



GUARDAPARQUE

December 9, 2007

Volume 1

Number 20

Guardaparque is a bi-weekly publication prepared and issued by the International Ranger Federation (IRF), a federation of non-governmental and governmental ranger organizations from around the world. **Guardaparque** carries reports on emergency service and law enforcement incidents, on protection of parks and the natural and cultural resources within them, on programs to educate visitors and communities on the values of parks and protected areas, and on the people who are responsible for all these activities.

If you have a submission for **Guardaparque**, please send it to the editor, Bill Halainen, at Bill_Halainen@nps.gov

EMERGENCY SERVICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

United States – Glacier National Park Week-Long Search For Missing Park Employee Suspended

The following comes from the U.S. National Park Service's "Morning Report" for November 26th:

A week long search for missing seasonal employee Clay Rubano, 46, in the Wind River Range in Wyoming was scaled back last Monday, November 19th. Rubano worked as a backcountry permit writer in Many Glacier from 2001 to 2006 and remains an intermittent employee for the park. He was working for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and was reported missing when he failed to report for work on the 12th. Rubano was thought to be planning a hike above the falls of the Middle Fork of the Popo Agie River, and his car was discovered at a nearby trailhead. Fremont County Search and Rescue actively searched for Rubano for seven days, utilizing ground searchers, dog teams and helicopters. Given that Rubano is an expert outdoorsman and was likely well prepared for his intended hike, searchers believe that something "unusual" happened. The park committed a peer support/family liaison councillor to the incident to support Rubano's spouse, Rachel Jenkins, who has worked as a bear ranger in Many Glacier for 12 seasons. Jenkins was working in Many Glacier when she learned of Rubano's disappearance. In addition to the councillor, numerous current and former NPS employees travelled to the Lander area to volunteer to assist in the search. Some of them continued looking for Rubano after the search was scaled back. The Fremont County Sheriff's Office will continue to investigate the disappearance.

Australia – Carnarvon Gorge National Park Rangers Stranded During Flash Floods

The Brisbane *Courier-Mail* had an article on December 4th about the high temperatures and strong storms affecting Queensland and other areas in Australia. It also reported on the following incidents associated with a severe storm:

Fallen power lines, unroofed houses, and power blackouts to 15,000 homes in the Mackay region followed a savage electrical storm with 100 kilometre per hour winds on Friday night. Park rangers at Carnarvon Gorge National Park have been marooned for eight days after flash flooding with 394mm (16 inches) of rainfall, including 59mm in a 45-minute period. "It has been awesome," said a ranger yesterday. "Some of the walking tracks have been damaged and parts of the main highway are still cut off, but the gorge looks magnificent." Alas, no further details were provided.

Republic of South Africa – Kruger National Park Five Visitors Killed In Accident In The Park

The following tragic occurrence, which took place on November 29th, comes from Independent Online, a South African news service:

Five foreign tourists, including a child, were killed in an accident in the Kruger National Park. The accident occurred when the vehicle in which the tourists were travelling struck the edge of a bridge before plunging into a river.

"Five Austrians and a German national approached the Park's Phalaborwa gate in their vehicle at around 4 pm on Thursday. They were headed to the Mopani camp and somehow when they reached the Letaba River, their Mercedes Benz station wagon hit the edge of a bridge and the car fell into the river," said spokesperson William Mabasa. Mabasa said that five people died at the scene while the sixth person, the Austrian driver, survived. The driver was taken to the Phalaborwa hospital.

Park managing executive Bandile Mkhize expressed his sincere condolences to the families of those killed, adding: "We stress that visitors should always take into account the distances between our entrance gates and the various camps and the fact that there are speed limits. The speed limits are not only in place for the safety of the wildlife, but also for people's safety."

SPECIES MANAGEMENT

United States – Northern Rocky Mountains Pressure Grows For Hunt Of Once Endangered Grizzly Bears

Associated Press posted an article last week on a movement in the northern Rocky Mountains to resume hunting of grizzly bears, which are commonly found in Glacier National Park, Yellowstone National Park and elsewhere:

Nearly extinct last century, grizzly bears are back in a big way in the northern Rockies, rising in numbers, pushing into new territories and mauling hunters who stumble across them in the wild. While state and federal officials laud the bear's comeback, others say it's time to lift the remaining protections that helped them recover. They point to recent grizzly encounters as evidence.

"We've got grizzly bears eating people who come here to hunt" said Vic Workman, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks commissioner, who fended off a grizzly during a November 25th hunting trip near Whitefish. "It's getting out of whack. We've got too many bears." The grizzly charged after Workman stumbled upon it as it guarded a fresh deer carcass. Workman fired a shot from his rifle and was not injured. The bear ran off. If hunters could kill some bears, Workman said, the rest of the population would learn to avoid humans.

The biologist in charge of restoring grizzlies acknowledges they appear to be on track toward recovery in some areas. In central and western Montana, for example, they've expanded their range

by more than 2,300 square miles in the last two decades. But Christopher Servheen, grizzly recovery coordinator with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said it would take at least five more years of research to show the bear's progress is not fleeting. Recovery is not just measured by the number of bears, he added. Also important is how widely they are distributed, whether females breed at an adequate rate and how many are killed crossing highways or in other human-related accidents.

Workman's close call was the latest in a string of bear attacks and near misses this year in Montana and portions of Idaho and Wyoming near Yellowstone National Park. While there is no comprehensive data on grizzly-human conflicts, an Associated Press tally shows at least a dozen grizzly bear attacks reported since April. Seven people were injured, some severely. At least five grizzlies were killed, either during the attacks or later by wildlife agents. Servheen said it would be a mistake to link the run-ins to a decision on whether protections should be lifted.

"That wouldn't have changed what happened to Mr. Workman in any way shape or form," he said. "If you walk close to a bear that's over a carcass, it doesn't care if it's a delisted bear or not. It's going to charge."

One bear population is already moving toward possible hunting. An estimated 600 grizzlies in and around Yellowstone this spring became the first of their species in the lower 48 states to lose their threatened species status. Even there, a hunt is at least a year away and would likely be capped at just a few animals, said Chris Smith, chief of staff for the state wildlife department.

Conservation groups say more could be done to prevent bear-human conflicts without simply culling the grizzlies' population. Craig Kenworthy, conservation director for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, noted that spikes in bear attacks generally coincide with a shortage of food or other unfavourable environmental conditions. This year, for example, drought in the Yellowstone area forced bears to roam farther and stay out longer in search of berries, insects and other food before winter. "What we don't want to do is have a hunt and knock the numbers down and then find out we're still having the same number of conflicts," Kenworthy said. His group recently filed a lawsuit seeking to reverse the delisting of Yellowstone-area grizzlies. Smith said his agency would await the outcome of the litigation before drafting any plans for a grizzly hunt.

PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

Canada – New National Park In Northwest Territory Canada Announces Plans For Major New National Park

The following was written by your editor for a U.S. National Park Service publication and is based on material obtained from Environment Canada and other sources:

In late November, the government of Canada took a major step toward protecting and conserving its northern lands by announcing the protection of over 10 million hectares (25 million acres) of land, one of the largest land conservation initiatives in Canadian history. The protection of these lands located near the East Arm of Great Slave Lake and around the Ramparts River and Wetlands, both in the Northwest Territories, is the first step in establishing a national park in the former area and a national wildlife area in the latter.

"Conservation is a top priority for our government. In January, I made a number of commitments and we are delivering," said the Honourable John Baird, Minister of the Environment. "Our government believes that our actions speak louder than words. In just the last 12 months, we have delivered real action on conservation. We are doing even more by withdrawing massive areas from industrial development to protect some of the most impressive ecological and cultural wonders in the North for generations to come."

The government also announced an interim land withdrawal to protect approximately 62,000 square kilometres, along with the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, from mineral staking, sale or lease during the course of negotiations. The announcement was made during a celebration with chiefs of

the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, the chief of Fort Good Hope (K'asho Got'ine) and representatives of the Northwest Territory Métis Nation.

The proposed national park, which would include about 34,000 square kilometres of territory, would include spectacular cliffs, the deep clear waters of Great Slave Lake, the transition area between taiga and tundra, and populations of caribou, moose, bear and wolf. Some of the lands for this proposed park were set aside in 1970, but little progress had been made since then because of unresolved aboriginal lands and governance issues. Recent progress on these issues, however, provided a context and an opportunity for Parks Canada to study the feasibility of establishing a larger national park than that envisioned in 1970. A larger park would allow better representation of the North-western boreal uplands region and would have the potential to help some aboriginal groups achieve some of their conservation objectives.

For a copy of the full press release, map, photos, and related documents, go to the following web page: <http://www.ec.gc.ca>

Sierra Leone – Gola Forest National Park Country Establishes New National Park

BBC's African service is reporting that the country has set up a new forest park:

Sierra Leone's president is launching a scheme to save part of an endangered rainforest, which campaigners say will help fight climate change. People living near the Gola Forest, near the border with Liberia, are to be paid annually, to compensate for the loss of royalties from logging firms. The 75,000 hectare park is home to 50 species of mammals, including leopards, chimpanzees and forest buffalos.

President Ernest Bai Koroma hopes the new national park will boost tourism. Sierra Leone is recovering from a brutal decade long civil war, which ended in 2002, and supporters say that without official protection, the Gola Forest would have been destroyed within 10 years, as Sierra Leone tries to raise living standards.

Aid agencies, the European Commission and France are setting up a \$12m (£6m) trust fund to pay for the park's running costs and to make annual payments to some 100,000 people. It is to become Sierra Leone's second national park.

The Gola Forest is also home to 274 bird species, 14 of which are close to extinction, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is helping to fund the scheme. "We are helping the government turn a logging forest into a protected forest," said the RSPB's Alistair Gammell. "Huge amounts of carbon will be saved and the site is an excellent example to those now involved in climate talks in Bali."

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

United States – The White House President's Home Decorated For Holidays On National Park Service Theme

President Bush's wife, First Lady Laura Bush, has been a strong and continuing advocate for supporting and protecting the United States' national parks and has done a great deal to educate Americans on the parks. Her latest initiative has been to decorate the entire White House for the holiday on a National Park Service theme.

The holiday displays incorporate the wide variety of natural, cultural, and recreational features preserved by the National Park Service. Models of icons such as the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the Statue of Liberty share space with paintings of scenic vistas from Grand Canyon, Zion, and Rocky Mountain National Parks. Holiday garlands intertwined with park objects including seashells, pine cones, and gold aspen leaves add to each room's festive feel. The official White House Christmas Tree in the Blue Room is adorned with hundreds of handmade ornaments

depicting national parks. These were prepared by each of the National Park Service's 391 units and sent to the White House.

President Bush and Mrs. Bush have posted this message on the web page that shows many of these decorations: "This Christmas season we give thanks for our nation's abundant blessings. In the spirit of gratitude for our natural and historic treasures found from sea to shining sea, this year's theme highlights America's national parks. From breathtaking landscapes to important historical sites, generations have marvelled at God's magnificent creation and cherished memories of visits to these special places."

If you'd like to see what all this looks like, go to the following website: whitehouse.gov/holiday/

Prepared and published by the International Ranger Federation as a service to rangers around the world. Submissions should be sent to Bill Halainen at Bill_Halainen@nps.gov
