appointed as the new manager of the Cades Cove Heritage Tours program, which was established by the Cades Cove Shuttle Task Force to provide a voluntary nonprofit educational tour of Cades Cove.

The Cades Cove Heritage Tours will use 19-passenger touring vehicles, taking visitors from the Great Smoky Mountain Heritage Center in Townsend into Cades Cove.

The program was designed to provide visitors with the option of experiencing the Cove through an interactive tour and lessening the environmental impact that is caused by more than 700,000 vehicles that drive through this portion of the Great Smoky Mountains each year.

Randy Boyd, task force member and president of Radio Systems Corporation, makers of PetSafe and Invisible Fence brands, purchased the two shuttles.

Alex was an ideal choice for manager because of his past work experience and his passion for protecting our national parks. The Task Force and I are confident he will help ensure the success of this new program, said Alissa McMahon, task force member and senior program coordinator of the National Parks Conservation Association.

As manager of the Cades Cove Heritage Tours program, Roch will oversee tour operations and integrate education programs that highlight the mission of the Heritage Center as well as the resources of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

With the hiring of Alex, we are now within reach of beginning to offer this service to our visitors before the season ends, said Herb Handy, task force member and executive vice president of the Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau. We feel that many of our visitors will be pleased that they will have this alternative choice to tour Cades Cove and learn more about the history of the area.

Roch plans to draw on his extensive knowledge from prior sales and marketing positions, including sales representative for MSP Rents where he handled sales of heavy utilities construction equipment throughout East Tennessee. He has also served as an outside sales representative for Alabama Construction Products and district sales manager for Lehigh Shoe and Redwing Shoe Companies.

Roch also worked at Yellowstone National Park for Yellowstone Traditions, where he handled the demolition and recycling of aged structures, as well as custom carpentry, and log work on high-end ranch homes.

Roch received a B.S. degree in psychology from Troy University. Roch is also actively involved in organizations including the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Tennessee Traditional Archers Society.

The Cades Cove Shuttle Task Force was established in the summer of 2007 to collaborate with local citizens and park visitors in order to create a voluntary nonprofit interpretive tour that benefits the local community, the visitors, the National Park and the region through education, resource protection, traffic mitigation and pollution reduction.

For more information about the program or the task force, please contact Alissa McMahon at amcmahon@NPCA.ORG .

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Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Daily Times, The
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Headline: A Climate of Change
Date: 7/21/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Rennie, Jeff
Media Outlet: Calibre MacroWorld
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1517201570&z=950239508>

Glaciers that are the namesake of Glacier National Park are one third the size they were more than 100 years ago, according to research from the U.S. Geological Survey. The freshwater prairie of the Everglades is threatened by the encroachment of salt water from nearby Florida Bay. Climate change is a reality for the National Park System, and comprehensive steps to reduce carbon emissions are beginning.

Jeff Rennie is a teacher at Conserve School in Wisconsin's North Woods.

This article originally appeared in the Fall 2007 issue of National Parks, a publication of the National Parks Conservation Association, a private nonprofit organization devoted to protection and enhancement of U.S. parks.

From increased smog in the Great Smoky Mountains to the loss of prairie pothole habitat for waterfowl breeding, no corner of the National Park System is out of reach of the hot fingers of climate change. 'This is the biggest challenge we've ever faced,' says Mark Wenzler, clean air program director for the National Parks Conservation Association, 'one that threatens to change the very fabric of the places we call national parks.' The reality of that challenge has created what Wenzler calls 'a real sense of urgency to act.' One result of that urgency has been the creation of the Climate Friendly Parks (CFP) program, a cooperative effort of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Park Service. Begun in 2003, CFP has a triad of goals: training park staff on the issue of climate change; helping parks to evaluate, monitor, and lessen their own environmental footprint; and showing visitors how climate change may affect the parks and illustrating ways they can get involved in the solution. Parks are asked to hold CFP workshops, develop action plans, and continually monitor and evaluate their progress on the path to becoming Climate Friendly Parks. To date, 10 national parks, including Delaware Water Gap, Everglades, Glacier Bay, Yosemite, and Zion, have held workshops, and more are in the works. It is a new vision for our parks, says Shawn Norton, one of the program's coordinators. And when asked to describe the perfect Climate Friendly Park, he speaks with a visionary's zeal. 'A perfect Climate Friendly Park is first and foremost carbon neutral, adding no emissions to the atmosphere,' Norton says. As you enter the park you are given information about sustainable practices along with a trail map and park pass. Instead of a snarl of too many private, polluting cars jostling for too few parking spots, you board an alternative energy shuttle system that takes you quickly, quietly, and cleanly anywhere you want to go in the park. The visitor center, which blends almost invisibly into the background because of its natural architecture and landscaping -- including a 'green roof' of native plants -- is a clean energy facility that takes advantage of solar, wind, or geothermal energy, LED technology, and natural lighting. The food you purchase at the snack bar is organic and locally grown. The artwork for sale in the gift shop is made from recycled materials such as glass and aluminum. The restrooms are fitted with low-volume toilets and automatic faucet shutoffs for water savings, and they are kept clean with nontoxic cleaning products. Ranger vehicles patrolling the park emit no harmful pollutants. Remote buildings are fitted with photovoltaic panels to meet their own energy needs. And interpretive signs explain it all to park visitors, offering tips on decreasing their own ecological footprint while in the park and back at home.

This vision isn't simply a futuristic daydream, either. 'We're not that far from making much of this a reality,' says Norton. 'We can cut our energy use substantially. We can cut our emissions substantially. We can lower our water consumption substantially using today's technologies, and, if we got aggressive about it, we could do it in just about every park within 10 years. We are just getting started, but more parks are stepping up every day.' One such park is Zion in Utah. In 2000, a park shuttle system replaced 5,000

private vehicles per day with 30 propane-powered buses, eliminating almost 14,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions that otherwise would have filled the park's skies over the course of a year. A new 'green' visitor center taps into solar power for 30 percent of its energy, takes advantage of natural light for 80 percent of its lighting needs, and features large cooling towers that provide low-energy air conditioning in the summer and a passive solar heating system with a Trombe wall (a sun-facing wall made from heat-absorbing materials such as adobe or stone) for heat retention for cooler days. Considered a model for national park construction, the new facility reduces energy use by nearly 75 percent and eliminates more than 300,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions every year.

Less visible are increases in the use of environmentally friendly building materials and nontoxic cleaning supplies, and a drastic rise in recycling efforts within the park. 'The Climate Friendly Parks initiative allowed us to address environmental management and climate change while identifying priority areas for our environmental management system,' says Zion superintendent Jock Whitworth. 'Now we have a better idea of the impacts of climate change on the park's natural and cultural resources, and we can identify possible solutions.' Change is coming to our national parks, that much is clear. Exactly what that change will look like and how park staffs, park visitors, and the parks themselves will adapt to this new reality is not as clear. But as Apostle Island superintendent Bob Krumenaker points out, 'We in the National Park Service are in the perpetuity business. Whatever changes are coming in the climate, our parks will still be here. In the face of global climate change, our parks may take on even greater importance as some of the most pristine, untouched, and ecologically significant places left on the planet.' The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Headline: Threat to parks seen in EPA plan
Date: 7/21/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Clayton, Mark
Media Outlet: Las Vegas Sun

Nature photographer Hullahen Moore specializes in vistas of Virginia's Shenandoah National Park, but worries he'll soon be unable to see his beloved ridgelines through a yellowish haze of industrial emissions.

On some days, thick air already obscures mountains just a few miles distant, he said. So adding six coal-fired power plants nearby, as is proposed, might make view-gazing impossible.

Shenandoah isn't the only national treasure whose scenic values are up in the air, however. From Virginia to Utah, the air quality of at least 10 national parks, including many with crystalline views, is threatened by plans to build at least two dozen coal-fired power plants, parks advocates and air-quality experts say.

The little-known reason air in places with names such as Badlands, Wind Cave, and Great Basin could soon be sullied is a federal proposal that would lower the bar for developers seeking permits to build upwind of the parks, these critics say.

Despite blunt criticism by its own staff experts, the Environmental Protection Agency is proceeding with a plan by year's end to revise regulations under the Clean Air Act that safeguard areas with some of the nation's cleanest air.

Across the United States, 156 national parks, wilderness areas and wildlife refuges have been designated by Congress as Class-1 areas, granting them the toughest legal protection.

Officially, the EPA says it is proposing "refinements" to regulations that measure Class-1 air-quality standards.

But federal air-quality experts at the EPA and the National Park Service say the planned changes would be a backward step for air quality.

"It's hard to see this proposal as improving air quality in the parks," said John Bunyak, policy chief at the National Park Service's planning and permit branch, which oversees air-quality issues. "It could allow additional pollution sources to locate in a particular area, where they wouldn't have been permitted under the old rule."

Inside the EPA, staff air experts have protested that the proposal would weaken the criteria used to evaluate just how polluted a Class 1 area already is - and how much pollution a new industrial facility would be permitted to add to that area.

EPA regional staff experts, in internal documents, said the proposal provided "the lowest possible degree of protection" against spikes in pollution - a common occurrence during hot days, when power plants operate at near maximum output.

The proposed changes would effectively hide pollution spikes from regulators, ignore existing major polluters, allow "phony pollution accounting" methods and let states establish their own standards, said Mark Wenzler, clean air director of the National Parks Conservation Association, a Washington-based advocacy group.

An EPA spokesman in Washington declined to grant an interview or respond to e-mailed questions. A

fact sheet about the proposed rule and a letter to Congress on the change were referred to instead. "The proposed rules would provide greater regulatory certainty and reduce complexity without sacrificing the current level of environmental protection," the fact sheet says.

Controversial changes

Central to the proposal, say Park Service and EPA experts, are four changes. They would:

Substitute an annual average of emissions for the current "maximum" emissions that are measured over a few hours, up to a single day.

Exclude from pollution estimates output from existing industrial emitters that have been granted variances.

Switch from calculating emissions using the two most recent years of data to any time period "more representative" of normal operations.

Grant discretion to state regulators to use whatever data and information in their judgment would be most reliable in calculating emissions.

The final period of public comment on these changes closed in April. The final rule is expected to take effect before the end of the year.

Several federal air-quality experts contacted by the Monitor say it is clear to them EPA's planned changes would weaken the underpinnings of clean-air standards for Class 1 regions.

"We're talking about more pollution in national parks and wilderness, not less, because of this proposed change," said a federal air-quality expert, who asked not to be named because he was not permitted to speak to the press.

Lawmakers raise objections

Congress is concerned, too. In February, Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, sent a letter expressing his concerns to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson. In it, Waxman quotes an internal e-mail from Bunyak that compares the EPA's plan to average polluters' emissions over a year when evaluating air permit applications to "allowing a person to average all the variations in his driving speed over (an) entire year to see whether he is complying with the 55-mile-per-hour speed limit."

"It looks like the EPA is once again ignoring the law and the best guidance of their career staff and operating instead from a political perspective," Waxman said in an interview. "We've seen it from the documents we already have and it's a troubling story."

Officials at EPA, however, broadly rebuffed Waxman's concerns in a March letter by Robert Myers, principal deputy assistant administrator.

To the congressman's contention that EPA staff concerns had been ignored, Mr. Myers wrote that all "had full opportunity to express their concerns .. and all concerns were considered" before publication of the proposed rule

Regarding other issues Waxman and others raised, he wrote that although some polluters would be omitted from Class 1 emissions calculations, they would still have to comply with lesser Class 2 requirements.

Myers added that internal concerns expressed by the Park Service and the agency's own staff who critiqued the proposal two years ago were addressed fully in the proposal's final language.

But federal air-quality experts told the Monitor little of substance changed in the proposal after their critiques in 2006.

"In my mind and to a lot of regional (EPA) air-quality officers, the effect of this proposal is to undermine the gains and practices of the past two decades," said Scott Bohning, an air-quality engineer in the EPA's San Francisco office. "Right now there are standard practices considered reasonable - and those will be thrown out the window."

Court battles lie ahead

Still others say the EPA's latest shift fits a pattern of changing air-pollution regulations to conform to a desired outcome Congress never intended when it passed the Clean Air Act.

"It's part of a familiar game played by this administration of trying to figure out how to help industry avoid pollution permits," said Eric Schaeffer, director of the Environmental Integrity Project and director of the EPA's Office of Regulatory Enforcement from 1997 to 2002. "They never seem to quit even though they've lost almost everything they've done (on changing air pollution regulations) in the federal courts."

Wenzler said his group and probably others would challenge the EPA changes in court. But that might not stop the power industry, in the meantime, from winning permits to begin building.

In the meantime, Waxman wrote EPA Administrator Johnson again, questioning whether EPA staff objections were really addressed.

In response, the EPA said it is "considering these (Waxman's) questions as we develop the final rule, which we expect to issue by the end of 2008," Tim Lyons, the EPA's deputy press secretary, wrote in an e-mail to the Monitor.

That may be small comfort, though, to Mr. Moore, trying to focus his camera back on the face of "Old Rag Mountain" in Shenandoah National Park.

"Some of the granite on the face of these mountains was exposed about 300 million years ago," he said. "I would hate it if this change means I won't be able to see it anymore."

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Headline: The Spiritual and Cultural Significance of National Parks
Date: 7/21/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Bernbaum, Edwin
Media Outlet: Calibre MacroWorld
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1517206667&z=950239508>

The national parks are more than landmarks, monuments, and territories, more than mountains, forests, lakes, and geologic wonders. They represent a piece of the American soul.

Edwin Bernbaum, PhD, is director of the Sacred Mountains Program at the Mountain Institute and the author of *Sacred Mountains of the World*. This article is excerpted from the book *America's Best Idea -- A Photographic Journey Through Our National Parks*, which was co-authored by Bernbaum and published by American Park Network (first edition 2006; second edition 2008).

The remarkable landscapes and features of nature preserved in national parks have the power to awaken an extraordinary sense of wonder. The ethereal rise of a peak in mist, the smooth glide of an eagle in flight, the bright slant of sunbeams piercing the depths of a primeval forest -- such glimpses of natural beauty can move people in inexplicable ways. National parks transport visitors far outside the confines of routine existence, to awe-inspiring realms of mystery and splendor, governed by forces beyond our control. By coming to national parks, many seek to transcend the superficial distractions that clutter daily life and experience something of deeper, enduring value. Indeed, these sanctuaries of unspoiled nature represent places of spiritual renewal where we can return to the source of our being and recover the freshness of a new beginning.

In addition to their scientific value as repositories of geological and biological diversity and knowledge, national parks have profound spiritual and cultural significance for the American people. The idea of nature as a place of inspiration and renewal played a key role in the creation of the National Park Service in 1916. For example, a primary motivation of the early conservationist John Muir for working to establish Yosemite National Park in California was to preserve Yosemite Valley as 'a temple far finer than any made by human hands.' A study by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) found that the most compelling message galvanizing public support for national parks is that they 'provide us with some of the most beautiful, majestic, and awe-inspiring places on earth.' The beauty and grandeur of national parks have inspired major works of art, photography, literature, and music. In the late 19th century, Thomas Moran's dramatic paintings of Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park and Albert Bierstadt's of Yosemite Valley helped draw national attention to these remarkable places. Photographer Ansel Adams's images of ageless trees and monumental mountains evoke a realm of timeless beauty preserved in national parks. The composer Ferde Grofe was so overwhelmed by his visit to Arizona's Grand Canyon that he felt he could not express his feelings in words and could only communicate his experience through music -- thus composing his most famous work, the Grand Canyon Suite.

National parks function as cultural icons of heritage and identity. For many, they preserve the pristine essence and pioneering spirit of the United States. Parents take their families on trips to national parks as secular pilgrimages -- to become familiar with national landmarks that enshrine the values, ideals, and origins of our nation. A close second as a compelling message in the NPCA study was: 'Our national parks are the legacy we leave our children.' Icons such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and the Grand Canyon have come to represent the nation as a whole, while the glacier-clad peak of Washington's Mount Rainier has become an evocative symbol of the Pacific Northwest. Much of the attraction of Great Smoky Mountains, the most visited national park, comes from its association with Appalachian and Cherokee cultures.

National parks enshrine important American values and aspirations. The high peaks and deep canyons of parks such as Alaska's Denali and the Grand Canyon embody the majesty and grandeur of the United

States extolled in the national hymn 'America the Beautiful.' The vast landscapes and untrammled places preserved within the National Park System serve as reminders of the quest for freedom and independence that lies at the heart of American culture and history. High mountains and remote wilderness areas in parks such as Grand Teton [Wyoming], North Cascades [Washington], and Wrangell-St. Elias [Alaska] provide opportunities for the kinds of challenge and adventure that build character and contribute to America's can-do spirit. Many go to primeval forests and quiet spots in Redwood [California], Rocky Mountain [Colorado], and other national parks as natural cathedrals, seeking to find peace and contemplation -- and to recover a sense of who they are and what is important in life.

American Indians, along with the native cultures of Hawaii, Alaska, and Samoa, attach many of their deepest spiritual values to sacred places, beliefs, practices, and traditions connected to lands that are now within national parks. The Hopi and other tribes of the Colorado Plateau come on pilgrimages to Mesa Verde National Park to perform rituals at the cliff dwellings of the Anasazi, their mysterious ancestors. The Cherokees look to the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee as their ancestral homeland and regard the rounded summits such as Clingman's Dome as places of refuge and healing, and sources of life-giving rivers. Native Hawaiians revere the lava and vegetation of Kilauea Volcano in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park as the sacred domain and body of Pele, the volcano goddess, who brings life and fertility through her fiery energy. The Blackfeet, Lakota, and other high plains American Indians hold sun dances and go on vision quests at ceremonial sites within national parks such as Glacier [Montana] and Badlands [South Dakota]. The National Park Service changed the name of Mount McKinley National Park in Alaska to Denali National Park and Preserve in deference to the traditional Koyukon name for the highest peak in North America (Denali means 'The High One'). The National Park of American Samoa helps to safeguard the customs, beliefs, and traditions of Samoa, the 'sacred earth' of the Samoan people.

Finally, national parks hold special value and attraction for people of all cultures, both in the United States and around the world. Japanese Americans living in the Pacific Northwest, for example, refer to Mount Rainier as 'Tacoma Fuji,' linking the mountain to the sacred volcano that serves as the symbol of their homeland of Japan. African Americans can take special pride in the Buffalo Soldiers, African-American U.S. Army soldiers, who helped safeguard Yosemite, Sequoia, and other national parks in their early days. People from all over the world come to visit national parks in the United States to learn about establishing similar sanctuaries in their own countries. America's 'best idea' has become a model for protecting special places around the Earth and a major contribution to world culture.

The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.

Headline: Mountain air not so fresh
Date: 7/21/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Paine, Anne
Media Outlet: Tennessean, The
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1517637130&z=950239508>

The air of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was blighted this weekend by both lung-irritating ozone and fine particles.

It was so bad that the National Park Service sent an email to employees - rangers and others - telling them not to exert themselves outdoors, said Don Barger, with the National Park Conservation Association. That means: "Don't do anything outside where you have to breathe hard," said Barger, who lives in Norris, Tenn.

The parks always alert visitors and employees with signs, and through the Web site, when pollution climbs beyond the unhealthy level as it has often this summer, Barger said. The email was sent since it was apparent early Sunday that the air would be particularly bad, he said.

Visibility was around 18 miles this afternoon, far short of the more than 100 miles possible, he said. He isn't talking the blue, misty haze from moisture and chemical compounds that plants release, which gave the mountains its name. This is a gray veil, he said.

To look at webcams of vistas in the mountains and to see forecast and current air pollution levels go to <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/naturescience/air-quality.htm>

The Great Smoky Mountains is by no means the only national park to be seriously affected by air pollution.

Mammoth Cave in Kentucky has the highest level of fine particles in the air of any national park in the country, according to a study Barger quoted in U.S. District Court in Asheville, N.C. today.

He was testifying on behalf of the state of North Carolina, which is suing TVA to try to make it reduce emissions from its coal-burning, electricity-generating plants as quickly as it is requiring plants in its borders.

Asheville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Clarksville and Knoxville are some of several areas in the two states forecast to have levels of pollution that are unhealthy for healthy individuals who exercise hard outside as well as the infirm. Check www.airnow.gov for more info on cities and air pollution.

Contact Anne Paine at 259-8071 or apaine@tennessean.com.

Headline: National Parks Group Applauds Support of Science and Discovery in Great Smoky Mountains National Par
Date: 7/21/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: U.S. Newswire

WASHINGTON, July 21 -- The National Parks Conservation Association issued the following news release:

"Today's National Parks Subcommittee field hearing by U.S. Senator Richard Burr to discuss the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) of Species in Great Smoky Mountains National Park highlights the role that national parks play as living laboratories and classrooms for scientific discovery. This program has engaged scientists, citizens, and schoolchildren in the discovery of nearly 900 new species and allowed the Smokies to become a leader in science and discovery.

We applaud Senator Burr for focusing attention on this valuable program, which can serve as a model for other parks nationwide. The ATBI engages citizens of all ages in learning about and protecting our parks. Data collected through this program benefits the parks by providing knowledge about the complexity of the resources within and around them, and by helping protect national parks from threats such as exotic species, development, and pollution.

The National Park Centennial Challenge, which is pending in Congress, has already helped begin a beneficial expansion of this program to parks across the country. We hope that Great Smoky Mountains National Park continues to receive the funds necessary to maintain this exemplary program, and the National Park System receives the funding necessary for this program to ensure that science and research remain paramount in national parks across the country.

Our national parks are classrooms for learning and discovery. We must ensure that our national treasures are protected and preserved for our children and grandchildren to enjoy."

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Headline: Mountains hazed over in the midst of lawsuit
Date: 7/21/2008 3:51:00 PM
Media Contact: Paine, Anne
Media Outlet: Tennessean, The
Attachment Link: <http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200880721087>

The air of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was blighted this weekend by both lung-irritating ozone and fine particles, according to its website.

It was so bad that the National Park Service sent an email to employees – rangers and others - telling them not to exert themselves outdoors, said Barger, with the National Park Conservation Association.

That means:

“Don’t do anything outside where you have to breathe hard,” said Don Barger, who lives in Norris, Tenn.

The parks always alert visitors and employee with signs and also on its website when pollution climbs beyond the unhealthy level as it has often this summer, Barger said. The email was sent since it was apparent early in the day Sunday that the air would be particularly bad, he said.

Visibility was around 18 miles this afternoon, far short of the more than 100 miles possible, he said.

He isn’t talking the blue, misty haze from moisture and chemical compounds that plants release, which gave the mountains its name. This is a grey veil, he said.

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He was testifying on behalf of the state of North Carolina, which is suing TVA to try to make it reduce emissions from its coal-burning, electricity-generating plants as quickly as it is requiring of plants in its borders. Pollution wafts across the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which both that state and Tennessee share.

Asheville, Nashville, Chattanooga, Clarksville and Knoxville are some of several areas in the two states forecast to have levels of pollution that are unhealthy for healthy individuals who exercise hard outside as well as the infirm. Check www.airnow.gov for more info on cities and air pollution.

Headline: Park Service agrees to keep Yellowstone pass open
Date: 7/22/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Ben Neary
Media Outlet: Yahoo! News
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1518603666&z=950239508>

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) -- The National Park Service has formally approved an agreement it reached with Wyoming and other parties to use explosives to keep a mountain pass open to guided snowmobile access on the eastern side of Yellowstone National Park.

The agreement codifies the changes in the agency's Yellowstone winter-use plan that the Park Service negotiated with state and local officials in a series of closed meetings that ended last month. Park Service Regional Director Mike Snyder in Denver announced the agreement Monday.

Wyoming officials say keeping Sylvan Pass open in the winter is critical for the area's tourism and recreation. The pass, which rises to an elevation of 8,530 feet, leads to the east entrance of Yellowstone National Park.

Gov. Dave Freudenthal said he's pleased with the decision, which also allows motorized snowcoach access, but was concerned the Park Service may not keep the pass open permanently.

Freudenthal noted that Snyder specified that his agency's commitment to keeping Sylvan Pass open is conditioned upon the weather, as well as on future fiscal and staffing constraints. 'I hope in the future the Park Service will not use this vague language as justification for closing Sylvan Pass,' Freudenthal said. Snyder last November approved a document stating the Park Service would stop using helicopters and howitzers to set off explosives to trigger avalanches on the pass because of the cost, unless it could reach a different agreement with the state. The agency said it intended to monitor snow conditions and allow snowmobile traffic only when it appeared safe.

In the agreement the National Park Service reached with the state last month and that Snyder has now ratified, the agency has agreed to continue to spend the money to keep the pass open -- roughly \$300,000 last winter.

John Sacklin, management assistant at Yellowstone National Park, said Monday that the cost of keeping the pass open will be higher this winter because of increases in the cost of fuel and other factors.

Sacklin said the agency is also considering safety improvements on the ground that could cost extra money, such as additional protections for the howitzer platform.

Groups including the National Parks Conservation Association have criticized the Park Service for resolving the snowmobile issue in closed meetings with the state. The Park Service has been studying the issue of winter management of Yellowstone for years and its environmental study of the issue drew more than 100,000 public comments from around the country. Conservation groups say the vast majority of the comments favored closing the park to snowmobiles. 'We are concerned anytime a major decision is made behind closed doors,' said Franz Camenzind, executive director of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance.

Rick Frost, regional spokesman for the Park Service, said Monday that the Park Service needed to hold closed meetings with state and local officials in order to reach a decision quickly.

Frost said the state and local government elected officials represented the interests of their constituents. 'These are government elected officials, they represent the people,' he said. 'That's what they're there

for!

Headline: NACD Announces 2008 Director of the Year Award Winners Andrew J. McKenna, David C. Phillips, Sally J

Date: 7/22/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: Digital50

Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1520242645&z=950239508>

The National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD:www.nacdonline.org) today announced the winners of the 2008 NACD Director of the Year awards as Andrew J. McKenna - non-executive chairman of the board of McDonald's Corporation and lead director of Aon Corporation, in the Public Company category; David C. Phillips - co-founder and chair of Cincinnati Works, Inc., in the Private Company category; Sally Jewell - CEO and president of Recreation Equipment, Inc. (REI), in the Not-for-Profit Company category; and John C. Whitehead, a long time governance leader and retired co-chairman and senior partner at Goldman Sachs, for the B. Kenneth West Lifetime Achievement Award.

For more than 20 years, NACD has recognized a Public Company Director of the Year, adding last year the categories of Private Company Director, Not-for-Profit Company Director and a Lifetime Achievement Award. The awards will be presented Oct. 20 during an awards banquet that is part of the 2008 NACD Corporate Governance Conference, Oct. 19-21 in Washington, DC.

The winners are nominated by their peers at large. Nominees also include winners of regional Director of the Year awards conducted by some NACD regional chapters. National winners are selected based upon stringent criteria reviewed by NACD selection committees. Each of the four awards honor individual board members who have demonstrated exceptional leadership in promoting the principles and best practices of good corporate governance. This year's committees looked at Integrity, Mature Confidence, Informed Judgment and High Performance Standards when benchmarking this year's nominees. In addition, the B. Kenneth West Lifetime Achievement Award honors those with an extended career of distinguished service and a dedication to the improvement of corporate practices.

Director Professionalism 'These awards are important because they provide deserved recognition to four individuals who have made incredible contributions to board effectiveness, corporate performance and shareholder value. The winners are great representatives of so many directors across the country who are performing at very high levels in challenging corporate environments,' notes Ken Daly, CEO of NACD.

NACD's survey data has indicated that directors spend an average of 210 hours of work per year on a single board, and that many spend significantly more time than that. Additionally, thousands seek continuing education through NACD annually, and 10,000 have joined the association so they can have regular access to the leading practices of their peers and the guidance of independent experts. 'NACD is seeing directors step up to the pressures facing them with dedication and professionalism. Directors today are committed to educating themselves on the governance issues of our times and to improving board performance. The bar has been raised on board service, and nowhere is that more evident than in the achievements of this year's award winners,' said Daly. The Winners

Andrew J. McKenna, NACD's 2008 Public Company Director of the Year honoree, is recognized for his continuing development of corporate governance as non-executive chairman of the board of McDonald's Corporation and as lead director at Aon Corporation.

He has earned praise from both fellow directors and management at McDonald's Corp. for his strong guidance through two difficult CEO changes and several boardroom adjustments in the early 2000s, instilling a positive culture through humility and wisdom. As lead director on the board of Aon Corporation and as chairman of Schwarz Supply Source, he continues to lead the charge in board peer evaluations

and management succession planning. He is a remarkable public servant and enjoys great respect particularly in the city of Chicago. A few of his undertakings there include being chairman of United Way of Metropolitan Chicago, the Chicago Bears Football Club, Inc., and having previously served as chairman of the Economic Club of Chicago. His extensive experience in the public sector has made him aware of the needs of managers as well as stakeholders, and he confers such insight to both directors and employees within these various organizations.

Mr. McKenna lives by his ideology that, 'A good leader is the person who serves others best - because in the end, we are not judged by what we got, but what we gave.' David C. Phillips, chair and co-founder of Cincinnati Works Inc., is NACD's 2008 Private Company Director of the Year. Mr. Phillips is a mentor to many of his fellow colleagues at Cincinnati Works, and brings clear, strong ideas to the boardroom. A humble leader, he is an adamant promoter of responsible executive compensation and is heavily involved in the company's succession planning process. Mr. Phillips is also a director at Midmark Corporation, where he has served on the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee and the Strategic Oversight Committee. He is recognized by his peers on that board for his ability to visualize the big picture and for his strong commitment to internal evaluation and auditing.

Mr. Phillips is currently on the board of nine private companies, three public companies, and several not-for-profit organizations. These ventures include board positions at the Better Business Bureau and Enerfab Inc. For his work, Mr. Phillips has been honored by a number of prominent bodies, including the University of Cincinnati College of Business and the Public Relations Society of America. Mr. Phillips was also a long-time Arthur Andersen partner and held numerous leadership positions while at the firm.

Sally Jewell, NACD's 2008 Not-for-Profit Director of the Year honoree, is the current CEO and president of REI. Ms. Jewell is a recognized leader in implementing corporate social responsibility to complement and positively impact business strategy, and is being awarded for her cumulative contributions to governance in the non-profit sector.

Ms. Jewell's leadership in the fields of education and environmental protection are particularly noteworthy. Ms. Jewell serves on and has chaired the Board of Regents for the University of Washington and serves on the boards of the National Parks Conservation Association, Retail Industry Leaders Association and Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust. She is also the 2008 chair of the Initiative for Global Development, an organization of business leaders committed to ending extreme global poverty. She has previously served on the boards of the YWCA, the Alliance for Education, and several other school and community organizations.

Her commitment to balance work, community involvement and family allows her to stay mindful of the big picture. Professional colleagues note her ability to lead diverse leadership teams and foster open dialogue between a board and its management. Ms. Jewell's outstanding skills as a mediator are highly valued in boardrooms where innovation and responsible business practice are constantly on the agenda. Her orientation towards strategy, constructive candor, and commitment to the highest standards of organizational ethics have positively affected stakeholders and executives alike.

Rounding out this year's recipients is John C. Whitehead, winner of the 2008 NACD B. Kenneth West Lifetime Achievement Award, and retired co-chairman and senior partner at Goldman Sachs. Mr. Whitehead is well known for his tremendous belief in and commitment to any task with which he confronts. Many chairmen have accredited him as the basis of Goldman Sachs' success throughout the 1980s and as an undisputed industry leader in terms of integrity and dedication. He has assisted presidents, governors, and a number of prominent board leaders in the disciplines of education, private business, and in the non-profit arena.

In the late 1980s Mr. Whitehead served as Deputy Secretary of State under George Shultz, and for his work in international affairs and administrative reform, was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal by President Reagan. He would go on to be chairman of the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and chairman of the United Nations Association. His resume is unparalleled, having served as chairman and/or a director in over fifteen private and non-profit organizations, including the Harvard

Board of Overseers, Rockefeller University, and the Lower Manhattan Re-Development Commission.

A man always ready to take on challenges, Mr. Whitehead's exceptional ability to lead by example has earned the admiration of countless CEOs and clients alike. His honest and down-to-earth personality is particularly striking for a man of his stature. With so many obligations, his ability to empathize with individuals fosters unity in every organization he is involved with.

All of these recipients will be recognized on Oct. 20 in Washington, DC, at the NACD Director of the Year Awards Banquet, in conjunction with the NACD 2008 Annual Corporate Governance Conference, Oct. 19-21, 2008. The Director of the Year Banquet sponsors include KPMG's Audit Committee Institute, FTI Consulting, Inc., and Radford Survey + Consulting. NACD 2008 Annual Corporate Governance Conference

The conference is an annual forum where NACD and its member boards meet to develop recommendations for improving corporate governance at the practice level. The director-centric program delivers the best insights from shareholders, law makers, governance experts, and experienced directors on critical issues in corporate governance.

Conference highlights include: the national release of recommendations from the NACD Blue Ribbon Commission on Board Shareholder Communications; a high level debate on the issue of governance principles versus prescriptive rating standards; and performance metrics for executive compensation.

More than fifty directors and experts will speak at the 2008 NACD Corporate Governance Conference and will lead a variety of valuable educational seminars. Speakers include: Bonnie Hill, director at The Home Depot and The Hershey Company; Chief Justice Myron Steele of the Delaware Supreme Court; and Reatha Clark King, director at Exxon Mobil Corporation and Lenox Group, Inc.

About NACD

Founded in 1977, the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) is the nonprofit membership organization of 10,000 directors representing companies ranging from the Fortune 50 to smaller public, private and nonprofit organizations. The organization's mission to help boards improve performance for the purpose of enhancing long-term shareholder value, and the majority of member directors join together as a full board. NACD conducts director education programs and standard-setting research and convenes networks of director peers in 21 Chapters throughout the U.S. The organization also conducts customized, in-boardroom education and evaluation services for individual boards. NACD is the publisher of Directors Monthly(R) and operates the NACD Directors Registry(TM), a board matching service. www.nacdonline.org.

Headline: Great Lakes Advocates Urge Congress to Act Quickly on Historic Protections for Lakes
Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Business Journal Serving Greater Milwaukee, The
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1520772899&z=950239508>

ANN ARBOR, Mich., July 23 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Advocates for the Great Lakes urged Congress to act quickly on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, a historic agreement introduced today in the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate to conserve water in America's largest fresh surface water ecosystem.

'This is an important day for the Great Lakes,' said Andy Buchsbaum, co-chair of the Healing Our Waters -Great Lakes Coalition and regional executive director of the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes office. 'The Compact would for the first time set the same strong water protections for all the Great Lakes states while protecting them from depletion. To keep the Great Lakes great, it is essential that Congress take up these bills and pass them soon.'

U.S. Representatives John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.), Vernon Ehlers (R-Mich.), Steve LaTourette (R-Ohio) and James Oberstar (D-Minn.) joined U.S. Senators Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and George Voinovich (R-Ohio) to introduce a joint resolution consenting to the Compact.

Co-sponsors in the Senate include Evan Bayh (D-Ind.), Sharrod Brown (D-Ohio), Robert Casey, Jr. (D-Pa.), Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), Richard Durbin (D-Ill.), Russell Feingold (D-Wisc.), Herb Kohl (D-Wisc.), Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.). More original co-sponsors are expected to be added to the list.

Presidential candidates Obama and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) have expressed support for the Compact. Hearings on the House and Senate bills could come as early as next week.

'The Compact has been called for by more than a dozen governors from three different political parties since its conceptualization and approved by sixteen state legislative chambers from eight states,' said Cameron Davis, co-chair of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition and President/CEO of the Alliance for the Great Lakes. 'Without the Compact, the Great Lakes are left vulnerable to depletion. We urge Congress to move quickly to approve the Compact to protect this national and international treasure.'

The eight Great Lakes states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have enacted the Compact, a regional water agreement that promotes water conservation within the region and protects the lakes from depletion. Congressional consent is required for it to become law, as has been the case with other water compacts around the nation.

The Compact has garnered support from businesses, farmers and conservationists. The region's governors have listed passage of the Compact as one of nine priorities to protect and restore the Great Lakes--along with efforts to halt invasive species, stop sewage contamination and clean up toxic pollution.

'The Great Lakes are one of America's national treasures and one of the natural wonders of the world,' said Tom Kiernan, co-chair of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition and president of the National Parks Conservation Association. 'We have a responsibility to protect them. Passage of the Compact is essential if we are to restore the Great Lakes and protect our drinking water, economy, National Parks and way of life. The longer we wait, the worse the problems and the more costly the

solutions.'

The Great Lakes contain over 90 percent of the fresh surface water of the United States. Although seemingly abundant, less than 1 percent of the Great Lakes water is renewed each year, leaving the lakes vulnerable to depletion.

SOURCE Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

Headline: National survey rates Hawaii's volcanoes

Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: KHNL-TV

Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521286015&z=950239508>

KILAUEA (KHNL) - A national parks survey rates Hawaii's volcanoes. The two-year study from the National Parks Conservation Association gives a 'fair' grade for cultural resources.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park received a 'failing' grade for the number of invasive species at Kilauea. 'The point is to get an overall condition of the resources in the park and then to have a new tool to track the changes,' said Kari Kaiser, a spokesperson.

The survey rated Kilauea and other volcanoes, on park programs, invasive species and restoration.

Headline: Report Invasive species hurt Volcanoes park

Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: KHNL-TV

Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521436841&z=950239508>

9:04 PM ET HAWAII VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, Hawaii (AP) - A new study says invasive plant and animal species are threatening to overwhelm native flora and fauna at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

The National Parks Conservation Association study says the park's natural resources are in poor shape as a result.

The report says the park needs more money to build fences and control weeds to protect habitat critical for native bird and plant populations.

Installing fencing to keep out pigs, goats and other hoofed animals has helped species recover in some parts of the park.

The report says such steps need to be expanded to other park lands.

The National Parks Conservation Association is an organization dedicated to advocating for national parks.

Information from: The Honolulu Advertiser, <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com>

Headline: Park's natural resources rated 'poor'
Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Sur, Peter
Media Outlet: Hawaii Tribune-Herald
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521561394&z=950239508>

KILAUEA -- Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's natural resources were rated 'poor' and its cultural resources only 'fair' in a report released today.

The National Parks Conservation Association, a nonprofit group, points to the results as proof of the need for better funding.

'The reason (for the poor score) is the invasive species,' said Kari Kiser, senior program coordinator for the NPCA's Pacific regional office in San Francisco. Kiser was not part of the team that assessed the national park, but she accompanied park staff and local media on a tour Monday up the Mauna Loa Road. The reason for this tour was the pending release of the 'State of the Parks' assessment, which was generally critical about various aspects of the park's lack of funding and infrastructure.

'Native bird populations, in particular, have suffered from habitat loss, avian disease introduced by invasive species, and predation by introduced predators -- pressures that are exacerbated by climate change,' the report states. It states that 'archaeological surveys are needed to accurately assess sites and their artifacts, many of which are at risk of being destroyed by lava flows and ash.' Only 3 to 5 percent of the park has been surveyed for archaeological sites, due to financial constraints.

'Existing staff positions remain vacant at the park because there are no funds to hire people to fill them,' the report states.

According to Kiser, 63 full-time staff positions at the park remain unfilled, and similar crunches exist across the National Park Service system.

As a result, the park has relied extensively on volunteers, seasonal hires and 'voluntourists.'

Kiser's organization has done about 60 reports on other national parks since 2000; they intend to do at least 100 more reports by the NPS centennial in 2016.

'The goal is to get an index of what the resources look like in the national parks right now,' Kiser said.

To ease the national park's lack of money, officials have entered into partnerships with eight other landowners nearby, including the state of Hawaii and Kamehameha Schools. The voluntary partnership is called the 'Three Mountain Alliance' for it encompasses the summits of Mauna Loa, Kilauea and Hualalai.

Regarding the Hawaii Volcanoes rating of fair to poor, Kiser said that most of the parks were rated fair to poor because of the lack of funding.

For natural resources, the park was given a score of 60 out of 100, just short of the 'fair' category. The two bright spots were air and water, which both scored 83, although air quality would likely be degraded if Halema'uma'u's recent emissions were considered.

The scale rates the park resources as either critical, poor, fair, good or excellent. No aspect of Hawaii Volcanoes were rated critical or excellent.

The natural resources rating reflects an assessment of more than 120 criteria associated with environmental quality, biotic health and ecosystem integrity.

For natural resources, the park scored a 65 out of 100, putting it in the 'fair' category.

The report gives the lowest score, 51, to the museum collection and archives.

Less than half of the 390,000 items in the park's collection and archives have been cataloged. Most of the collection is in the basement of the Kilauea Visitor Center, where it is vulnerable to floods.

'The park's large archival collection is not being used to its full potential, largely because the park does not have an archivist on staff to create finding aids and inventory resources,' the report states. It calls for a park-wide inventory of the entire collection and archives.

The \$13.6 million budget that the park received in the 2007 fiscal year was deemed 'insufficient to fund all projects.'

Out of that amount, the park receives only \$6 million in base funding and must compete for the remaining amount.

The fiscal picture was not all bleak, said park Superintendent Cindy Orlando.

'On the upside, we did get the first installment of that 10-year commitment by the administration this year. We received an increase in our base funding for the first time in many years, in fact, the largest ever operating increase in the national park system. We in this park received funding for about 22 seasonal positions, so there's actually 22 more gray and green (uniforms) out there than there were last summer, which is wonderful.

'We got funding for a full-time permanent volunteer coordinator position that will help us leverage our already very successful volunteer program, which provides up to 25 bodies a year for us, over 40,000 hours.'

The NCPA's goal is to advocate for the National Park Service, including lobbying Congress for more funds.

On the Internet: <http://www.npca.org>

E-mail Peter Sur at psur@hawaiitribune-herald.com.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park assessed

The following points are taken from an assessment of the resources of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, issued by the National Parks Conservation Association

- Issues with invasive nonnative plant and animal species predominate at the park, with lowland areas more affected by invasive species and past human use.
- The presence of vog is a concern for park employees, visitors and nearby communities.
- Visitors and local residents do not have access to critical resource information because the park is not adequately staffed.
- The park's entire infrastructure needs upgrades to meet current building codes due to the threat of earthquakes. Retrofitting requires extensive survey work and money.
- Archaeological surveys are needed to assess sites and their artifacts, many of which are at risk of being

destroyed by lava flows and ash.

- Caves should be mapped, inventoried and monitored, because they may contain archaeological artifacts.
- Existing staff positions remain vacant because there are no money to fill them, and new staff positions are also needed to boost resource management, visitor services and law enforcement.
- The park's general management plan is more than 30 years old and does not address the existing eruption at Kilauea. The plan does not address the addition of new lands in the Kahuku section of the park. The park is in the process of developing this plan.
- Private guides hurry many visitors through park sites and exhibits; these visits concern park staff because they may not give adequate education and interpretation for visitors.

Headline: Public comment sought on guns in national parks
Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Carlsbad Current-Argus
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521706302&z=950239508>

A non-profit group is seeking comment on proposed changes in gun regulations for national parks. The National Parks Conservation Association encourages park enthusiasts to take advantage of the extended comment period on proposed changes to the current law that allows guns in national parks as long as they are unloaded and properly stowed. The new regulation would mandate that national parks allow loaded and concealed firearms if the state where that park is located allows the same practice in its state parks. Members of the public can learn more about the proposal and submit comments prior to the new Aug. 8 deadline via the association's Web site at www.npca.org/keep_parks_safe.

Headline: Report Invasive Species Hurt Volcanoes Park
Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: KITV-TV
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521847960&z=950239508>

Group Says Hawaii Park Needs Fences, Weed Control

HONOLULU -- An invasive plant and animal species are threatening to overwhelm native flora and fauna at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, according to a new study.

The National Parks Conservation Association study said the park's natural resources are in poor shape as a result and that the park needs more money to build fences and control weeds to protect habitat critical for native bird and plant populations.

Installing fencing to keep out pigs, goats and other hoofed animals has helped species recover in some parts of the park.

The report said such steps need to be expanded to other park lands.

The National Parks Conservation Association is an organization dedicated to advocating for national parks.

Headline: Supervisors approve conditional use for ARC
Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Rotenberg, Carl
Media Outlet: Montgomery Newspapers
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521841697&z=950239508>

A conditional use approval allowing the developers of the American Revolution Center to cross two tributaries of the Schuylkill River with driveways and footpaths was granted by the Lower Providence Board of Supervisors July 17 in a 3-2 vote.

Board Chairman Craig Dininny, Supervisors Marie Altieri and Piero Sassu voted for the conditional use and Supervisors Richard Brown and Chris DiPaolo voted against it.

The hearing for the conditional use was June 23, the same evening ARC's preliminary site plan was granted approval in a similar 3-2 vote.

A conditional use hearing was required because concrete culverts and the earthen berms covering them will be built in the Floodplain Conservation District. The 20-foot culverts will channel the two tributaries downhill into the river, according to the approval. Outside surfaces of the culverts will be built with stone, natural to the area, or other materials approved by the board during final site plan approval.

Residents opposed to the proposed 142,000-square-foot, three-story museum and a 145,000-square-foot, conference center with 99 hotel rooms also opposed the conditional use July 17.

Valley Forge National Historical Park Chief of Planning Deirdre Gibsen read a statement from park Superintendent Mike Caldwell, who questioned filling the 'wetlands' for the stream crossings.

The park's congressional boundary line includes ARC's 78-acre parcel off Pawlings Road and the park's property line is very close to ARC's land and the Schuylkill Trail, which lies uphill from the Schuylkill River. 'We're surprised that a developer that claims its development will be a model of sustainability wishes to fill wetlands,' Caldwell said. 'Despite the developer's claims of confusion about the park's ownership of the land on which the Schuylkill River Trail runs - the deed to which has been filed as a public record at the [Montgomery] county courthouse since 1985 - we won't permit a connection across park land to the Schuylkill River Trail if the developer's trail has required the gratuitous filling of wetlands.' Caldwell said the proposal to fill wetlands would 'unreasonably affect park lands down slope.' Joseph Byron III, the president of Lower Providence Concerned Citizens, questioned the logic of approving the conditional use and asked the board to vote against it.

Neil Sklaroff, the attorney for the ARC, argued that residents' objections to the museum's plans before the board vote were not relevant to the conditional use approval. 'This is a wonderful project in the wrong place,' said Joyce Cluely, one of the litigants who has sued Lower Providence Township to overturn the underlying zoning district for the museum. 'I'm totally opposed to the conditional use. Vote no.' DiPaolo, who voted against the conditional use, said ARC officials had not made their case for the conditional use. 'When the professionals were questioned from ARC they didn't have answers,' DiPaolo said. 'The residents have the right to know the answers.' DiPaolo also questioned how traffic destined for the museum could be routed off the Egypt Road interchange on Route 422, 'over an old railroad bridge onto a private road.' The private road in Upper Providence serves an existing shopping center that has not been built to township specifications because it is a private driveway. 'This project looks like it's on a train and moving fast,' complained Nancy McFarland, a former zoning hearing board chairwoman.

A zoning challenge to the May 2 'preliminary opinion' of Zoning Officer Michael Siegal that the ARC plans meet the requirements for the Living History Overlay District zoning were scheduled to be heard by the

zoning hearing board July 24.

The National Parks Conservation Association filed the validity challenge with Joyce Cluley, Joanne Burns, Craig Crawford, Lawrence Loughlin and H. Joseph Byron III. A conditional use approval allowing the developers of the American Revolution Center to cross two tributaries of the Schuylkill River with driveways and footpaths was granted by the Lower Providence Board of Supervisors July 17 in a 3-2 vote.

Headline: National Park Service Cleared in U.S. Department of Interior Inspector General Rep
Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: U.S. Newswire

WASHINGTON, July 23 -- The National Parks Conservation Association issued the following news release:

Statement by NPCA Senior Program Manager Neal Desai

"The nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is pleased with the findings of a report issued this week by the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of the Interior, which maintains the National Park Service operated fairly and appropriately toward the private Drakes Bay Oyster Company now located in a protected wilderness area within Point Reyes National Seashore.

The independent report concludes that the oyster company delayed signing a permit to operate legally and within environmental compliance in the park, and that the oyster company had been operating without a permit since they bought the operation in 2005.

Additionally, the report found that Point Reyes Superintendent Don Neubacher treated the oyster company fairly. In fact, nine local ranchers recently submitted letters to the National Park Service in support of Superintendent Neubacher's conduct, stating their support for his work and treatment of them as tenants of the Seashore.

The report also makes clear that regardless of impacts from the oyster operation on the estero now, the oyster company must be removed when the company's rights to operate expire in 2012 so that Drakes Estero can be managed in accordance with wilderness law. The land sale transaction to the National Park Service allowed oyster operations to continue in Drakes Estero until 2012, at which point Congress required the elimination of all commercial enterprises from the estero and other areas designated as wilderness.

Drakes Estero in Point Reyes National Seashore is the only wilderness estuary on the West Coast of the continental United States. The landmark Point Reyes Wilderness Act that designated thousands of acres as wilderness, including Drakes Estero, while preserving agriculture in a separate pastoral zone, was widely supported by the public. Prior to buying Johnson's Oyster Co., the Drakes Bay Oyster Company was notified that they were mandated to close their business in 2012 due to Park Service laws and policies.

NPCA believes that if the oyster company intends to continue its operations beyond 2012, it needs to relocate to an area that doesn't have the same federal protections. Wilderness laws safeguard our most treasured natural areas from commercial exploitation, and NPCA opposes the Drakes Bay Oyster Company's attempts to violate the Wilderness Act."

TNS gv51gv-080724-1703173 18MASHGema

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Headline: New Report Identifies Key Threats Facing Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

Date: 7/23/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: U.S. Newswire

HILO, Hawaii, July 23 -- The National Parks Conservation Association issued the following news release:

The nation's leading voice for the national parks, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), today released an assessment that reveals Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's natural features and cultural sites are in fair to poor condition. The park has among the highest number of threatened and endangered plants and animals in the National Park System, largely due to non-native species, which the National Park Service is working aggressively to eradicate.

According to NPCA's Center for State of the Parks report, released just prior to the start of the Hawaii Conservation Conference, Hawaii Volcanoes' natural resources rank in "poor" condition, scoring an overall 60 out of 100 points, primarily because the park battles non-native plants and animals that threaten to overtake native species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Hawaii Volcanoes is home to 54 federally listed endangered, threatened and candidate endangered plants and animals. Because of a lack of funding, the park relies on volunteers and partnerships with adjacent landowners, state and other federal agencies to actively monitor and protect four species that it identifies as flagship species: the hawksbill turtle, Hawaiian petrel, Hawaiian goose, and Mauna Loa silversword plant. The successful hawksbill turtle recovery program educates the public about ways to avoid inadvertent trampling of turtle nests on beaches, and in 2005 the park beaches achieved the highest hatchling rates since 1995.

"Our report recommends that more money be allocated to the park so it can continue to expand and enhance programs such as the hawksbill turtle recovery program and the newly created Three Mountain Alliance, a partnership of public and private landowners working together to protect more than one million acres of habitat," said NPCA Senior Program Coordinator Kari Kiser. "These two highly innovative programs protect threatened plants and animals and increase public awareness so that each of us can help native species survive."

In fact, according to a system-wide review of the condition of America's national parks, invasive species are a widespread concern across many of our parks. NPCA's "The State of Our National Parks: A Resources Index" released in June, found that invasive species are a limited concern in 90 percent of the parks evaluated, and are considered a widespread or chronic concern in 38 percent. Additionally, 82 percent of assessed parks have experienced the extirpation of one or more species, while 40 percent of sampled parks have lost a key species or top predator.

The new assessment also finds that Hawaii Volcanoes' cultural resources are in "fair" condition, scoring an overall 65 out of 100. Most historic structures and other park infrastructure need upgrades to meet building codes for structures in earthquake zones. And because of budget shortfalls and limited staff availability, only 3 to 5 percent of the park has undergone archaeological surveying, despite the risk of many of these sites being destroyed by lava flow and ash. The report gives high marks to the park's strong ethnography program and its solid relationship with kupuna (Hawaiian elders) groups, enabling it to incorporate Native Hawaiian voices and perspectives into park programs and projects.

The park's business plan cites a shortfall of 63 full-time equivalent employees, causing resource management, visitor services and educational programs to suffer. For example, the number of educational programs provided by the park has decreased by 45 percent in the last decade, and it is only with the help of volunteers that current levels are maintained. In 2006, 5,269 students and teachers participated in educational programs in the park, while more than 1, 200 students were denied this opportunity because the park lacked the staff needed to accommodate them.

"As the 100-year anniversary of the National Park Service approaches in 2016, we have an opportunity to make a difference for our national parks. Congress and the Administration must provide sustained financial support to help parks like Hawaii Volcanoes restore and protect our heritage for our children and grandchildren," Kiser continued.

NPCA launched the landmark Center for State of the Parks program in 2000 to assess the health of national parks across the country.

Download the full report (<http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks/hawaiivolcanoes/>)

TNS gv51gv-080724-1703187 18MASHGema

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Headline: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's funding shortage is showing
Date: 7/23/2008 3:41:00 PM
Media Contact: Dayton, Kevin
Media Outlet: Honolulu Advertiser - Hilo Bureau
Attachment Link: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080723/NEWS0101/807230391/1001/LOCALNEWSFRONT>

HAWAII VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, Hawai'i - The natural resources in the state's busiest national park are in poor condition, mostly because non-native plants and animals are threatening to overwhelm native flora and fauna including many endangered species, according to a new study of the park.

The study by the National Parks Conservation Association, an organization dedicated to advocating for national parks, also judged the condition of natural features and cultural sites at the park to be "fair to poor," and argues for more money for park operations.

Hawai'i Volcanoes is among the national parks with the largest numbers of endangered plants and animals in the national system, with a total of 54 species in the Big Island park that are endangered, threatened or proposed for endangered or threatened status.

About 1.6 million people visit the park each year, and the park has been designated a World Heritage Site. Nearly 131,000 acres of the park are designated as wilderness.

Park Superintendent Cindy Orlando said the 333,086-acre park needs 64 more employees, but lacks the money to hire them.

The park has about 183 employees, including seasonal workers and staff who work at the park under cooperating agreements with other agencies.

"Remember, this is not unique to this park," Orlando said. "It's a system-wide issue. I think it speaks to the lack of funding for the system."

Kari Kiser, senior program coordinator for the Pacific regional office of the conservation association, agreed. Of the 60 reports her organization released so far on national parks, Kiser said, "there are very few parks that have gotten anything above fair and poor, and it's solely due to the lack of resources that are made available to them."

Kiser said there is an estimated \$8 billion backlog in maintenance work in national parks across the nation.

The report on Hawai'i Volcanoes contends the park needs more money to pursue strategies such as fencing and weed control to protect habitat critical to the recovery of native bird and plant populations in the park.

Steps such as installing fencing to keep out pigs, goats and other hoofed animals has helped other species to recover in some parts of the park, but such steps need to be expanded to other park lands, the report said.

Rhonda Loh, chief of the park's natural resources management division, said the park now spends about \$1.5 million of its \$17.7 million annual budget combating invasive species.

Orlando said the base budget for the park is about \$7.1 million, with an additional \$6.4 million in federal money supplied for special projects. The park earns more than \$3.54 million in fees, including visitor entrance fees, and receives \$735,000 more from donations and other sources.

Other study findings:

a.. Park buildings, including some of its 205 historic structures, need to be upgraded to meet building codes to protect against earthquake hazards.

a.. Archaeological surveys are needed for ancient sites at risk of being covered by lava and ash. Only 3 percent to 5 percent of the park has been surveyed, and budget shortfalls make it difficult to survey more of the sites, according to the report. Areas that need to be surveyed include caves that have yet to be mapped and that may contain artifacts.

a.. Staff shortages at the park means there is not enough educational and interpretive material available to the public, which in turn hampers efforts to build private support for the park.

a.. Among its other staffing problems, the park lacks people to set up operations in the 116,000-acre Kahuku unit, acquired by the park in 2003.

For all of the criticism of the park budget, the report credits Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park with working aggressively with volunteers, landowners around the park and others on its four showcase programs to protect endangered species, including efforts to increase the populations of the hawksbill turtle, the Hawaiian petrel, the nene goose and the Mauna Loa silversword plant.

And Orlando said the park received its first increase in base funding in many years under the federal Centennial Initiative to restore park funding as the system approaches its 100th anniversary in 2016, and said the national park system received the largest operating budget increase in its history.

For Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, that translated into money for about 22 new seasonal positions and a full-time volunteer coordinator position to help increase the role of volunteer labor at the park, which already provides 40,000 hours of free labor a year, or the equivalent of 25 full-time employees, she said.

Headline: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's funding shortage is showing
Date: 7/23/2008 3:57:00 PM
Media Contact: Dayton, Kevin
Media Outlet: Honolulu Advertiser - Hilo Bureau
Attachment Link: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080723/NEWS0101/807230391/1001/LOCALNEWSFRONT>

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Advertisement

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For all of the criticism of the park budget, the report credits Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park with working aggressively with volunteers, landowners around the park and others on its four showcase programs to protect endangered species, including efforts to increase the populations of the hawksbill turtle, the Hawaiian petrel, the nene goose and the Mauna Loa silversword plant.

And Orlando said the park received its first increase in base funding in many years under the federal Centennial Initiative to restore park funding as the system approaches its 100th anniversary in 2016, and said the national park system received the largest operating budget increase in its history.

For Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, that translated into money for about 22 new seasonal positions and a full-time volunteer coordinator position to help increase the role of volunteer labor at the park, which already provides 40,000 hours of free labor a year, or the equivalent of 25 full-time employees, she said.

Reach Kevin Dayton at kdayton@honoluluadvertiser.com.

Headline: TO CULTURAL RESOURCES, THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION RANKS

Date: 7/23/2008 9:03:08 PM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: K5 News at Nine PM - KFVE-TV

CROSSTOWN COURIERS, A DELIVERY SERVICE THAT USES SOLELY BIKES HAS SEEN BUSINESS UP ABOUT 50-PERCENT. CARRYING EVERYTHING FROM LEGAL DOCUMENTS, ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS TO EVEN SOME ODD REQUESTS, THE STAFF OF SIX MAKE UP TO 70-DELIVERIES A DAY. "The concept's been around forever, everybody thought it would die with fax machines, it didn't. With the gas thing now it seems like it's bringing it back. " COURIERS SAY WITHOUT HAVING TO WORRY ABOUT TRAFFIC THEY CAN USUALLY MAKE A DELIVERY WITHIN 15-TO-20 MINUTES DEPENDING ON LOCATION. THEIR SERVICE AREA IS ANYWHERE FROM KAHALA TO THE AIRPORT. THEY SAY THE ONLY DRAWBACK TO THE SERVICE IS THE OCCASIONAL TRAFFIC VIOLATION TICKET. FROM SPEEDING TO JAY-WALKING, ONE COURIER TOLD ME HE'S PAID UP TO A 220-DOLLAR FINE OUT OF POCKET. REPORTING LIVE FROM DOWNTOWN HONOLULU ZAHID ARAB K-5 NEWS. A 56 YEAR OLD OAHU MAN IS IN JAIL TONIGHT, ACCUSED OF REPEATEDLY RAPING A YOUNG GIRL OVER A SPAN OF EIGHT YEARS. TODAY, A GRAND JURY HEARD TESTIMONY ABOUT MANUEL TABO-ADA. HE'S CHARGED WITH EIGHT COUNTS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, ALLEDGEDLY BEGINNING IN MARCH 19-99 WHEN THE VICTIM WAS 12 YEARS OLD. PROSECUTORS SAY, THE SUSPECT WAS A MINISTER IN A COMPOUND WHERE SEVERAL FAMILIES LIVED TOGETHER, INCLUDING THE YOUNG VICTIM'S FAMILY. "Since the victim was 12 years old, he committed a number of sexual offenses against her, in the house and in the ministry's van. Until she was 20 years old. He told her if she told anyone, the children would be taken away. " PROSECUTORS SAY, THERE HAVE BEEN SIMILAR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST TABO-ADA IN A MINISTRY IN OREGON, AND NOW AN INVESTIGATION IS UNDERWAY THERE. TABO-ADA IS CURRENTLY IN CUSTODY. HIS BAIL IS SET AT TWO MILLION DOLLARS. HELP IS ON THE WAY FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED BIG ISLAND HOSPITAL WORKERS WHO WERE LAID OFF LAST WEEK. AT GOVERNOR LINDA LINGLE'S REQUEST, THE STATE IS ACTIVATING ITS RAPID RESPONSE TEAM TO AID FORMER EMPLOYEES. FROM SKILLS ASSESMENT AND COUNSELING, TO A NUMBER OF TRAININGS, WORKERS WILL GET THE HELP THEY NEED TO FIND NEW JOBS. THE KONA AND NORTH HAWAII COMMUNITY HOSPITAL CUTS ARE THE RESULT OF A 100 MILLION DOLLAR DEFICIT THAT THE HAWAII HEALTH SYSTEMS CORPORATION WILL FACE BY THE END OF NEXT FISCAL YEAR. THE JOB HELP SESSIONS TAKE PLACE TOMORROW. A LOCAL GROUP IS GIVING A HELPING HAND TO HOSPITALS IN THE PHILLIPPINES THAT ARE LACKING BASIC MEDICAL NECESSITIES. ON HIS LAST TRIP WITH THE ALOHA MEDICAL MISSION, ERWIN GABRILLO SAW MANY HOSPITALS THERE LACKED EQUIPMENT. HE ALSO MET WITH PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T AFFORD TO GET TREATMENT. MEMBERS GATHERED TODAY IN WAIPAHU TO MOVE THINGS LIKE X-RAY MACHINES, HOSPITAL BEDS, WHEELCHAIRS AND MAMMOGRAM MACHINES INTO A CONTAINER. THEY PLAN TO SHIP IT SOON. "You can see it's really important to them and you can see the appreciation every time that the harder we put we feel that it's worth it. " GABRILLO ALSO SAYS, HOSPITALS HERE IN HAWAII AND ON THE WEST COAST CHIPPED IN TO DONATE MOST OF THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES. OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY AND THROUGHOUT THE STATE HAVE ALSO DONATED MONEY. THE SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS OF A B-52 AIRPLANE THAT CRASHED NEAR GUAM HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. THE US AIR FORCE B-52 CRASHED MONDAY WITH SIX CREW MEMBERS ON BOARD. THE COAST GUARD SEARCHED MORE THAN 7 THOUSAND SQUARE MILES FOR SURVIVORS. ONLY TWO BODIES WERE RECOVERED. THE COAST GUARD SAYS IT WILL CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR DEBRIS LEFT FROM THE DOWNED PLANE. A NATIONAL PARKS SURVEY RATES HAWAII'S VOLCANOES, AND IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD. WHEN IT COMES TO CULTURAL RESOURCES, THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION RANKS HAWAII VOLCANOES AS FAIR, BUT FLUNKS ON ENVIRONMENT. THE STUDY RATED VOLCANOES LIKE KILAUEA ON PARK PROGRAMS, INVASIVE SPECIES, AND RESTORATION. "The point is to get an

overall condition of the resources in the park and then to have a new tool to track the changes. " THE SURVEY SAYS A HIGH NUMBER OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES THREATEN THE VOLCANO'S ENVIRONMENT. THE NAVY TESTS A NEW WAY TO KEEP THEIR DIVERS SAFE WHEN SEARCHING FOR UNDERWATER EXPLOSIVES. IT'S AN EFFORT TO REMOVE THE MAN FROM THE MINEFIELD, THE UNMANNED UNDERWATER VEHICLE SEARCHES FOR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES ON THE SEA FLOOR. IT COSTS A HALF MILLION DOLLARS, BUT THE NAVY SAYS A DIVER'S LIFE IS PRICELESS. "Systems like this were used during the initial phase of OIF to get into the harbor. So systems have been out there for some time they've been slowly moving towards more difficult areas like Honolulu harbor. " THE EXERCISE WILL GENERATE VALUABLE INFORMATION TO PROTECT THE COUNTRIES' PORTS FROM MINE WARFARE. A DISTURBING DISCOVERY OUT ON THE GARDEN ISLE AS THOUSANDS OF CRABS ARE FOUND DEAD. WE'LL HAVE THAT STORY WHEN K5 NEWS AT NINE RETURNS. AND KHNL AND K5 PROVIDE MORE NEWS AT CONVENIENT TIMES THAN ANY OTHER HAWAII TELEVISION STATIONS. LIVE, LOCAL, LATE BREAKING NEWS AT FIVE AND 11AM, AND IN THE EVENING AT 5,6 AND 10. AND K-5 NEWS NOW AT 6:30 AND NINE. AND NOW HERE'S TONIGHT'S THINK ABOUT IT WITH OUR GENERAL MANAGER JOHN FINK. Five states have already banned the use of handheld cell phones while driving, and four states have banned text messaging while driving.

Headline: NEW STUDY BY THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION SAYS,
Date: 7/23/2008 10:04:57 PM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: KGMB9 News at 10 PM - KGMB-TV

THE SCREENER INFORMED A DEPUTY, WHO THEN ARRESTED KANEKOA. HE WAS CHARGED THEN RELEASED AFTER POSTING 2-THOUSAND DOLLARS BAIL. DOLLY HAS BEEN DOWNGRADED FROM CATEGORY 2 HURRICANE TO TROPICAL STORM, BUT IT'S NOT DONE YET. THE STORM HAS ALREADY DUMPED OVER A FOOT OF RAIN AND THERE'S MORE SEVERE WEATHER AHEAD. GUY HAGI JOINS US WITH THE LATEST. NOW THAT DOLLY IS OVER LAND, IT'S WINDS ARE WEAKENING, BUT THE RAIN IS STILL COMING DOWN IN BUCKETS, THE STORM IS MOVING VERY SLOWLY, AND THAT'S BAD NEWS BECAUSE IT INCREASES THE FLOODING POTENTIAL THE RAIN IS JUST PILING UP, PLUS THERE'S THE THREAT OF TORNADOES AROUND THE STORM, CURRENTLY THE WINDS ARE STILL RUNNING NEARLY 70 MPH AND THAT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TO CAUSE DAMAGE, CBS'S DAVE PRICE IS IN TEXAS AND HE HAS MORE. Locator: South Padre Island, Texas Dolly barreled through South Texas packing up to 100 mile per hour winds and heavy rain. The season's second Atlantic hurricane knocked down power lines and sent a river rushing through the heart of South Padre Island. Even fences were no match for these whipping winds. 16-: 25 IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH A FEW DEGREES AND A FEW MILES PER HOUR MAKES. THIS HAS BEEN MUCH STRONGER THAN WE THOUGHT COMING IN. 38-: 51 DOLLY LET UP RAPIDLY AFTER IT CAME ONSHORE AS YOU CAN SEE RIGHT HERE. DOLLY STAYED LONG ENOUGH TO LEAVE A CLEAR MARK. The raging storm gutted the Bahia Mar I AM VERY DISTRAUGHT RIGHT NOW. THANKFUL TO GOD THAT MY STAFF HELPED ME THROUGH THIS, THIS IS VERY SAD. Thousands are without power and many are taking advantage of shelters. Despite the storm's intensity, the levees holding back the Rio Grande are still intact. Before Dolly hit land the governor had declared 14 counties disaster areas to prepare for the worst case scenario. AS THE SYSTEM PUSHES THROUGH OUR GOAL IS TO HELP PEOPLE PICK UP THE PIECES, CLEAN UP THE MESS. And if these waters are any indication, it will take many weeks to wipe up Dolly's mess. Dave Price, CBS News south padre island, tx. HAWAII VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK IS IN DANGER, IT'S NOT AN ALERT ABOUT LAVA, ITS ABOUT INVASIVE SPECIES. A NEW STUDY BY THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION SAYS, THE PARK HAS AMONG THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF THREATENED PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN THE PARK SYSTEM. HAWAII VOLCANOES PARK IS HOME TO 54 ON THE ENDANGERED LIST. THE REPORT IS RECOMMENDING MORE MONEY BE ALLOCATED TO THE PARK TO INCREASE STAFFING AND WORK TO PROTECT THE HABITAT. "nats stinger" THE FIRST COUNCIL VOTE OVER WHETHER TO PUT RAIL ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT WAS UNANIMOUS ALL 9 MEMBERS APPROVED IT. COUNCILMAN CHARLES DJOU INTRODUCED THE RESOLUTION LAST WEEK AFTER THE GROUP STOP RAIL NOW WAS TOLD ITS PETITION MISSED THE DEADLINE. BUT COUNCILMEMBERS SAY DON'T READ TOO MUCH INTO TODAY'S VOTE. THEY SAY BILLS ALMOST ALWAYS PASS THE FIRST READING. MEMBERS WE SPOKE TO SAY THEY MAY NOT BE IN FAVOR OF PUTTING THE QUESTION TO VOTERS BUT THEY ARE OPEN TO DISCUSSION. "I want to see the debate discussion continue whether or not if I vote on this is still determine on the discussion goes on this. " "No matter if you're for or against rail, I think the public should vote whether we should move forward on this, HERE'S WHAT'S NEXT, THE FULL COUNCIL HAS TO APPROVE IT TWO MORE TIMES BEFORE SEPTEMBER 5TH. SIX OUT OF THE NINE WILL HAVE TO GIVE IT FINAL APPROVAL. BUT BECAUSE THIS IS A CHANGE TO THE CITY'S CHARTER THE MAYOR CAN VETO IT AND IF HE DOES THE COUNCIL CANNOT OVER RIDE THAT VETO. AROUND THE WORLD TONIGHT, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE BARACK OBAMA HAS ENDED HIS TRIP THROUGH THE MIDDLE EAST WITH A PREDAWN VISIT TO JERUSALEM'S WESTERN WALL. EARLIER IN THE DAY, THE SENATOR MET WITH A SENIOR ISRAELI STATESMEN, AND ALSO WENT TO THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL . OBAMA SPENT AN HOUR WITH THE PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT SOMETHING JOHN MCCAIN DID NOT DO ON HIS TRIP THERE. BUT THE FOCUS OF THE DAY WAS TRYING TO

REASSURE JEWISH VOTERS WHO MAY BE SUSPICIOUS OF HIM, "I'm here on this trip to reaffirm the special relationship between israel and the united states. " MEANWHILE OBAMA'S CAMPAIGN IS SPENDING BIG BUCKS ON TV ADS. THE SENTATOR IS REPORTEDLY SPENDING 5-MILLION DOLLARS ON ADVERTISING TIME DURING THE OLYMPIC GAMES, THE PRE-SEASON POLL IS OUT. WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW OUR WARRIORS RANK RIGHT NOW IN THE WAC LATER IN SPORTS. PLUS, CONTROVERSY ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL. THE PUSH, TO HAVE TWO HIGH PROFILE CANDIDATES, TAKEN OFF THE BALLOT. AND, HELP COULD BE ON THE WAY FOR HALF A MILLION FAMILIES IN DANGER OF LOSING THEIR HOMES. HOW THE RESCUE BILL WOULD EFFECT HAWAII, COMING UP.

Headline: APPEALS COURT REJECTS AIR ACT CHALLENGE AGAINST PERMIT APPLICATION
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Clean Air Report

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit has upheld a district court ruling rejecting the ability of citizens to file lawsuits claiming that industry permit applications violate the Clean Air Act.

In a first-of-its-kind ruling July 21 in CleanCOALition, et al. v. TXU Power, the 5th Circuit found the law does not authorize citizen suits to redress alleged pre-permit, preconstruction, pre-operation violations. The district court found a facility in this stage has yet to emit anything and cannot be deemed "to have violated . . . or be in violation of an emission standard or limitation." The ruling is available on InsideEPA.com.

The 5th Circuit called the case "one of first impression" involving the scope of citizen suit jurisdiction under the Clean Air Act, an acknowledgment of the precedential nature of the ruling.

However, it is unclear how often permit applications -- rather than final permits -- are challenged. And some state officials and industry sources say that the environmentalists who brought the suit erred in bringing action against the power company seeking the permit, rather than waiting for a permit decision by the state.

In this case, first filed in Texas federal district court in December 2006, environmentalists claimed that TXU's prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) permit application failed to qualify as best available control technology (BACT) and should be rejected, among other claims. PSD applies to major emission sources in areas that already meet EPA air quality standards, and requires the installation of BACT to reduce pollution. The groups alleged that TXU's application violated pre-construction emissions standards and air act limits.

But the 5th Circuit in its 17-page ruling found that the Clean Air Act's citizen suit jurisdiction does not extend to allegedly incomplete permit applications, and is instead limited to challenges of final permits and alleged violations of permit requirements. A three-judge panel on the court agreed with the lower court's decision that TXU's permit application -- whether incomplete or not -- does not constitute an air act violation.

The 5th Circuit held, "Presumably, an entity can file as many incomplete permit applications as it so chooses, but that does not mean in doing so, it is violating a preconstruction requirement or an emission standard or limitation." The ruling also notes that the 11th Circuit in the 2007 case National Parks & Conservation Association v. Tennessee Valley Authority has held that violations of the preconstruction permitting requirements occur at the time of construction.

One environmentalist criticizes the ruling, saying the 5th Circuit was in error because the plant has subsequently received a permit and is now under construction. "This decision is poorly reasoned and ignores the facts and law," the source says. "The court claims that it can't rule because the plant wasn't permitted or under construction at the time the suit was filed, yet acknowledges that the plant has since been permitted and is being built."

The environmental groups that pursued this case have a separate lawsuit in state court challenging the final permit, which Texas issued in June 2007.

The activist says that that Clean Air Act section 7604(a)(1) explicitly grants citizens the right to file suits against sources "to enforce compliance only with respect to . . . any proposal to construct or the

construction of any new or modified emitting facility without a permit under the [PSD] or the nonattainment provisions."

"It couldn't be clearer that Congress intended to allow this remedy to be used to stop damage before it occurred," the environmentalist argues.

However, the 5th Circuit in its ruling appears to address the fact that the permit has subsequently been issued and is under litigation in state courts, saying another reason to deny the appeal is because "the permit process is still pending and subject to state judicial review."

And a state official questions the activists' litigation strategy, saying, "Why would these people sue the source rather than the agency writing the permit?" The source adds that a more effective, and legally sound, strategy is for power plant opponents to file suit against a state or EPA once it issues a permit.

An industry source echoes this idea, saying a suit over a permit application is "a stretch." The source hopes the ruling will deter activists "who see citizen suits as a panacea for everything." -- Anthony Lacey

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Headline: Report Invasive species hurt Volcanoes park

Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: Associated Press (AP) - Honolulu Bureau

HAWAII VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, Hawaii_A new study says invasive plant and animal species are threatening to overwhelm native flora and fauna at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

The National Parks Conservation Association study says the park's natural resources are in poor shape as a result.

The report says the park needs more money to build fences and control weeds to protect habitat critical for native bird and plant populations.

Installing fencing to keep out pigs, goats and other hoofed animals has helped species recover in some parts of the park.

The report says such steps need to be expanded to other park lands.

The National Parks Conservation Association is an organization dedicated to advocating for national parks.

Information from: The Honolulu Advertiser, <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com>

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Headline: Park Service skewed data on oyster farm
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Zito, Kelly
Media Outlet: San Francisco Chronicle
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521867278&z=950239508>

National Park Service officials overstated scientific data and deleted a key e-mail in a bitter dispute over an oyster farm's ecological impact on Drakes Bay in Marin County, according to a federal investigation.

However, the report issued Wednesday by the U.S. Department of the Interior's inspector general found no evidence Park Service officials aimed to shut the Drakes Bay Oyster Co. before 2012 - when the company's permission to operate within Point Reyes National Seashore expires.

The Park Service claimed in a 2007 report that Drakes Bay Oyster Co. operations reduced the number of harbor seals and damaged eelgrass beds, which support a wide variety of marine and bird life.

Kevin Lunny, who owns the oyster company with his family, contacted federal authorities in April 2007 and contended park officials used intimidation and misinformation in a campaign to convert his farm to a wilderness area.

The yearlong inspector general's investigation found no indication that park officials had 'treated the Lunny family with any disparity regarding either of their businesses in the park,' said the report. The report, however, alleged several missteps by Point Reyes National Seashore senior science adviser Sarah Allen, saying that Allen exaggerated the impact of oyster feces on sedimentation in Drakes Bay. Allen also failed to produce an important e-mail to U.S. Geological Survey scientist who questioned her findings. Investigators found the deleted e-mail on a Park Service computer.

Lunny said the report proved the Park Service knew some of its data were inaccurate. 'The Park Service has made things very difficult for us, and they've made a lot of accusations,' Lunny said. 'It's caused us to hire consultants and lawyers. I don't know if we're going to be able to recover from it.' He said he hoped to avoid a lawsuit, but said the clash has cost him about one-third of his business over the past year. In a typical year, he said, he harvests about 300,000 pounds of shucked oysters and 1 million Manila clams.

The issue reverberates not just through pastoral West Marin but also through national discussions about business operations in parks. Some environmentalists argue that Lunny is trying to turn people against the Park Service in an effort to continue harvesting oysters past the 2012 deadline. That, they say, could set a dangerous precedent for for-profit uses within protected areas. 'Never has wilderness been removed from a national park for the purposes of allowing for a commercial business,' said Neal Desai, senior program manager for the Pacific region of the National Parks Conservation Association.

The wrangling dates to 2004, when Lunny bought the oyster company on Drakes Bay, an estuary home to thousands of birds and one of the most important seal breeding grounds on the West Coast. The oyster company is allowed to operate in the Point Reyes National Seashore under a 40-year agreement reached in 1972 when the National Park Service purchased the property containing what was then Johnson's Oyster Co.

Though Lunny spent \$300,000 cleaning up and improving the oyster operation, he said it was not enough to please park officials.

After USGS scientist Roberto Anima questioned some of the findings of the 2007 Park Service report that accused the oyster company of harming the environment, the Park Service removed the report from the Web and put an 'acknowledgement of errors' in its place. But Lunny was so incensed about what he saw

as a crusade to discredit his business that he appealed last year to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., the Marin County Board of Supervisors and the Department of the Interior, which oversees Point Reyes National Seashore.

Wednesday's report quoted Marin County Supervisor Steve Kinsey as saying Point Reyes National Seashore Superintendent Donald Neubacher was upset and seemed obsessed with proving the oyster company was harming seals and eelgrass in the bay.

Allen, Neubacher and officials with the National Park Service's Oakland office did not return calls seeking comment.

The report was forwarded Wednesday to Mary Bomar, director of the National Park Service, and recommends she determine any repercussions for Allen and Neubacher.

Some observers defended Allen and the Park Service. They pointed to the inspector general's finding that Lunny operated within the park without permits for several years. And they also note the report did not delve into the scientific work by an agency charged with protecting an important natural resource. 'As a biologist, I think there is a negative impact,' said Todd Steiner, executive director of the Salmon Protection and Watershed Network. 'Maybe that impact was overstated, but the Park Service didn't set out on a (public relations) campaign. This was thrust on them and created by a gentleman who wants to profit by exploiting resources within a national park.' Lunny acknowledged that he had declined to sign a document agreeing to leave the park land in 2012. But he said his farm benefits the environment and culture of West Marin. 'We're hoping if people understand the truth of the science and what the impacts are,' Lunny said, 'we can discuss openly and productively any chances to have the community keep this oyster farm, because it's an important resource, some people think.'

Headline: Letter: Stop UDB projects
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: KETTERING, Kahlil
Media Outlet: Miami Herald - Online
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1521918611&z=950239508>

Stop UDB projects

Re the July 19 story Not so fast on westward sprawl, state tells Dade: The Florida Department of Community Affairs' decision to reject two development projects outside the Urban Development Boundary is a sound one. Halting these outsized development proposals supports the county's wise growth-management and land-use policies. It ensures that our environment, economy and agriculture industry will be protected.

If the Miami-Dade County Commission does not rescind these amendments, DCA's objections will lead to a lawsuit against the county. As we continue to face growing budget cuts and an economic downturn, it would be fiscally irresponsible to spend money to defend private projects that will degrade the environment and cost taxpayers millions of dollars in infrastructure and legal costs.

There is no need to expand the UDB at this time. The County Commission should enact a resolution to rescind the amendments from the comprehensive development master plan and, instead, encourage urban infill within the UDB. Preventing this ill-advised development from moving forward will benefit national parks, the economy and residents.

KAHLIL KETTERING, analyst, Biscayne Restoration Program, National Parks Conservation Association, Hollywood

Headline: Zoning appeal contests Valley Forge development plans
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Gammage, Jeff
Media Outlet: Philadelphia Inquirer
Attachment Link: http://www.philly.com/inquirer/entertainment/20080724_Zoning_appeal_contests_Valley_Forge_development_plans.html

More than a million visitors come each year to explore its rich Revolutionary War history, but the fact is that there's never been a battle fought at Valley Forge.

Until now.

Tonight, a conservation group and several local property owners plunge into what could be a long and contentious attempt to stop a nonprofit organization from building a museum and conference center on private land inside the national park.

"Our ultimate goal is to protect Valley Forge," said Cinda Waldbuesser, state program manager for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), a Washington advocacy group.

The NPCA and five local petitioners have filed a zoning appeal with officials in Lower Providence Township, Montgomery County. The township has given the American Revolution Center at Valley Forge preliminary approval to proceed with plans for a big and highly controversial development.

The appeal contends that the project would trample the National Park Service's congressional mandate to manage and protect its lands. It also maintains that the ordinance governing the development constitutes "spot zoning," illegal in Pennsylvania.

At stake is the future of Valley Forge, in a profound and important debate dressed up as a zoning hearing.

The hearing is scheduled for 7 tonight at the Arcola Intermediate School in Eagleville. Thomas Daly, president and chief executive officer of the American Revolution Center (ARC), said he had no comment on tonight's meeting.

When first proposed nearly a decade ago, the museum was to be built near the park's welcome center as part of a public-private partnership. Everyone liked that idea. But the marriage between the National Park Service and the American Revolution Center fell apart last year amid disputes over fund-raising, management and control. Now ARC is moving ahead on its own.

ARC owns 78 acres on the north side of the Schuylkill, a pocket of property virtually surrounded by the national park. The group plans to build a three-story museum, a four-story conference center with up to 99 rooms of lodging, and a structure containing bathrooms.

Funding for the \$150 million project has been pledged from state, county and private sources.

Historians say the commissary for the Continental Army's 1777-78 winter encampment was located to the north - though some experts dispute that - and that the area served as staging grounds for the army's departure.

ARC describes its project as a proud and worthwhile addition to Valley Forge: The first museum and education center dedicated to interpreting and promoting the story of the American Revolution, a natural

in the Philadelphia region and a necessity in a nation that's largely illiterate about the war.

The museum and learning center, ARC officials say, will generate 855 jobs and \$50 million in "economic impact." Most important, it will offer the full and compelling story of the Revolution and its legacy.

But ARC's opponents are numerous. What don't they like about the plan? Practically everything. They see the project as a fount of noise and pollution, the potential cause of untold ruination - from wrecking the park's bucolic settings to skewing the hydrology of nearby wetlands.

The Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, a 640-member association of former rangers and superintendents, condemns the project as a Disney-style desecration of a national treasure.

"The whole ARC development is not a good idea for the park or its visitors," coalition chairman Bill Wade said in an interview. "The scope of the development suggests their motives are more than trying to run a high-quality museum."

In popular memory, Valley Forge looms as the darkest period of the Revolution, the site where George Washington's starving soldiers dropped one by one during a bitter winter. Dressed in rags, the poorly supplied troops huddled in crowded quarters where dysentery and pneumonia were rife.

In recent years, the Park Service has developed a more nuanced interpretation, painting the prevailing story as romanticized. It was disease, not cold or starvation, that claimed lives at Valley Forge. The soldiers' hardship could more accurately be described as "suffering as usual," the Park Service says.

Armies typically withdrew from battle during winter, the weather limiting their ability to mount military operations. Washington settled his troops at Valley Forge, 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia, where his men built 2,000 huts, miles of trenches, earthen forts, and a bridge across the Schuylkill.

"The sound that would have reached your ears on approaching the camp," the Park Service writes on its Web site, "was not that of a forlorn howling wind, but rather that of hammers, axes, saws and shovels at work."

That's a sound many park supporters hope they won't hear soon, at least not from the north side of the landscape.

"There are plenty of hotels in the area. We don't need another hotel. There are plenty of conference centers in the area. We don't need another conference center," said Don Naimoli, president of the 550-member Friends of Valley Forge.

He and others see an alternative: Return to the original plan of building a museum near the Visitor Center, where the land is not as historic and the infrastructure is already present.

"It will end up in the courts most likely," Naimoli said. "And it's a shame. This whole thing could be resolved."

Contact staff writer Jeff Gammage at 610-313-8110 or origammage@phillynews.com.

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Headline: Showdown over packing heat in national parks
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Stuckey, Mike
Media Outlet: MSNBC.com
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1522533590&z=950239508>

In 40 years as a ranger, manager and superintendent of national parks from Alaska to North Carolina, Doug Morris says he never responded to a crime that would have been prevented had a visitor been carrying a concealed weapon. Nor did he hear complaints from gun owners about the rule requiring them to unload and lock away firearms while in national parks.

But Morris, who retired three years ago, says he did see cases where visitors shot wildlife or fired wildly into the night in crowded campgrounds. That's why Morris and a majority of his fellow members of the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees adamantly oppose a National Rifle Association-led effort to lift the decades-old ban on concealed weapons in the parks. Nothing is broken about the existing rule, he said.

But David Yates, a gun-rights activist from Alexandria, Va., says he believes the current rule tramples the Second Amendment rights of all law-abiding Americans to bear arms. Yates, who usually carries a handgun for self-defense where legally allowed, has given up visiting national parks as a point of honor and principle.

I won't go there because they make a political issue out of preventing somebody from defending themselves, Yates said.

NPS manages nearly 400 sites

Morris and Yates are on opposing sides in the latest showdown over U.S. gun rights, which would ease the ban on loaded weapons within some of the 58 national parks and 333 other sites managed by the U.S. National Park Service. The dispute involves a proposed rule change that would allow visitors with concealed weapons permits to carry their firearms in national parks, as long as doing so also would be legal under state law. Rifles and shotguns and open carry of loaded handguns would remain illegal in the parks.

The NRA's long campaign to ease the ban appeared to be close to succeeding a month ago, but lost momentum when the Interior Department extended the period for public comments on the plan until Aug. 8.

The NRA sees the extension as yielding to bullying by anti-gun members of Congress who are trying to run out the clock ... possibly until after the election, into a new administration.

Interior spokesman Chris Paolino said the department wanted to be fair to parties who wanted to comment in light of a Supreme Court ruling in June. That decision affirmed the Second Amendment right of individuals to possess firearms along with the government's right to regulate them.

Paolino could not say when a final decision would be made.

25-year-old rules

Under rules last updated 25 years ago, visitors to the parks must keep all firearms unloaded and inaccessible, generally locked in a trunk or elsewhere in a vehicle.

When those rules were written, just a handful of states allowed citizens to carry concealed weapons. Since then, with help from campaigns by the NRA and other groups, all but two states now allow citizens to obtain permits to carry loaded, concealed handguns. In many of those, known as shall issue states, any citizen who is entitled to own a handgun may obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

Given changing state laws, the NRA for years has said rules for national parks should change so that gun laws are consistent on parklands within each state. But a bigger issue, an NRA spokesman told msnbc.com, is the right that all law-abiding Americans have to self-defense.

Just because youre in a national park or on federal land doesnt mean youre immune to crime, said Andrew Arulanandam, the associations director of public affairs.

Opponents counter that the crime rate in national parks is very low. Theyre extremely safe places, said Bryan Faehner of the National Parks Conservation Association, which opposes the rule change. You have a higher likelihood of being hit by lightning.

In recent years, statistics from NPS nearly 400 sites, which receive about 275 million visits a year, show a rate of less than one violent crime per 100,000 visits. According to the FBI, in 2006 the average rate of violent crimes in cities across the United States was 474 per 100,000 people.

The low rate does not sway the NRA. The fact that you can throw a statistic out there is not going to provide any consolation to the family of someone who lost their life in a park, Arulanandam said, adding that violent crime rates have decreased (as) the number of states that have right-to-carry laws has increased.

Foes of allowing guns in parks point out that the move is opposed by current NPS Director Mary Bomar, seven former directors and the Association of National Park Rangers, among others.

The No. 1 best argument is that the resource managers are against it, said Peter Hamm, spokesman for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

'Resistance to change'

But Yates, a member of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, said he believes the park services opposition is a matter of institutional resistance to change.

They simply have a culture that is averse to the concept of self-defense, he said.

He and the NRAs Arulanandam said that rangers shouldnt base their fears on past experiences with guns in parks, since those incidents involved people who were breaking the law to begin with.

Not necessarily, said former Ranger Morris, who served as superintendent of Shenandoah, Sequoia-Kings Canyon and Saguaro national parks during his career. He recounted cases in California where campers, legally transporting guns in vehicles, were frightened by black bears.

They somehow found their gun, got it loaded and shot the bear, he said. In one case, they hit the bear and they did not kill it. The bear just danced around the campground kind of angry until a ranger came and had to kill it.

Black bears and many other animals in parks hardly ever pose serious threats to humans, Morris said, but people who visit these parks are really out of their comfort zone and they perceive threats that just dont exist.

Rangers also worry that allowing concealed guns in campgrounds could lead to more human vs. human conflict.

A potential for irony?

Hamm of the Brady Campaign, who once worked at Interior himself, stressed that many sites administered by the NPS are urban and the rule change could have interesting consequences by overriding state laws that work in concert with state right-to-carry permits.

Under Georgia state law, for example, You cant bring a gun into the Georgia state Capitol but under this loosening of the laws, I dont see how you could argue that you wouldnt be allowed to carry a concealed weapon into the Martin Luther King historic site, he said. Theres some irony there.

Both sides use consistency to make their case, with the NRA saying that one set of rules for all national parks would be easy to follow. But opponents argue that rules still would vary depending on the state the park is in; also, they say, some national parks extend across state borders, creating potential conflicts.

'Open carry' backers would go further

For that reason, some gun-rights activists would like to go even farther than the current proposal. Members of the open carry movement believe it should be changed to allow citizens to carry unconcealed guns in parks, a right they say is constitutionally protected. Calling the current proposal a cruel hoax, Mike Stollenwerk, a co-founder of OpenCarry.org, said, You almost have to be a freaking international attorney to figure it out.

The park service has successfully defended its policies on weapons in parks for years against NRA efforts to change them, shutting the door firmly with a November letter from Director Bomar to a member of Congress: The existing regulations provide necessary and consistent parameters throughout the National Park System.

So the NRA went to the top, appealing to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, a conservative Republican and former governor of Idaho.

In Idaho, where per-capita gun ownership is high and the NRAs backing is crucial to a politician, Kempthorne had been a solid member of the pro-gun camp before joining President Bushs Cabinet 18 months earlier.

As a U.S. senator, after receiving nearly \$10,000 in campaign funds from the NRA, he voted against the 1993 Brady Bill, which requires a waiting period and background checks for handgun buyers. He also brought Michael Bogert, a onetime assistant general counsel at the NRA, to Interior to act as his counsel.

The NRA enlisted Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, Kempthornes successor as Idahos junior senator, to write a letter to the secretary seeking a revision of the gun regulation. The Dec. 14, 2007, letter was signed by 51 senators to whom the NRA has collectively given at least \$618,033 in congressional campaign funds in the last 10 years, according to federal election records placed online by the Center for Public Integrity. Those who signed the letter included such pro-gun stalwarts as Republican Sen. Larry Craig, Idahos senior senator and a member of the NRAs board for more than two decades, and Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, a former NRA board member.

In the hot seat

When Kempthorne didnt respond, House Republicans put him on the hot seat at a Feb. 14 hearing before the Natural Resources Committee, speaking about Second Amendment rights and asking him about the status of congressional inquiries about the bizarre national park gun rule. Kempthorne promised he would reply very soon.

Eight days later, Kempthorne wrote to Crapo that the Interior Department would propose changes to national park gun policy as sought by the NRA and members of Congress. The proposal, published April 30 in the Federal Register, said the rules would be changed to allow individuals to carry concealed

weapons in park units and refuges to the extent that they could lawfully do so on analogous state-administered lands.

Thousands of comments poured in. Interior spokesman Paolino declined to say whether the majority favored or opposed the rule change.

With the quick turn-around between Kempthornes February appearance before the House committee and issuance of the proposed new rule, the NRA had been expecting final approval by the end of the year and was dismayed when the comment period was extended.

In a statement on its Web site, the NRA said the anti-gun Democratic chairmen of congressional panels with oversight of the parks, Sen. Daniel Akaka of Hawaii and Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, pressured for the extension in a blatant and intentional stalling tactic. Spokesmen for Akaka and Grijalva both denied that was the intent of the extension of the comment period.

But Hamm, the spokesman for the Brady Campaign, said the extension does improve the chances of opponents to keep the weapons ban intact. The closer you get to a presidential election on an issue like this, the less likely the system is going to want to make a change, he said.

'Very mainstream'

NRA spokesman Arulanandam, a former executive director of the Idaho Republican Party who once worked for Kempthorne, called the comment extension and threats by other lawmakers to block the rule change by other means disappointing. He also said the NRA, with 4 million members, is very mainstream although there are a lot of people who try to portray us as otherwise.

Likewise, Faehner, the spokesman for the parks conservation association and himself a former park service employee, said some in the pro-gun lobby depict his side unfairly.

Our staff and our members, many of them are gun owners and hunters, he said of the groups 340,000 members. We support the Second Amendment and we dont oppose guns in any way. I was shooting shotguns when I was 10 years old. But theres a time and place for everything.

While Arulanandam would not estimate the NRAs immediate chances of victory on the issue, he said that a defeat this time would not be the end of the organizations effort. If you look at our track record, we get what we want, even if it takes a few years, he said. We dont go away.

Comments on the proposed rule change may be sent by mail to: Public Comments Processing, Attn. 1024-AD70, Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, Va., 22203. They may be submitted online by following instructions at www.regulations.gov.

Headline: White House reverses experts on Yellowstone policy
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: JIM DRINKARD
Media Outlet: Washington Post - Online
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1522900690&z=950239508>

WASHINGTON -- The National Park Service wanted to close a section of Yellowstone Park in the wintertime because of the risk of avalanche. No way, protested businesses in Cody, Wyo., that wanted to promote more tourism.

The spat did not stay local for long. It ended up in Washington, where the Bush White House intervened late last year and sided with the businesses, according to officials familiar with the fight.

A final decision, announced Monday by Park Service regional director Mike Snyder, will keep the park's eastern entrance open to snow-going vehicles throughout the winter. The cost to taxpayers could run into the millions of dollars for a decision to accommodate a small number of tourists. 'This clearly falls into the basket of politics and the administration trumping science and what's best for the national park system,' says Tim Stevens, who manages Yellowstone issues for the National Parks Conservation Association, a private watchdog group. 'It clearly shows political manipulation.' The Park Service had studied the winter closure issue for a decade, beginning in the Clinton administration. The agency was poised last fall to issue a decision that would close that part of the park for three months of the year.

But in November, just as a crucial ruling was to come out, an official in the Park Service's Washington headquarters called Yellowstone and asked that key sections of the document be faxed for review by nine White House officials, including policy advisers to President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, said two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of reprisals. Cheney is a former Wyoming congressman.

The episode fits a pattern of complaints by government scientists and experts who contend the administration frequently has overruled their work and imposed politically driven policies that benefit powerful economic interests, on issues from global warming to endangered species. For example, the administration rejected scientific advice in loosening air quality standards for ground-level ozone and soot, and ignored advice to control greenhouse gas emissions.

White House spokesman Scott Stanzel said the consultation between the Park Service and the White House 'is standard practice.' He added, 'We don't comment on those internal deliberations. The Park Service rendered their decision after taking into account all pertinent factors.' The eastern entrance to Yellowstone is along a road that runs from Cody into the heart of the park through Sylvan Pass, a steep-sided hollow that in the winter is at severe risk for avalanches. For years a dispute has simmered between the Park Service and the business community over whether to keep the pass open to vehicles such as snowmobiles and snow coaches when the avalanche threat is highest, December through February.

For several decades, the route has been kept accessible with a practice commonly used for mountain highways and ski areas, but which is unique in the park system: using explosive charges dropped from helicopters or shells fired from a howitzer to dislodge threatening snow.

But there are problems with this solution, They include unexploded munitions left in the park and the threat to crews that have to cross numerous avalanche corridors just to get to the howitzer emplacement. Just last wee, officials at Glacier National Park in Montana rejected a similar proposal to use explosives to control avalanches that sometimes block railroad tracks, saying it would have an adverse impact on the environment.

To come up with a policy for Yellowstone, the Park Service set in motion an environmental impact study and a separate risk assessment, and both came to the same conclusion late last year: It would cost upward of \$3.5 million to safely keep the route open and it would not be cost effective. Just 463 visitors entered the park last winter along that route, which would work out to roughly \$8,000 per person. 'Talk about a bridge to nowhere,' said Stevens, referring to the infamous plan to build an expensive bridge in Alaska to a tiny island village.

The money would have gone to buy expensive snow transport vehicles, build a safety berm behind the howitzer to protect it from avalanches, and construct a concrete bunker and warming hut to protect park rangers on avalanche patrols.

Of seven policy options presented in the environmental study, the government's 'preferred alternative' was to keep the route closed whenever conditions are ripe for avalanches. A draft rule dated Sept. 13 said the Park Service had 'determined that there is no reasonable way to mitigate the danger to employees and park visitors.' Closing the pass in winter, it said, would mean only a 'minor' impact on the area's economy.

As soon as that intention became known, protests erupted from the Cody business community, which believes closing the pass will kill its efforts to develop winter tourism. A group calling itself 'Shut Out of Yellowstone' got more than 500 people to attend a public meeting on the subject, and got the ear not only of their own representatives in Congress but also of senior officials in Washington.

A new draft of the rule dated Nov. 10 still included language about closing the pass. But an unidentified official's handwritten marginal note asked, 'Sylvan Pass, should we adjust this language to open door to collaborate and adaptive mgt.?' _ the first indication that the decision might be changing.

When the Park Service published its policy on winter use of the park 10 days later, the idea of shutting down the pass in winter was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the agency created an additional step in the decision process: a task force largely of representatives of local business and political interests to further study what to do about Sylvan Pass. To conservationists, the move seemed clearly designed to reverse the recommendations of the experts and professional managers.

On June 4, after a series of private meetings, the task force announced its decision to keep up the use of explosives to keep the pass open in winter. That was the recommendation ratified Monday by Snyder, the Park Service regional director.

One member of the task force that recommended the policy reversal was Republican state Rep. Colin Simpson, son of former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson. Colin Simpson says the community applied 'whatever political pressure we could bring to bear,' and that led to the turnabout. 'There was knowledge at high levels of the issue,' Simpson said. Asked whether Cheney was involved, he said: 'I'm sure he was aware of it.' Stevens' conservation group has filed a federal lawsuit challenging the use of snowmobiles in the park, and as part of the case asked the government for its complete rule-making record on the Sylvan Pass issue. When the 40,000-page record was handed over, however, hundreds of documents were withheld. Government lawyers claim the documents, including the faxes from Yellowstone to the White House, are privileged and not subject to disclosure.

On the Net:

National Park Service decision: <http://tinyurl.com/62ykuf>

Headline: Invasive plants and animals threaten to overwhelm Hawaii Volcanoes National Park
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Associated Press
Media Outlet: KPUA-AM
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1522927100&z=950239508>

HAWAII VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, Hawaii (AP) _ A new study says invasive plant and animal species are threatening to overwhelm native flora and fauna at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island.

The National Parks Conservation Association study says the park's natural resources are in poor shape as a result.

The report says the park needs more money to build fences and control weeds to protect habitat critical for native bird and plant populations.

Installing fencing to keep out pigs, goats and other hoofed animals has helped species recover in some parts of the park.

The report says such steps need to be expanded to other park lands.

The National Parks Conservation Association is an organization dedicated to advocating for national parks.

Headline: FOLEY, MARK
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: News Journal - Online
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1522923968&z=950239508>

Mark was a Nuclear Engineer for Sargent and Lundy in Wilmington. He was involved with high school athletics and was a graduate of Penn State University. Mark was an avid hiker and historian and loved to ski.

He is survived by his mother, Myrtle Foley of Wilmington, his brother, William Foley of Westtown, NY and his sister, Kate Brewer of New Castle, DE.

Relatives and friends are invited to the visitation on Friday, July 25 at the DOHERTY FUNERAL , 3200 Limestone Rd., Pike Creek from 6-8 pm. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the National Parks Conservation Association, 1776 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036-1904.

To send condolences, visit: www.dohertyfh.com

302-999-8277

[published 07/24/2008] Advertisement Partners : : : Shop.com Copyright , The Journal. Use of this site signifies your agreement to the and (updated 10/3/2005).

Headline: Glacier rejects bombing snow chutes near rail tracks
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Peterson, Chris
Media Outlet: Hungry Horse News
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1523167270&z=950239508>

Glacier National Park has rejected a plan by Burlington Northern Santa Fe that would allow the railroad to blast avalanche chutes inside the Park.

The Park last week released a final environmental impact statement that instead calls for the railroad to build less than a mile of snowsheds in avalanche-prone areas in the John F. Stevens Canyon and would only 'grant a permit for emergency explosive use in the event that human lives and or resources are at risk and all other options have been exercised by BNSF.'

The area is on the south border of Glacier and is paralleled by U.S. Highway 2.

Snowsheds are man-made wooden tunnels that trains travel under in snow-prone areas. They're designed so that avalanches go over them and don't harm the train or the tracks.

The final document was heralded by the National Park's Conservation Association.

'It's a victory for people who love Glacier National Park and a victory for Park resources,' said Will Hammerquist, the director of NPCA's Glacier Field Office. 'Bombing isn't the way to deal with avalanche control.'

The Park received some 13,000 comments on the plan, most of which supported the railroad building more snowsheds. Many letter writers noted that the railroad's profits, which have in the hundreds of millions of dollars each quarter.

By contrast, the cost of snowsheds, amortized over 50 years, would be about \$5 million annually, the Park estimated. Using BNSF's own numbers, Park officials estimated that it costs about \$20,000 to \$25,000 a foot to build more snowsheds.

BNSF claimed that its request to use explosives was being blown out of proportion.

ONE ALTERNATIVE CONSIDERED was to allow the railroad a special use permit for permanent explosive control of avalanches in the area and just extend two existing snowsheds a total of 250 feet.

The Park rejected this alternative, but BNSF claimed the alternative mischaracterized what it was trying to do.

It claimed the Park's analysis 'significantly overstated the number of blasts that would be used, substantially limiting the utility of any comparative analysis of the alternatives,' wrote BNSF Vice President David L. Freeman in January 2007.

The railroad went on to note that in a 2004 incident where avalanches blocked the tracks in the Canyon it only used 10 explosives, but the Park's analysis estimated using hundreds.

The Park said the numbers were based on a report that BNSF itself commissioned that estimated the number of charges per year would be in the 150- to 200-round range. The Park noted that BNSF could have changed its numbers anytime during the process, but chose not to.

But BNSF had its supporters. Several local Republican legislators favored BNSF's blasting plan, including Montana state Sen. Greg Barkus, who claimed snowsheds are 'unsightly and expensive and would pose unreasonable requirements on (BNSF).'

THE DEBATE OVER avalanche control has gone on for years. Glacier first started the process in 2005, then BNSF actually withdrew from the process in 2007 and the draft environmental impact statement was held up in the Park Service's Washington office for months before being released virtually unchanged from the original last week.

NPCA also filed a freedom of information request on the draft when it was held up in Washington.

Hammerquist commended Park staff.

'I think Park staff did a great job on the process,' he said.

The environmental impact statement cost about \$500,000 and the railroad paid for about half of it.

Even with the document completed, the railroad is under no obligation to build any new snowsheds -- its tracks are outside the Park boundaries. The document is a recommendation only.

BNSF is uncommitted.

'This matter is under review,' said BNSF spokesman Gus Melonas Monday.

Headline: Valley Forge hearing goes into the night
Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Gammage, Jeff
Media Outlet: Philadelphia Inquirer - Pennsylvania Suburban Bureau, The
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1523653222&z=950239508>

A zoning hearing that will help determine the future of Valley Forge national park stretched into the night tonight, the arguments of attorneys delaying testimony and comments from people who wished to speak.

More than 75 people attended the hearing in Eagleville, Montgomery County, concerning a plan by a nonprofit group to build a museum and conference center on private land located inside the park. More than two hours after the meeting started at 7 p.m., the first witness finally spoke, questioned by attorneys for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and five local property owners who oppose the development.

Her qualifications as a land planner were immediately challenged.

'A travesty,' one older spectator said, walking out of the hearing.

The zoning hearing was to proceed much like a trial, with the sides calling witnesses, introducing exhibits, and making arguments. The conservation group failed to get two members of the Lower Providence Township Zoning Hearing Board to recuse themselves, seeking their removal based on earlier views they shared about the project.

'This is not really a zoning case. It's a complaint about the project,' said attorney Neil Sklaroff, representing the American Revolution Center at Valley Forge, which wants to build the museum and conference center.

The township has given the American Revolution Center at Valley Forge preliminary approval to proceed with plans for the big and highly controversial development.

The appeal contends that the project would trample the National Park Service's congressional mandate to manage and protect its lands. It also maintains that the ordinance governing the development constitutes 'spot zoning,' illegal in Pennsylvania.

The hearing, held at the Arcola Intermediate School, is a key proceeding in an ongoing controversy.

Contact staff writer Jeff Gammage at 610-313-8110 or jgammage@phillynews.com.

Headline: New report identifies key threats facing hawaii volcanoes National Park

Date: 7/24/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: YubaNet

Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1523977387&z=950239508>

HILO, Hawaii, July 23, 2008 - The nation's leading voice for the national parks, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), today released an assessment that reveals Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's natural features and cultural sites are in fair to poor condition. The park has among the highest number of threatened and endangered plants and animals in the National Park System, largely due to non-native species, which the National Park Service is working aggressively to eradicate.

According to NPCA's Center for State of the Parks report, released just prior to the start of the Hawaii Conservation Conference, Hawaii Volcanoes' natural resources rank in "poor" condition, scoring an overall 60 out of 100 points, primarily because the park battles non-native plants and animals that threaten to overtake native species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. Hawaii Volcanoes is home to 54 federally listed endangered, threatened and candidate endangered plants and animals. Because of a lack of funding, the park relies on volunteers and partnerships with adjacent landowners, state and other federal agencies to actively monitor and protect four species that it identifies as flagship species: the hawksbill turtle, Hawaiian petrel, Hawaiian goose, and Mauna Loa silversword plant. The successful hawksbill turtle recovery program educates the public about ways to avoid inadvertent trampling of turtle nests on beaches, and in 2005 the park beaches achieved the highest hatchling rates since 1995.

"Our report recommends that more money be allocated to the park so it can continue to expand and enhance programs such as the hawksbill turtle recovery program and the newly created Three Mountain Alliance, a partnership of public and private landowners working together to protect more than one million acres of habitat," said NPCA Senior Program Coordinator Kari Kiser. "These two highly innovative programs protect threatened plants and animals and increase public awareness so that each of us can help native species survive."

In fact, according to a system-wide review of the condition of America's national parks, invasive species are a widespread concern across many of our parks. NPCA's "The State of Our National Parks: A Resources Index" released in June, found that invasive species are a limited concern in 90 percent of the parks evaluated, and are considered a widespread or chronic concern in 38 percent. Additionally, 82 percent of assessed parks have experienced the extirpation of one or more species, while 40 percent of sampled parks have lost a key species or top predator.

The new assessment also finds that Hawaii Volcanoes' cultural resources are in "fair" condition, scoring an overall 65 out of 100. Most historic structures and other park infrastructure need upgrades to meet building codes for structures in earthquake zones. And because of budget shortfalls and limited staff availability, only 3 to 5 percent of the park has undergone archaeological surveying, despite the risk of many of these sites being destroyed by lava flow and ash. The report gives high marks to the park's strong ethnography program and its solid relationship with kupuna (Hawaiian elders) groups, enabling it to incorporate Native Hawaiian voices and perspectives into park programs and projects.

The park's business plan cites a shortfall of 63 full-time equivalent employees, causing resource management, visitor services and educational programs to suffer. For example, the number of educational programs provided by the park has decreased by 45 percent in the last decade, and it is only with the help of volunteers that current levels are maintained. In 2006, 5,269 students and teachers participated in educational programs in the park, while more than 1,200 students were denied this opportunity because the park lacked the staff needed to accommodate them.

"As the 100-year anniversary of the National Park Service approaches in 2016, we have an opportunity to make a difference for our national parks. Congress and the Administration must provide sustained financial support to help parks like Hawaii Volcanoes restore and protect our heritage for our children and grandchildren," Kiser continued.

NPCA launched the landmark Center for State of the Parks program in 2000 to assess the health of national parks across the country.

Full report: <http://www.npca.org/stateoftheparks/hawaiivolcanoes/>

Headline: Letter: Assateague Island offers memorable experiences

Date: 7/24/2008 2:02:00 PM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: Delmarva Media Group

Attachment Link: <http://www.delmarvanow.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080724/OPINION03/807240423/-1/newsfront2>

In a recent Daily Times editorial, the National Parks Conservation Association was incorrectly identified as a plaintiff in a lawsuit against off-road vehicle use at Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Assateague Island National Seashore offers an outstanding beach experience where visitors can enjoy wildlife and outdoor activities in a natural setting.

Today, the National Park Service is challenged with balancing this national treasure's long-term health and visitor recreation, including beach access for vehicles.

In order to ensure the park's long-term sustainability, the Park Service must analyze the effects of vehicle use and seek a solution that balances opportunities for visitor recreation with preserving the beach and wildlife that we all enjoy.

The Park Service did a great job engaging scientists and other parties to plan how to manage the popular but destructive non-native horse herd.

We can expect the Park Service to develop a similarly thoughtful, thorough and open process to evaluate its management of beach access for vehicles.

Assateague provides memorable family experiences, attracting more than 3 million visitors annually and providing an ongoing boost to the region's economy.

We must work together to ensure this national seashore is preserved, unimpaired, for the enjoyment of our children and grandchildren.

Joy Oakes

Washington

Oakes is Mid-Atlantic senior regional director for the National Parks Conservation Association. --Editor

Headline: White House reverses experts on Yellowstone policy
Date: 7/24/2008 2:56:00 PM
Media Contact: Drinkard, Jim
Media Outlet: Associated Press (AP) - Washington DC Bureau
Attachment Link: <http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2008Jul24/0,4670,FightingOverYellowstone,00.html>

WASHINGTON — The National Park Service wanted to close a section of Yellowstone Park in the wintertime because of the risk of avalanche. No way, protested businesses in Cody, Wyo., that wanted to promote more tourism.

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As soon as that intention became known, protests erupted from the Cody business community, which believes closing the pass will kill its efforts to develop winter tourism. A group calling itself "Shut Out of Yellowstone" got more than 500 people to attend a public meeting on the subject, and got the ear not only of their own representatives in Congress but also of senior officials in Washington.

A new draft of the rule dated Nov. 10 still included language about closing the pass. But an unidentified official's handwritten marginal note asked, "Sylvan Pass, should we adjust this language to open door to collaborate and adaptive mgt.?" _ the first indication that the decision might be changing.

When the Park Service published its policy on winter use of the park 10 days later, the idea of shutting down the pass in winter was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the agency created an additional step in the decision process: a task force largely of representatives of local business and political interests to further study what to do about Sylvan Pass. To conservationists, the move seemed clearly designed to reverse the recommendations of the experts and professional managers.

On June 4, after a series of private meetings, the task force announced its decision to keep up the use of explosives to keep the pass open in winter. That was the recommendation ratified Monday by Snyder, the Park Service regional director.

One member of the task force that recommended the policy reversal was Republican state Rep. Colin Simpson, son of former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson. Colin Simpson says the community applied "whatever political pressure we could bring to bear," and that led to the turnabout. "There was knowledge at high levels of the issue," Simpson said. Asked whether Cheney was involved, he said: "I'm sure he was aware of it."

Stevens' conservation group has filed a federal lawsuit challenging the use of snowmobiles in the park, and as part of the case asked the government for its complete rule-making record on the Sylvan Pass issue. When the 40,000-page record was handed over, however, hundreds of documents were withheld. Government lawyers claim the documents, including the faxes from Yellowstone to the White House, are privileged and not subject to disclosure.

On the Net:

National Park Service decision: <http://tinyurl.com/62ykuf>

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Headline: NATIONAL PARK BUT THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION, SOME

Date: 7/24/2008 10:35:51 PM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: Ten O'Clock News - WTXF-TV

NEW AT TEN TONIGHT, A NEW BATTLE AT VALLEY FORGE AS ANGRY CITIZENS SPEAK OUT AGAINST PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT. THE LOWER PROVIDENCE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LISTENED TO TO FEEDBACK ON A HOTEL AN CONFERENCE SENT ARE DEVELOPMENT. IT COULD GO UP INSIDE THE NATIONAL PARK BUT THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, SOME NEARBY RESIDENTS, ARE TRYING TO STOP THAT FROM HAPPENING.

Headline: Park Service loses to businesses
Date: 7/25/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact:
Media Outlet: Winston-Salem Journal
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1524155993&z=950239508>

WASHINGTON

The National Park Service wanted to close a section of Yellowstone Park in the wintertime because of the risk of avalanche. Businesses in Cody, Wyo., protested and said they wanted to promote more tourism.

The spat did not stay local for long. It ended up in Washington, where the White House intervened late last year and sided with the businesses, according to officials familiar with the fight.

A final decision, announced Monday by Mike Snyder, the Park Service's regional director, will keep the park's eastern entrance open to snow-going vehicles throughout the winter. The cost to taxpayers could run into the millions of dollars for a decision in favor of a small number of tourists. 'This clearly falls into the basket of politics and the administration trumping science and what's best for the national park system,' says Tim Stevens, who manages Yellowstone issues for the National Parks Conservation Association, a private watchdog group. 'It clearly shows political manipulation.' The Park Service had studied winter closure 10 years, beginning in the Clinton administration. The agency was poised last fall to issue a decision that would close that part of the park for three months of the year.

But in November, just as a crucial ruling was to come out, an official in the Park Service's Washington headquarters called Yellowstone and asked that key sections of the document be faxed for review by nine White House officials, including policy advisers to President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, said two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of reprisals. Cheney is a former Wyoming congressman.

A White House spokesman, Scott Stanzel, said that consultation between the Park Service and the White House 'is standard practice.' He added: 'We don't comment on those internal deliberations. The Park Service rendered their decision after taking into account all pertinent factors.' The eastern entrance

For years, the route has been kept accessible with a practice commonly used for mountain highways and ski areas, but which is unusual in the park system: using explosive charges dropped from helicopters or shells fired from a howitzer to dislodge threatening snow.

But there are problems with this solution. They include unexploded munitions left in the park and the threat to crews that have to cross numerous avalanche corridors just to get to the howitzer emplacement. Just last week, officials at Glacier National Park in Montana rejected a similar proposal to use explosives to control avalanches that sometimes block railroad tracks, saying that it would have an adverse effect on the environment.

To come up with a policy for Yellowstone, the Park Service set in motion an environmental-impact study and a separate risk assessment, and both came to the same conclusion late last year: It would cost upward of \$3.5 million to safely keep the route open, and it would not be cost effective. Just 463 visitors entered the park last winter along that route, which would work out to about \$8,000 a person. 'Talk about a The money would have gone to buy expensive snow-transport vehicles, build a safety berm behind the howitzer to protect it from avalanches, and construct a concrete bunker and warming hut to protect park rangers on avalanche patrols.

Of seven policy options presented in the environmental study, the government's 'preferred alternative' was to keep the route closed whenever conditions are ripe for avalanches. A draft rule dated Sept. 13 said that the Park Service had 'determined that there is no reasonable way to mitigate the danger to employees and park visitors.' As soon as the intention of closing the pass became known, protests erupted from the Cody business community, which says that the move would kill its efforts to develop winter tourism. A group calling itself 'Shut Out of Yellowstone' got more than 500 people to attend a public meeting on the subject, and got the ear not only of its own representatives in Congress but also of senior officials in Washington.

A new draft of the rule dated Nov. 10 included language about closing the pass. But an unidentified official's handwritten marginal note asked, 'Sylvan Pass, should we adjust this language to open door to collaborate and adaptive mgt.?' -- the first indication of a possible change.

When the Park Service published its policy on winter use of the park 10 days later, the idea of shutting down the pass in winter was nowhere to be seen.

Headline: National parks will be affected by warming
Date: 7/25/2008 12:00:00 AM
Media Contact: Smith, Sean
Media Outlet: News Tribune
Attachment Link: <http://news.vocus.com/click/here.pl?z1524293091&z=950239508>

Re: Crews hunt source of Rainier debris flows (TNT, 7-21). Thanks to Susan Gordon for examining the connection between climate change and increased flooding at Mount Rainier. The storms that battered our Northwest national parks in the fall of 2006 serve as a reminder of the significant environmental changes scientists say we can expect in national parks as a result of global warming.

The article reinforces analysis from a recent report by the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association, which warns that if Congress and the administration do not take action now to slow or halt global warming, as much as 70 to 90 percent of the snowpack in the Cascade Mountains could disappear by the end of the century, threatening winter sports and water supplies. In other parks like the North Cascades, warmer winters and more extreme precipitation events could greatly increase the likelihood of flooding.

The National Park Service needs adequate resources in order to cope with global warming and to develop new strategies for creating environmentally friendly and sustainable public access to our national parks not only in the Northwest region, but throughout the country. (Smith is director of the National Parks Conservation Associations Northwest region.)

Headline: SLOW DOWN FOR LOBSTERS

Date: 7/25/2008 12:00:00 AM

Media Contact:

Media Outlet: South Florida Sun-Sentinel

It seems divers are always in a rush during lobster miniseason. If they'd slow down, they'd catch more lobsters and be a lot safer.

The annual miniseason is Wednesday and Thursday. Designed to give recreational divers the first shot at lobsters since the regular season closed April 1, the miniseason has hordes of people scouring reefs and rock piles offshore.

In their hurry to collect their daily bag limit of 12 lobsters (the limit is six in the Keys), many divers end up spooking their quarry. Others, caught up in the thrill of the hunt, run their boats too close to other divers. And some have no idea what they're doing, but they want a lobster dinner.

"There's a lot of people out there who have no business being out there," Dave Brisbane said. "One time I was diving in 20 feet of water and a guy jumps in off another boat and almost hits me."

Brisbane, of Boca Raton, has been out for the past 15 miniseasons with Frank Schmidt of Lighthouse Point. Unlike those who haven't been diving since last year's miniseason - "The ones who take their gear out of the garage and blow the dust off," Schmidt said - they put in their time scouting before the miniseason and they take their time when the season arrives.

"One of Frank's favorite lines is that guys beat up the lobsters," Brisbane said. "You can tickle them out nice and easy. Don't be aggressive."

Harry Booth of Pompano Beach has been diving for more than 40 years, and his wife, Lois, has been diving almost as long. They're out every weekend and every miniseason.

One of their keys to lobster success is their methodical approach. They'll go along a reef together, Harry on the bottom so he can see lobsters that are in the reef and Lois above the reef so she can see any antennae sticking out.

"You can't catch what you can't spot," Booth said. "We stay in visual eyesight of each other the whole time and we work as a team."

Despite their thorough scouring of a reef, they do miss lobsters that are hiding at the back of caves. That's why the Booths turn around and go back, often picking up two to four lobsters that came out from the reef to look at them.

"Male lobsters are more aggressive than females," Booth said. "The females will back in, but the males will sometimes come out and challenge you. They'll see you, come out and sit in the open."

"I've gone along a reef right after a group of divers from another dive boat has gone through and picked up my limit."

Most divers use tickle sticks and nets to catch lobsters. Brisbane taps on a lobster's tail with his tickle stick to get it to come out from its hiding place, then puts the net behind the lobster. Then he taps the lobster on its head so it scoots backwards into the net and rakes the tickle stick across the back of the net so the lobster can't get out.

Booth likes to use a lobster snare, also known as a hoop. He simply slips the snare over the tail of the

lobster and pulls it tight.

"After you get proficient with it, you're deadly with it," he said. "Basically, wherever you can get a tickle stick, you can get a hoop."

A trick that works well with a snare is to extend your hand and wave at the crustacean. While the lobster looks at Booth's left hand, he uses his right hand to put his hoop around its tail.

"If you distract them," Booth said, "they're not watching the hoop."

Lots of boaters get distracted during miniseason and they don't watch for dive flags.

Law enforcement officers with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other agencies will be out to make sure boaters stay the proper distance from divers and that divers stay close to their dive flags.

They'll also be checking divers for egg-bearing female lobsters and undersized lobsters, as well as for their saltwater fishing licenses and lobster stamps.

"Make sure if you're a beach diver that you carry your license with you when you come off the beach," FWC Lt. Dave Bingham said. "We don't have the means to go to your vehicle to look at your licenses and it is required to be on you at all times when you're out participating in the harvest."

If you're diving from a boat and you have someone staying on the boat while you dive, make sure that person knows how to operate the boat. Schmidt goes over everything in his boat, from how to start the engine to where the anchor is in case the motor won't start.

If you or your divers get into trouble, help is just a radio call away.

"The Coast Guard monitors channel 16," Bingham said, "and we want to make sure that people know that and they know how to use the radio just in case of an emergency."

Steve Waters can be reached at swaters@sun-sentinel.com or 954-356-4648.

INFORMATIONAL BOX:

LOBSTER REGULATIONS FOR SPORT DIVERS

Seasons

The two-day miniseason runs from 12:01 a.m. Wednesday to midnight Thursday. The regular season is Aug. 6-March 31.

Licenses

You must have a saltwater fishing license (\$17 for residents) and a crawfish stamp (\$2) to take lobsters.

Limits

The miniseason bag limit is six lobsters per person per day in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park and 12 per person in the rest of the state. The possession limit on the water is equal to the daily bag limit. The possession limit on land is the daily bag limit the first day and double the daily bag limit the second day. The regular-season daily bag limit is six lobsters per person.

Legal lobsters

Spiny lobster must have a minimum carapace length of more than 3 inches and must be measured in the water. (Those who catch lobsters with a bully net are allowed to measure them in the boat and release the small ones.) Possession and use of a measuring device is required at all times. Lobsters must remain in a whole condition while in or on the water. No egg-bearing females may be taken.

Lobster Rodeo

The second Lobster Rodeo & Dive Safety Expo is 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday on Knight's Key, mile marker 47 at the Seven Mile Bridge in Marathon. The free event emphasizes safe diving and boating for miniseason with scuba skills stations, briefings on dive flags and measuring lobsters, demonstrations and contests. To participate in the scuba activities, attendees must bring their scuba certification card and their own gear. Visit www.fl-keysdive.com.

Dive flags

Dive flags on boats must be at least 20 by 24 inches and have stiffeners to keep the flags unfurled. Dive flags on floats must be a minimum of 12 by 12 inches. Dive flags on boats must be displayed above the vessel's highest point or other location so the flag's visibility is not obstructed in any direction. Divers must make reasonable efforts to stay within 300 feet of a dive flag on open waters and within 100 feet of a flag within rivers, inlets or navigation channels. Boats must make an effort to stay at least 300 feet from dive flags on open waters and at least 100 feet from flags in rivers, inlets or navigation channels. Vessels approaching dive flags closer than 300 feet in open water and 100 feet in rivers, inlets and navigation channels must proceed no faster than is necessary to maintain headway. The diver down flag must be lowered once all divers are aboard or ashore.

Violations

Most lobster violations are second-degree misdemeanors, which are punishable by up to a \$500 fine and/or up to 60 days in jail.

Information

Call the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission regional office in West Palm Beach at 561-625-5122 or visit <http://myfwc.com/marine/lobster.htm>. To report lobster violations, call Wildlife Alert at 888-404-FWCC (3922).

INFORMATIONAL BOX:

FISHING TRENDS

LAKE OKEECHOBEE

The lake level was up to 10.53 feet, but the water coming into the lake is dirty. That means anglers will have to search for clean water on the main lake if they want to catch bass. Top lures include Gambler Giggy Heads with plastic worms, topwater plugs and swim baits. Anglers fishing around bedding areas off Observation Shoal were catching good numbers of bluegills along with some shellcrackers using live worms, crickets and Beetle-Spins.

FRESHWATER/EVERGLADES

Bass fishing in the Everglades has been tough because of high water, but a few anglers have caught some nice fish. Chad Langlin and Joe Dorio had 17.7 pounds Sunday, including the big bass of 5.63, to win the Night Owls Summer Open tournament out of Everglades Holiday Park. David Anderson was second at 6.6. Bass were biting better in the canal and on the flats at the south end of Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

FLORIDA BAY/10,000 ISLANDS

Anglers were catching snook, redfish, sea trout, mangrove snapper, jacks and ladyfish fishing in the backcountry of Flamingo and around the outside islands. Shallow wrecks had cobia, snook and goliath grouper.

GOLD COAST OFFSHORE

The best bet has been kingfish. Capt. Steve Souther of Fort Lauderdale charter boat Marlin My Darlin said kingfish were biting in 85-300 feet off Port Everglades Inlet, with the best bite in 100-160 feet. Most of the fish were 6-8 pounds, with a few fish running 15-20 pounds. The kings were biting trolled bonito strips and spoons. Bonito were biting in 180-300 feet. Mutton and vermilion snapper were biting around artificial reefs and wrecks in 120-200 feet. Dolphin have been scarce and scattered. "You've got to get lucky," Souther said, "and find that one board that nobody's found for a week."

Capt. Skip Dana of the Helen S and Fish City Pride drift boats at Hillsboro Inlet Marina said the boats caught their limits of kingfish 6-10 pounds, along with a few 12- to 15-pounders, on the Wednesday morning trips. Helen S had a limit of kingfish Tuesday morning. The bite slowed Thursday because of a poor drift, but the kingfish were still around. Yellowtail, mangrove and lane snapper were biting on the reefs in 50-130 feet.

The Sea Mist III drift boat of Boynton Beach had bonito, yellowtail snapper and some kingfish.

INLETS/PIERS

Snook were biting at most local inlets, with the best bite at night. Anglers at Juno Beach Pier landed two of three sailfish Thursday morning, hooked a big tarpon and caught a few barracuda. Deerfield Beach Pier had a few snapper, a couple of Spanish mackerel and some bonito and blue runners. Tarpon were around Anglin's Pier, and anglers were catching a few snapper and barracuda. Dania Beach Pier had mackerel, snapper, blue runners and lots of snook. The leader in the pier's free tournament for July is an 18-pound barracuda that was caught Thursday.

THE KEYS

Schoolie dolphin have been plentiful offshore, and yellowtail and mangrove snapper were biting on the reefs. The Catch-22 out of Bud N' Mary's Marina in Islamorada had a memorable trip Tuesday as Vic Gaspeny caught his 118th swordfish, surpassing the 117 caught by Ruben Jaen of Venezuela, whose writings on daytime swordfishing inspired Gaspeny to try it off the Keys. On the way back to the marina, Capt. Scott Stanczyk spotted diving birds and flying fish and the boat soon had seven dolphin hooked up at one time. All the fish were caught and they were all over 20 pounds. The biggest was a 46-pounder landed by 8-year-old Mikey Capozzoli, who also weighs 46 pounds.

INFORMATIONAL BOX:

CALENDAR

Saturday: Honda Marine Weekly Fisherman presented by Boat Owners Warehouse, 6-9 a.m., WQAM (560-AM).

Saturday: Fishing Headquarters Live, 8-9 a.m., ESPN Radio 760.

Saturday: Horizons Fishing Tournament, Riviera Beach Marina, 200 E. 13th St., Riviera Beach, for kingfish, dolphin, wahoo, snapper, grouper. Weigh-in 1-4 p.m. Call 561-494-6884 or visit www.spectrumhealthcarefoundation.org.

Sunday: Everglades Bass Anglers Open Team Tournament, Lake Okeechobee out of the Clewiston

public boat ramp. Entry fee \$70 per team, \$10 optional lunger pot. Registration starts at 4:30 a.m. Call Joe at 954-871-7477.

Monday: RedGhost Stalk backcountry fishing tournament for redfish and bonefish, Islamorada. Junior division for ages 10-16, young adult division for ages 17-29. Rules meeting Sunday, Islamorada Fishing Club, mile marker 82. Entry fee \$75 per angler. Call 305-664-3864 or e-mail< a href="mailto:sherri_trice@bellsouth.net">sherri_trice@bellsouth.net.

Aug. 1: Off-road vehicle trails open at Big Cypress National Preserve.

Aug. 7: Under Sea Adventurers dive club meeting, 7:30 p.m., Emma Lou Olson Civic Center, 1801 NE 6th St., Pompano Beach. Robert Myers reports on the club's recent trip to Fiji. Visit to <http://usadiveclub.com>.

INFORMATIONAL BOX:

OUTDOORS NOTEBOOK

Saltwater tournament: The Saint Coleman's Men's Club has its eighth annual Walk On Water Saltwater Fishing Tournament on Saturday out of Alsdorf Park in Pompano Beach. Entry fee is \$225 per boat. All proceeds benefit the Special Olympics of Broward County.

The kickoff party and captains meeting are 6-9 p.m. today at Saint Coleman's Church, 1200 S. Federal Highway, Pompano Beach. Fishing starts at 7 a.m. The weigh-in ends at 4 p.m. The awards party and dinner are 6-9 p.m. Saturday at Saint Coleman's.

Visit <http://stcmc.org> or call Jerry Squadrito at 954-682-2128 for information or to make a tax-deductible donation to the tournament.

Bass tournament: A Night Owls Summer Open bass tournament is safe light-3 p.m. Sunday out of Everglades Holiday Park. Entry fee is \$60 per boat. Call Luke Campbell at 954-707-8303.

Everglades cleanup: The Broward County Airboat, Halftrack and Conservation Club has its inaugural Everglades Cleanup at 8 a.m. Saturday on the L-5 Levee at Holey Land Wildlife Management Area.

A dumpster and garbage bags will be on site, a limited number of T-shirts will be given out and a \$100 prize will go to the individual who collects the most bags of garbage. A cookout for participants will follow the cleanup. Call John Storms at 954-658-7714.

Dolphin results: Bobby Everett, 20, of Key Largo and Inverness caught a 46.75-pound bull dolphin to win the 24th annual Holiday Isle/Caribee Boat Sales Dolphin Tournament this past weekend. Everett, fishing on Nuff Said with Capt. Scott Stoky, caught the fish off Duck Key at 2:10 p.m. Sunday, less than an hour before lines out. He also caught a 16.35-pound wahoo that took first in the wahoo division. Zack Wampler of Islamorada was second with a 38.15-pound dolphin fishing with his brother, Capt. Augie Wampler, on Predator. Fred Clevenger of West Palm Beach was third on Sword-A-Broke with Capt. Adam Townsend with a 36.55-pounder. Emily Hughes, 13, of Naples won the junior division with a 32.75-pounder on Sachem with Capt. Bill Basset.

Gator class: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has a free class from 1-4 p.m. Saturday at the IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum in Dania Beach for alligator hunters to help them prepare for the alligator season, which is Aug. 15-Nov. 1. Visit www.myfwc.com/gators.

Flamingo future: The National Parks Conservation Association, the South Florida National Parks Trust and Everglades National Park are holding a Flamingo visioning event to discuss issues related to the rebuilding of the Flamingo area in Everglades National Park. Featured are experts in green design to address the establishment of a sustainable Flamingo.

The event, which is open to the public, is 2-3 p.m. Aug. 4 and 3-4 p.m. Aug. 5 at the Campbell Agricultural Center Auditorium, 18710 SW 288th St., Homestead. To RSVP, contact Jill Horwitz at 954-961-1280, ext. 201 or jhorwitz@npca.org.

PHOTO: CORNERED: Harry Booth of Pompano Beach eyes a nice lobster during a scouting trip last month. Booth and his wife, Lois, work in tandem, often doubling back for lobsters that venture out of hiding.

Photo/Lois Booth

COLUMN: WATERFRONTS

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Headline: Legal battles go on
Date: 7/25/2008 1:53:00 PM
Media Contact: Rotenberg, Carl
Media Outlet: Times Herald
Attachment Link: http://www.timesherald.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19870854&BRD=1672&PAG=461&dept_id=33380&rfi=6

LOWER PROVIDENCE - Legal skirmishes, not unlike the rifle volleys of Revolutionary War soldiers, peppered the Zoning Hearing Board Thursday night as the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) laid out its case against the proposed American Revolution Center (ARC) museum and the overlay ordinance at issue.

The legal standing of litigants Joyce D. Cluley, Joanne S. Burns, Craig Crawford, Lawrence E. Loughlin and H. Joseph Byron III were challenged by ARC's attorney, Neil Sklaroff, and Lower Providence Solicitor David Onorato during the hearing at Arcola Intermediate School.

The professional qualifications of landscape architect Colleen Eckman, the first witness to offer testimony about the unique narrowness of the Living History Overlay District ordinance, were also challenged by Sklaroff and Onorato.

NPCA attorney Bob Rosenbaum argued that ARC's plan for a three-story museum and separate conference center with 99 hotel rooms on the 78-acre parcel off Pawlings Road would harm the "view-sheds, light impact, wetlands, wildlife and visitors" to the Valley Forge National Historical Park.

"Federal parkland is 96 percent of the land around the ARC property," Rosenbaum said. "The primary duty of the park service is to protect the park against harm."

Rosenbaum said the 33,000-member NPCA had legal "standing" to challenge the validity of the overlay ordinance, which is "invalid because it violates well-established Pennsylvania law that prohibits 'spot zoning.'"

Sklaroff argued, "What you will hear is speculation and opinion. The appeal is frivolous. Their position is that the project should not be developed at all."

Sklaroff said the central question posed by the validity challenge was: "Who should be empowered to interpret history? Their argument is that only the federal government has the right to tell a version of history."

Onorato insisted the zoning board should decide the issue of whether the five litigants and the NPCA have standing to continue hearing the validity challenge.

"All the appellants are at least 1,300 feet from the (Pawlings Road) property," Onorato said. "They live beyond the 500-foot line. You have to have a special interest in the property (to have standing)."

Rosenbaum unsuccessfully challenged Zoning Board Chairwoman Janice Kearney and board member William Donovan to recuse themselves because they had spoken in favor of the ARC plans at a public hearing and in a "letter to the editor" in The Times Herald, respectively.

"I know I can be impartial," Kearney said, "and I will continue to be impartial."

Donovan said, "I know I can be totally impartial and make a decision on the record presented."

ARC's legal petition demanding the NPCA post a multi-million bond to continue the validity challenge will be heard Wednesday morning by Common

Pleas Court Judge Bernard Moore. The courthouse hearing was continued from Thursday morning.

Projected construction costs have ballooned to \$325 million for the museum and conference center from an earlier cost estimate of \$150 million, said ARC President Thomas A. Daly on Thursday night. A \$50 million endowment fund will add to the fundraising goal for the educational project.

The zoning board continued the validity challenge to 7 p.m., Aug. 12, at the Lower Providence Township Building to hear four additional witnesses from the NPCA and the legal arguments of Sklaroff and Onoroto. Arguments over the legal standing of the NPCA will also be heard.

The zoning board first denied the validity in late February because it was filed against the overlay ordinance before the board of supervisors approved a site plan for the project, according to the zoning board decision.

The supervisors granted preliminary site plan approval June 23 for ARC's plan and a conditional use approval for stream crossings in the floodplain on July 17.

Headline: An \$8,500 Ticket to Yellowstone
Date: 7/25/2008 3:07:00 PM
Media Contact: McCarter, Joan
Media Outlet: New West Blog
Attachment Link: http://www.newwest.net/topic/article/an_8500_ticket_to_yellowstone/C530/L37/

An \$8,500 Ticket to Yellowstone

It's a familiar story these days. Science and common sense be damned--if a Bush or Cheney crony wants it, they get it.

The east entrance to Yellowstone National Park is about 53 miles west of Cody, Wyoming, on a road running through the steep-sided Sylvan Pass, an avalanche waiting to happen most winters, given that there are 20 or so avalanche chutes in the pass. The National Park service has been having an ongoing dispute for years with Cody recreational business owners over keeping that pass open during high avalanche season, December through February.

Last November, the Park Service had been set to issue a final decision, based on a variety of impact studies including environmental and occupational safety and risk management, to keep the pass closed three months out of the year. Then an all too familiar thing happened.

But in November, just as a crucial ruling was to come out, an official in the Park Service's Washington headquarters called Yellowstone and asked that key sections of the document be faxed for review by nine White House officials, including policy advisers to President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, said two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear of reprisals. Cheney is a former Wyoming congressman.

The episode fits a pattern of complaints by government scientists and experts who contend the administration frequently has overruled their work and imposed politically driven policies that benefit powerful economic interests, on issues from global warming to endangered species. For example, the administration rejected scientific advice in loosening air quality standards for ground-level ozone and soot, and ignored advice to control greenhouse gas emissions.

And what happened this week? You got it, the initial Park service decision was reversed and the pass is to remain open, although, as the National Parks Traveler notes, a key amendment might save the day--it specifies that the "pass will only be open between December 22 and March 1 and then only if weather allows, if safety can be maintained, if equipment is available to groom the route, and if the Park Service can afford to maintain the pass."

The safety and affordability are the keys here. The route will be kept open the way avalanche corridors usually are, with explosive charges dropped from helicopters or fired from howitzers to dislodge threatening snow. One of the problems posed by this is little landmines sometimes left around the park--not all of the munitions explode on impact. Then there's the fact that crews manning the howitzers actually have to figure out how to navigate those 20 avalanche chutes to get in place to fire them. It's a risky business.

Then there's the cost, and this is where we get in to the total surreality of what the Bush administration has imposed here. In order to keep this pass open and to do it with the maximum safety provided to Park workers and visitors, it will cost nearly \$4 million, annually. That's four times the Park's FY2008 budget increase over FY2007.

The National Parks Traveler does some more math: "Last winter 463 people traveled over Sylvan Pass from Cody. At that rate, based on the nearly \$4 million Yellowstone soon could find itself spending to

keep Sylvan Pass safe, the cost would equate to \$8,470.76 per person.”

You read that right: \$8,470.76 per single tourist visit into the Park via Sylvan Pass. That’s an expensive day pass--picked up, I might add, not by the visitor. Not by the Cody company providing the guide service in. By us. You and me. The taxpayer. So much for the “smaller government, fiscally responsible” Bush administration.

Just out of curiosity, and because I’m a bleeding heart liberal, I spent a little time Googling what \$8,500 could buy one, either in public or private dollars. (I rounded up. So sue me.)

Five months salary for a mid-level mid-career federal employee.

37 months of combat pay for soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan.

134 high school introductory biology textbooks.

Roughly 8.5 months of health insurance for a family of four.

A month of food assistance to 242 children living with hunger in the U.S.

A backyard windmill.

An Oscar de la Renta gown (in 2006 dollars) to wear to the White House Christmas party.

Or you could look at it this way, it’s the majority of the 2008 federal tax bill for a married couple, filing jointly, earning \$65,101-\$131,450. A year’s taxes for one joy ride through avalanche territory. Priceless.

Or you could think about it just in terms of the national park system itself:

And yet, 560 miles to the south there’s another unit of the National Park System, Dinosaur National Monument, that obviously doesn’t have the political cache of a Yellowstone. You’d think it might, as part of the monument is in Utah, which, politically, is the reddest state in the nation. But it doesn’t. No, Dinosaur’s superintendent was forced to eliminate two of the three staff positions in her paleontological division because she couldn’t find the \$200,000 or so in salaries and benefits for those two positions....

Look around the park system and you quickly can spot staff reductions forced on park managers because the dollars supposedly don’t exist. At Acadia National Park there are 20 vacancies on the 100-person staff. At Blue Ridge Parkway there are 45 or more vacancies. At Gettysburg National Military Park more than two dozen full-time employees have been let go the past two decades due to insufficient funding. Canyonlands National Park did away with a deputy superintendent’s position when the incumbent retired to save \$122,000. Rocky Mountain National Park filled a deputy superintendent’s job with a division chief, and then left that position vacant to make ends meet.

Does that qualify as robbing Peter to pay Cheney’s home state buddies? It’s enough to make one wonder if Halliburton isn’t invested in the Wyoming tourist business.

The National Parks Conservation Association has filed federal suit on the whole snowmobiles in the Park issue, and as part of the case, requested the documents relating to the rule-making for the Sylvan Pass decision. Not surprisingly, when the 40,000-page record was released hundreds of documents, including the faxes from Yellowstone to the White House, were withheld. Executive privilege, don’t you know. Whether it’s over the outing of a covert CIA operative, the railroading of a political foe, the rampant politicization of the justice department, illegal spying on Americans, or just a ridiculous and blatant waste of taxpayer dollars in Wyoming, this administration holds itself above accountability.