



NATIONAL PARKS  
**TRAVELER**

2019-2020 Annual Report

*[nationalparkstraveler.org](http://nationalparkstraveler.org)*

*Grand Canyon National Park, Rebecca Latson*





NATIONAL PARKS

# TRAVELER



*Kurt Repanshek, founder and editor-in-chief*

First of all, thank you for your support. Without it, National Parks Traveler would not exist.

Across the country, more and more news organizations are shrinking, and a disconcerting number have gone under due to changes in advertising spending. As we continue to seek additional revenue streams, your continuing support is proving invaluable.

While major news organizations across the country occasionally produce stories on the National Park System, it's usually only around large events, such as government shutdowns or the recent coronavirus pandemic. We've found that the National Park System is rich with stories, enough to justify a news organization that focuses only on national parks and protected areas. Your readership justifies our belief.

The past year has been challenging, most recently due to the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the National Park System. But that also introduced hundreds of thousands of new readers to Traveler as they came to check our daily listing of which parks were closed, and then which were open. Once on the site, more than a few recognized the value of the content we produce on a daily basis and stuck around.

Readership on the flagship website was up 18.7 percent from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, to 2,007,716. Our Apple News feed attracted more than 1,140,300 readers during the same period. We also added a weekly podcast series in mid-February 2019 that quickly gained interest. Through June 30, 2020, nearly 93,000 episodes were downloaded, and [feedspot.com](https://www.feedspot.com) has ranked it as the No. 1 podcast on national parks.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we will continue to expand news and feature stories as we explore the wonders of the parks. We'll continue our podcast series and continue to explore new ways to approach storytelling.



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## National Parks Traveler's Leadership

Kurt Repanshek  
Founder, President & CEO  
Utah

Patrick Cone  
Vice President  
Utah

Marcelle Shoop  
Secretary  
Utah

Erika Zambello  
Director  
Florida

Rebecca Latson  
Director  
Washington

Davitt Woodwell  
Director  
Pennsylvania

Constantine Dillion  
Director  
California

Jim Stratton  
Director  
Oregon

Kristen Brengel Hajibrahim  
Ex Officio  
Washington, D.C.





# NATIONAL PARKS TRAVELER

## Rich and diverse coverage of the National Park System

National Parks Traveler is a news organization. We follow accepted journalistic practices in pursuing stories. Our coverage across the National Park System ranges from search-and-rescue missions and campground openings and closings to the impact of national activities and developments that happen both inside and outside the parks. We report on scientific research and discoveries, and entertain you with travelogues so you can make the most out of your national park adventure.

We work with a cadre of freelance and volunteer writers, photographers, and broadcasters who, combined, have more than a century of professional experience.



*Grand Canyon/Rebecca Latson*



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## Our Impact and Reach

National Parks Traveler generates more than 1,000 stories a year, with articles and podcasts spanning the National Park System from Alaska to the Caribbean that reach an audience of more than three million readers and listeners from around the world.

Coverage cannot always be carefully planned out and executed. On any given day there might be exciting research or discoveries coming from a park, a natural disaster that impacts parks and their visitors, or some other news that might affect visitors. In addition to covering those topics, we develop feature-length stories to help readers make the most out of their national park visits, or to examine an issue that merits greater depth and explanation.

As the only media organization focused solely on national parks and protected areas, we also watch for behind-the-scenes stories that affect the parks in some fashion or how visitors might experience the parks.

Among the stories that stood out during the past 12 months are the following.





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## *Oil And Water At Big Cypress National Preserve*

This series of stories in March 2020 was developed after a field trip to Big Cypress by Editor-in-Chief Kurt Repanshek and Contributing Writer Kim O'Connell. Along with reporting on visible impacts to Big Cypress from oil exploration dating back to 2017, the trip provided coverage of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' flipflop on whether Burnett Oil Co. had damaged the park's resources.



*Big Cypress National Preserve, March 2020/Kurt Repanshek*

## *Yellowstone Forever Crippled By Overambition, Lack Of Financial Transparency*



Too much ambition and too little financial transparency greatly hamstrung Yellowstone Forever in its fledgling years, and now the organization finds itself fighting for its life at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has been crippling for nonprofits that depend greatly on philanthropy. ~Kurt Repanshek

*Old Faithful/Rebecca Latson*



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*Caneel Bay Resort, Virgin  
Islands National Park*



*Virgin Islands National Park/NPS, Anne Finney*

The latest articles in a years-long series documented, with material obtained through a Freedom of Information Act inquiry, how the operators of the Caneel Bay Resort in Virgin Islands National Park tried to persuade the Interior Department to break the agreement Laurance S. Rockefeller made with the department in 1983 to ensure the resort was transferred to the National Park Service in September 2023. ~ Kurt Repanshek

In a project made possible through a grant from the Water Desk at the University of Colorado, Patrick Cone traveled to Canyonlands National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to report on the impacts of an ailing Colorado River on those two parks.







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National Parks Traveler released its first annual *Threatened and Endangered Parks* report in December 2019. Reported and written by Rita Beamish and Kurt Repanshek, this series examined the threats of climate change, invasive species, energy exploration, and overcrowding on parks most in danger of impairment.



Everglades National Park is endangered in part because of invasive species such as Burmese pythons overrunning the park/NPS

Continued retreat of tidewater glaciers at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve could force park staff to choose between protecting Johns Hopkins Bay for seal pupping or to open more of it up for cruise ships/Kurt Repanshek file







# NATIONAL PARKS TRAVELER

## *Reopening The National Park System: What's Closed, And Open?*

Hundreds of thousands of readers flocked to National Parks Traveler through the second quarter of 2020 and into the third as the coronavirus pandemic swept the country and led most units of the National Park System to close...and then reopen. Traveler kept readers informed on which parks were closed and which were open with a regularly updated story. This public service feature was pinned to the top of the Traveler's homepage from March into June.

## *Everglades National Park Lodging At Flamingo Without The Mosquitoes*



*Twenty "eco-tents" are the first phase in expanded lodging at Flamingo in Everglades National Park/Kurt Repanshek*

Smudge pots weren't in sight when I visited Flamingo on the southern tip of Everglades National Park, but it was early spring and the mosquitoes hadn't quite worked themselves up to scourge strength. They are legendary when in full biting force, with rumors of cows and mules being killed by vicious, insatiable swarms of the bloodsuckers. And yet, the appeal of Flamingo to anglers and those fleeing winter's snows for a few days makes it a popular destination.~ Kurt Repanshek



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*"It Looked Like Molten Lava. Except  
It Was Molten Ice"*

"My first impression was that it looked like molten lava. Except it was molten ice. It had that same kind of pyroclastic flow to it," recalled Peter Christian of the day back in 2016 when he flew over a remote corner of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and saw a slurry of ice coursing rapidly downhill through a barren drainage. ~ *Kurt Repanshek*

Big Cypress National Preserve doesn't have the same name attraction as its next-door neighbor, and that's not a bad thing. Enter its realm and you might find one of the world's most unique orchids, a forest of "dwarf" trees hundreds of years old, and a wild kingdom of raucous birds and toothy reptiles.



*A Watery Feast At Big Cypress National Preserve*

*By Kim O'Connell*





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## *Incoming Grand Canyon Superintendent Brings Deep Background To Challenging Job*

Edward Keable doesn't bring a National Park Service pedigree with him to Grand Canyon National Park as its incoming superintendent, but he brings a wealth of legal experience in the issues the park is steeped in. ~ *Kurt Repanshek*

## *Gateway Town Businesses Trying To Stay Optimistic Amid Coronavirus Pandemic*

As a growing number of businesses relying on visitation to the national parks face the stark reality of an obliterated April and possibly much curtailed revenue in the subsequent summer and fall months, staying calm and being flexible seem to be the best, perhaps only, options. ~ *Lynn Riddick*

## *The River's The Thread: Floating The Green Corridor In Utah's Desolation Canyon*

Late one evening last summer, about the time that bats take to the air, I was stretched out on a patch of warm sand next to the Green River in Utah's Desolation Canyon, waiting for stars to appear. Next to me were a couple my age from Baltimore and their two young grandsons, part of a group enjoying a six-day float trip with a Utah adventure outfitter. As darkness fell, the glittering band of the Milky Way spread above us from cliff to cliff. This was one of the reasons we had come to this place, for the "star river," as the ancient Chinese poets called it, is no longer visible from our homes in the city. ~ *Fred Swanson*

## *Protecting The Sonoran Pronghorn From Extinction*

With its diminutive frame and legendary skittishness, the Sonoran pronghorn is emblematic of the delicate efforts required to save an endangered species. Relegated to the desert of southwest Arizona and northern Mexico, the pronghorn fights for survival from predators and the ever-constant threat of drought that comes with living in the desert. ~ *Kelly Furnas*



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## *Traveler Special Report: Invasive Animal Species A Veritable Plague In The National Park System*

There has been, for a disturbing amount of time, a slow, creeping invasion of the national parks, one in the form of an ecosystem-upsetting menagerie that poses a significant threat to both native species and the very integrity of the parks. ~ *Kurt Repanshek*

## *Climate Change Could Be Influencing World's Greatest Terrestrial Migrations*

It's a spectacle of the animal kingdom, one most of us don't see in person, but are amazed when it is shown on television. "It" is the crossing of the Noatak River far north in Alaska by thousands of caribou. ~ *Kurt Repanshek*

## *Lessons From A Previous Environmental Catastrophe*

In June of 1894—125 years ago—Sequoia National Park superintendent James Parker journeyed northwards to inspect the Sierra Forest Reserve. This mountainous country (now called the Sierra National Forest) had been set aside sixteen months previously to protect its watersheds from overgrazing by sheep and over-cutting by timber interests. Parker entered a disaster zone. ~ *John Clayton*

## *Clamping Down On Climate Science At The National Park Service*

You still can find some climate change information on the vast nps.gov domain, but there isn't much that's terribly recent. That's a troubling development when if you believe the National Parks Conservation Association's contention that climate change was a significant concern for 80 percent of all national park units. ~ *Kim O'Connell*





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## National Parks Traveler's Weekly Podcasts

Appreciating that people consume information in many formats, National Parks Traveler launched a weekly podcast series in mid-February 2019. Since then, Kurt Repanshek, Lynn Riddick, and Erika Zambello generated 72 programs through June 28, 2020, that were produced by Jesse Repanshek.

These shows follow a newsmagazine format, with weekly content usually featuring a topic of recent prominence along with features taken from the National Park System. The 40- to 50-minute programs are distributed through [libsyn.com](http://libsyn.com), which sends them to iTunes, Facebook, Twitter, radio.com, Spotify, YouTube, and other podcast outlets.

Through June 30, 2020, nearly 93,000 episodes were downloaded, with listeners from at least 50 countries.

*Checkerboard Mesa bighorns in Zion National Park/Kurt Repanshek*





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## A Sampler Of Traveler's Podcasts

*The Yellowstone Volcano Observatory*

*A Conversation With Photographer Clyde Butcher*

*Sea Level Rise And National Parks, Great Sea Kayaking Park Destinations*

*Ranger Doug To The Rescue, Rethinking America's Best Idea*

*Threatened And Endangered Parks*

*Public Lands, Federal Regulatory Changes*

*Yellowstone's Wolves, National Parks Of Lake Superior, Seasonal Migrations*

*Longest Terrestrial Migrations, Jean Lafitte National Historical Park*

*Breaching Cape Lookout, Glacier's Shrinking Glaciers, Wintering At Voyageurs*

*Prey And Predators In Yellowstone, Birding In Katahdin Woods And Waters  
National Monument*

*How Not To Get Lost, Sketching Birds, Hiking Peaked Hill Bars*

*Isle Royale's Wolves And Caving In The National Parks*

*The Dark Ranger And The Other Half Of The Park System*

*Lionfish Invasion, Winter Visit To Olympic National Park, Harvest Time In The  
National Park System*

*Segregation In The Parks, And Winter In Everglades*

*Can Guns Protect You Against Bear Attacks?*

*Parks As Classrooms, And Katahdin Woods And Waters*

*Staying Safe In Bear Habitat, And Thomas Moran And The Parks*

*Roundtable Discussion On National Parks*





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## Financial Summary 2019 July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020, preliminary

### Operating Income

Contributions	\$41,546
Direct public grants	\$9,998
Other income	\$13,218
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$64,762</b>

### Operating Expenses

Business expenses	\$5,286
Contract Services	\$36,722
Payroll	\$19,419
Travel and meetings	\$2,591
Other expenses	\$471
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$64,489</b>



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## Donors

July 2, 2019-June 30, 2020

**\$2,001-5,000:** Preston Chiaro, National Parks Conservation Association, Potrero

**\$2,000:** Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Friends of Acadia, Grand Teton National Park Foundation, North Cascades Institute, Washington's National Park Fund







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\$500-\$1,999

Danny Bernstein  
Derrick Crandall  
Michael Norte  
Jim Stratton

\$250-\$499

Mike Caldwell  
Elaine Dorward-King  
John and Sara Hazuda  
James Hoogland  
Rebecca Latson  
Kevin Mendik

Edward M. Olefirowicz  
Patrick O'Driscoll  
Matthew Seidelman  
Roger Siglin  
Rob Wallace  
Davitt Woodwell



*Glacier National Park, Rebecca Latson*



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\$100-\$249

George Albino

Paul Anderson

Paul Berkowitz

Terry Binkele

Eric Buck

Mike Carroll

John Case

Douglas Chadwick

Rudy D'Alessandro

Constantine Dillon

Margaret Dolinich

Christoph Dolph

Kris Fister

Susan Flader

Larry Foster

Phil Frances

John Freemuth

Charlotte Goldberg

Stephen Gregory

Justin Hayes

Robert Janiskee

Jay King

Kevin Killeen

Kevin Kissling

Dolores Kong

Bob Krumenaker

Robert J. LaCasse

Suzanne Liles

Charles Lockett

Stephen Long

Ron Mastrogiuseppe

John Miles

Joe Miczulski

Howard Nichols

Patrick O'Driscoll

John Brian Peterman

Thomas Philippi

Laurel Rematore

Merry Southers

Gaylord Staveley

John Stark

Bruce Strange

Daryl Sullivan

James Tapner

Tempestry Project

Cornell Tramontana

Marilyn Webster





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## \$50-\$99

John Adornato III  
Jeff Antonelis-Lapp  
Patricia Ashley  
Paul Bartlett  
Marlene Battle  
Connie Burleson  
Dennis Burnett  
Christopher Calvert  
Deborah Carboy  
Bill Carroll  
Mike Carroll  
Carole Childs  
Lauren Danner  
Sarah Eaton  
Christopher Elbert  
Marty Ess  
Thomas Faith  
John Fairhall  
Joshua Flory  
Linda Fritschel  
Kerry Gallivan  
Paul Girouard  
Jim Glavine  
Edna Good  
Stacy Goss

David Graber  
Albert Gutierrez  
Kristen Hajibrahim  
Cheryl Hanke  
Michael Hanshew  
Linda Helm  
Thomas Hiscox  
Tony Jewitt  
Ann Johnson  
Beth Johnson  
Jaimasen Koelker  
Eileen Kortas  
Tim Korte  
Jessica Lavandier  
Christine Lehnertz  
Kevin Lucas  
Max Malmquist  
Sonia Martin  
Mary McClelland  
Lyndel Meikle  
Carla Meyer  
Jeff Mow  
Michael Nepple  
Mike Oswald  
Cherry Payne  
Randy Payne

Wendy and Patrick Poinsot  
Amy Renshaw  
Jess Repanshek  
Douglas Rollins  
Molly Ruffle  
William Sanders  
Joseph C. Schott  
Cheryl Schreier  
Kim Sikoryak  
Rick Smith  
Robert Smith  
Shelley Spector  
Douglas Sporn  
Michael J. Stamer  
Timothy Strand  
D'Ann Stone  
Bria Sullivan  
Colleen Wagner  
Larry Walling  
Maggs Warren  
Mark Wenzler  
Dina Wilke  
Carolyn Wilson  
Scott G. Wolff  
Mike Wurm  
Robert Yearout



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\$25-\$49

Melissa Abdo  
Rene Agredano  
Nancie Ames  
Joan Anzelmo  
Elaine Applebaum  
Allison Augustyn  
Bill Baehr  
Michael Bender  
Evald Carlson  
Cascade Hiking Adventures  
Jeffrey Clark  
Coalition Advocating  
for Animals  
Joni Cobb  
Eliot Cohen  
Bill Cook  
Melissa Darnell  
Sharon Donovan  
Mary Ann Dunham  
Laura Ellenboss  
Susan Fearon  
Peggy Fettes  
Katherine Fox  
Natalie Frantz  
Edward Gaffney  
Bob Garcia  
Rita Griffin  
Erik Hague  
Edward Hanson  
Kenneth Hardin  
Neysa Hardin  
Chris Hawkins  
Paul Henderson  
Peter Herreid  
Dennis Huffman  
Rick Jones  
Jennifer Judd  
Michael Kanevich  
Linda Kinsinger  
Edward Klohr  
David Krane  
Michael Latari  
Lois Lindberg  
Gail Lindeman  
QT Luong  
Sara Marion  
Tom Mason  
Dean Meledones  
Kevin McKibben  
Donna Meredith  
Mike McGhie  
Matt McWenie  
Chris and Kristi Meyer  
Ruth Middlecamp  
Paula Mitchell  
Steven Mullen  
Patricia Nathan  
Valerie Naylor  
Beth Nelson  
Kendrick Neubecker  
Lisa Neuhof  
Mary Page  
Claudette Paige  
Michael Painter  
Robyn Parker  
George Parkins  
Donald Patton  
James Phillips  
Roslyn Pinson  
Jeanne Prange  
Tracy Purrington  
Julie Quick  
Daniel Richardson  
Samuel Rusbridge  
Marie Sappenfield  
Nino Schramm  
Steven Sedor  
Tim Shirber  
Louis Skenderis  
Eugene Smith  
Merry Ann Smith  
Margaret Sonnefeld  
Nancy Stone  
Greg Taylor  
Marlea Taylor  
Marlive Taylor-Harris  
Jane Timmerman  
Carole Thickstun  
Ann Torrence  
Jeffrey Trust  
Christopher Vervais  
Lynn Wahl  
Scott Westphal  
Charles Winter  
Erika Zambello





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\$5-\$24


Yvonne Aguero  
Jeannine Barr  
JonHenry Beers  
Tracy Bucholz  
Alan Carey  
Caryn Covington  
Kevin Dadey  
Stephen Dishart  
Alan Duckworth  
David Govatski  
Kathleen Green  
Jim Hall  
Robert Harlan  
William Harmon  
Rose Hurst  
Mitchell Jim

Robert Klang  
Don Koberna  
Meredith Lowe  
John Osbo  
Miranda Paquet  
Daniele Pedrazzoli  
Kenneth Pense  
Greg Rempel  
Jesse Shade  
Tracy Skinner  
Eric Sleeper  
Wendi Strong  
Margo Tarrant  
Brenda Treadaway  
Sarah Webber  
Michael Wolfe

## Awards

### **Stewart L. Udall Award**

The Western National Parks Association honored National Parks Traveler in November 2019 for keeping the public informed on National Park System issues.



*National Parks Traveler is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit media organization that  
relies on reader and listener support.*

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*[nationalparkstraveler.org](http://nationalparkstraveler.org)*

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