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THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



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National Parks

FALL 2017 / Vol. 91 No. 4

COVER:

Valerie Ardelia Ross Manokey, Harriet Tubman's great-great niece, at the new Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center in Maryland.

©DAVE HARP

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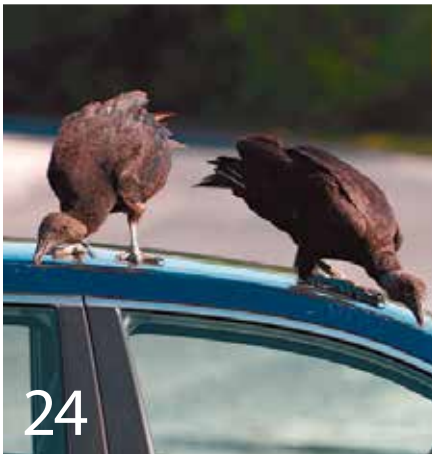
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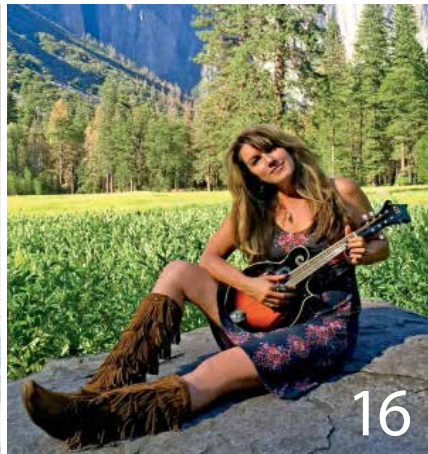
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Fighting Harder

National park sites can be incredibly powerful places. We say this often here, and it may seem like a cliché, but it's true. Those are the words that kept going through my head after I read this issue's "Remember Aunt Harriet" (p. 26).

Harriet Tubman, born into slavery, became one of our country's great heroes, repeatedly risking her life to free people from slavery. That's the story many of us know. But that's not where the story ends. By visiting the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Maryland, designated in 2013, you'll learn much more about Tubman's life: about the personal hardships that she never let stop her and about her fight for justice that continued long after slavery ended.

But it's through her living descendants, including her great-great niece, Valerie Ardelia Ross Manoke, and her great-great-great nephew, Charles E.T. Ross, that Tubman's story literally comes alive. In Manoke and Ross, you see her enduring spirit and refusal to quit.

It took years of working, and fighting, to get the national park site established. It wasn't easy to gain support for a site that represents a painful time in our history, which some may wish to forget. But stories from those dark chapters are often the ones we need to hear most.

Manoke, Ross and so many others refused to let Tubman's story die. Manoke was told, "You'll never get anything," but "never means you just got to fight harder," she said.

These words of wisdom remind me, and should remind us all, that there are things worth fighting for — and our national parks are among them. When the going gets tough, we just need to fight harder. And we will.

Please keep Manoke's advice with you and make some time to visit the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park. If you're really fortunate, you might even see Tubman's great-great niece or great-great-great nephew while you are there.

Warm regards,
Theresa Pierno



Editor's Note



© DAVID HARP

THE EASTERN SHORE is photographer Dave Harp's stomping ground.

Behind the Story

When I was a newspaper reporter, some of the most interesting stories I worked on grew out of tips from staff photographers. Photographers are always out in the world, observing, and I learned long ago to listen carefully to them.

So when writer Rona Kobell and I were discussing how to tell the story of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park, it seemed natural to turn to a photographer for ideas. We enlisted the help of Dave Harp, a self-described "marsh rat" who has photographed the people and places of Maryland's Eastern Shore, where the park is located, for decades. "They call this the Everglades of the North," he said. "Dorchester County is just acres upon acres of Spartina grasses, needlerushes and loblolly pines. And that hasn't changed since Tubman's time." Harp has been amazed at how the park has already affected the town of Cambridge, where he lives. "It's cultural and historical, but it's also economic," he said.

Unsurprisingly, Harp had a brilliant thought: He suggested talking to a couple of Tubman's descendants and building the story around them. He found it interesting that some lived in the area where their famous ancestor had been enslaved, and he'd met several around town and knew they would be terrific interview subjects. We instantly loved his idea.

Harp's evocative photographs appear with the article (p. 26). The highlight of the assignment, he said, was photographing Valerie Ardelia Ross Manokey and Charles E.T. Ross, Tubman's kin, and witnessing their enthusiasm. It took decades of work to create the park, and "they're just sort of reveling in the light of that now," he said.

He shot the cover photo in the new visitor center. Some hymns were playing in the background, he explained, and Manokey started singing along. "I let her go and just started photographing," he said. "She was in the moment."

Rona Marech
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NationalParks

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Established in 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association is America's only private, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated solely to protecting, preserving and enhancing the U.S. National Park System.

WHAT WE DO

NPCA protects and enhances America's national parks for present and future generations by identifying problems and generating support to resolve them.

EDITORIAL MISSION

National Parks magazine fosters an appreciation of the natural and historic treasures found in the parks, educates readers about the need to preserve those resources, and illustrates how member contributions drive our organization's park-protection efforts. The magazine uses the power of imagery and language to forge a lasting bond between NPCA and its members, while inspiring new readers to join the cause. National Parks magazine is among a member's chief benefits. Of the \$25 membership dues, \$6 covers a one-year subscription to the magazine.

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Members can help defend America's natural and cultural heritage. Activists alert Congress and the administration to park threats, comment on park planning and adjacent land-use decisions, assist NPCA in developing partnerships, and educate the public and the media. Please sign up to receive Park Notes, our monthly email newsletter. Go to npca.org/join to sign up.

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ELATED IN THE NORTHWEST

Even as a long-time journalist who revels in great stories and good writing, I find it rare to so enjoy a magazine that I even find myself reading some of the advertisements. The Summer 2017 issue of National Parks accomplished just that. Wow! From the President’s Outlook and Letters to “A People’s Historian,” “The Great Escape” and “Lost Bears” (right in our Northwest backyard), the magazine staff members outdid themselves. I look forward to the Fall issue.

CRAIG WECKESSER
Olympia, WA

CORRECTING HISTORY

Many thanks for your interesting article “A People’s Historian” about Turkiya Lowe, the Park Service’s new chief historian. My wife and I visited Dry Tortugas National Park this past February, and I noticed during the tour (presented by the ferry staff) that the Fort Jefferson soldiers and Confederate prisoners were mentioned, but nothing was said about the people who were enslaved there. I commented on this to the tour guide and the Park Service staff, and later sent a letter to the park, including an article about how ignoring slavery perpetuates racism. I received a wonderful response from the park interpreter promising to research the history of Fort Jefferson slaves and include that in future tour presentations. I wish Lowe great success in her important work, and thanks again for including this article.

TIM WERNETTE
Tucson, AZ

I am delighted to see Turkiya Lowe selected as National Park Service chief historian and featured in your magazine, as well as mentioned by Theresa Pierno in her letter. She appears to be just right for the job, but at age 39 she is not the youngest person to hold the title. Robert M. Utley was five years younger (34) when director George B. Hartzog, Jr. moved him from Santa Fe to Washington as chief historian in 1964.

JERRY L. ROGERS
Santa Fe, NM

The writer served as associate director for cultural resources at the Park Service.

He retired from the agency in 2001.

We checked with a historian at the Park Service who confirmed this and also pointed out that Ronald F. Lee was in his early 30s when he took over as chief historian in 1938, though officially, he might have had the title of assistant director at that time. —Editors

PRAYING FOR PARKS

Thank you for the excellent magazine. I love reading about our great national parks. I am 90 years old and probably can’t visit most of the memorable, precious, beautiful places I read about. But I pray they all continue to flourish. I’m urging my grandson, a graduate student of ecology at the University of Washington, to work toward reintroducing grizzlies in the North Cascades. I loved reading about the new Park Service chief historian, Turkiya Lowe. What an impressive person! I admire her and wish her well.

ALAN EMMET
New York City, NY

MORE THAN VIEWS

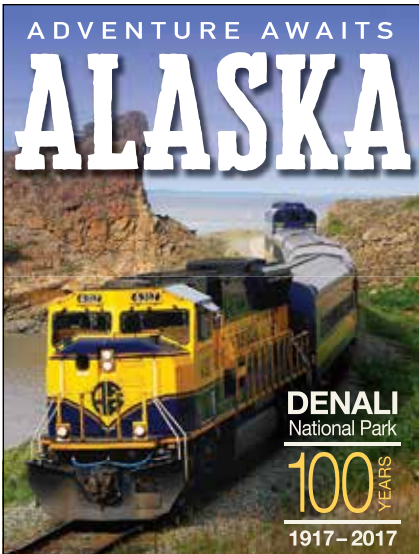
I really enjoyed the article “Soaking It All In” in the Summer issue. For me, the most memorable parts of being in national parks, forests and wilderness areas are the spiritual experiences I have there. I believe that these very special places have even more to offer than scenic views, wildlife and fresh air.

KURT ERLANSON
Mansfield, WA
The writer is a retired ranger.

Send letters to National Parks Magazine, 777 6th Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-3723. Oemail npmag@npca.org. Include your name, city and state. Published letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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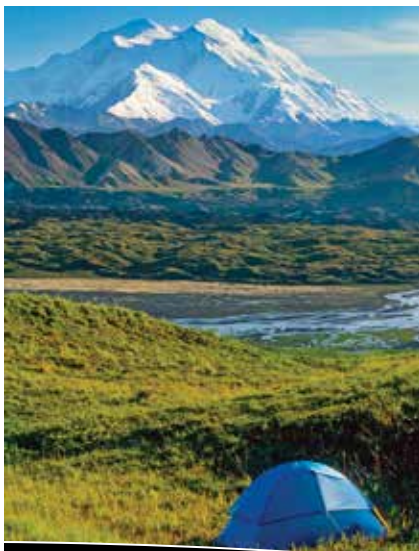
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Echoes

The National Park Service must have the authority to prevent potentially indiscriminate killing of bears and their cubs on national park lands.

President and CEO Theresa Pierno as quoted in The Washington Post about the Interior Department's order to review a 2015 rule that prohibits some extreme hunting methods on Park Service lands in Alaska. NPCA has been a strong supporter of the rule, which bans tactics including baiting bears with doughnuts and killing cubs in dens.

We're hearing stories about why people love Cumberland Island. It's good to see.

Don Barger, NPCA's Southeast senior regional director, speaking to The Brunswick News at a rally organized by opponents of a proposal that would have permitted the rezoning and subdivision of 1,000 acres of private property located in Georgia's Cumberland Island National Seashore. The Camden County Commission eventually voted to allow time for negotiations between the Park Service and private landowners; discussions are now underway.

There is only one Jamestown, and once development of this magnitude begins, there is no undoing its impacts. We cannot stand by and let that happen.

Theresa Pierno as quoted in The Washington Post after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers granted Dominion Energy permission to construct a power transmission line across the James River near historic Jamestown. NPCA has since filed a lawsuit against the Corps of Engineers.





STAGED EACH YEAR on Patriots' Day, the Battle of Lexington is one of the oldest battle re-creations in the country, first held as early as 1825.



©KATE FLOCK

Revolutionary Roles

For historical reenactors in Lexington and in Minute Man National Historical Park, the past is present.

Along the streets of Lexington, Massachusetts, flashlights and white plastic buckets bob in the dark. A hazy spring moon still hangs over First Parish Church as everyone in town heads to the Battle Green.

By 5:30 a.m., hundreds flank the common: spectators in New England Patriots sweatshirts, sleepy kids, dogs. The buckets, flipped over, become

platforms for shorter observers. Around daybreak, a few dozen militiamen muster on the grass, responding to Paul Revere's warning: "The regulars are coming out!" The men wear tricorn hats and breeches and grip hunting muskets, just as they would have on April 19, 1775.

Soon a column of British regulars in blazing red jackets files onto the green, and the crowd readies cameras and

phones. A shot rings out. Then, bedlam. Volleys of gunfire, the sharp smell of powder, rehearsed confusion and huzzahs. Midfield, a man is bayoneted dramatically. "Go back to Boston!" one colonist snarls, drawing laughs.

Within minutes, the skirmish is over. Women in bonnets rush out to tend to the wounded and mourn the eight men who perished. The colonials retreat; the redcoats will continue on to Concord and the Old North Bridge, where a group of Minute Men — the best-trained members of the colonial militias, ready to turn out "in a minute" — first returned fire on the king's army 242 years ago. The American Revolution has begun, again.

Staged each year on Patriots' Day — a holiday observed only in Massachusetts, Maine and Wisconsin — the Battle of Lexington is one of the oldest battle re-creations in the country, first held as early as 1825. Each year in Lexington and nearby Minute Man National Historical Park, the days around the April holiday are packed with military demonstrations, parades and ceremonies honoring the people and actions that sparked the Revolutionary War. But the lineup also represents the "Super Bowl" of living history events for hundreds of reenactors from across New England. Around 20 militia units and eight "British" regiments converge on the area's historic sites to perform, trade notes and educate the public.

"You can read a book and understand it intellectually, but what reenactment does is it engages your imagination. People can imagine themselves in the story. It pulls them in," says Jim Hollister, a park ranger and lead interpreter at Minute Man, which preserves around 1,000 acres and 11 "witness" houses along a 5-mile stretch of the Bay Road, where on April 19, 1775, militias pursued British forces in a 16-mile running battle back to Boston. By the end of that day, 49 colonials and 73 regulars were dead.

After the smoke clears in Lexington, people spill onto the common to mingle with reenactors or wander off to all-you-can-eat pancake breakfasts at nearby churches, another yearly tradition. I approach a man in a brown smock and round brim hat with a silver ponytail. It's Asahel Porter, a merchant from Woburn, Massachusetts, and one of the war's first casualties. He's also known as Chris Hurley, a Lexington computer programmer. He introduces

me to his wife, Abigail, portrayed by his actual wife, Clare Hurley. An editor at Brandeis University, Clare says her husband "reluctantly got dragged in" to their shared hobby but quickly became hooked.

The couple has done impressions together for 10 years, volunteering at Minute Man sites and with the Lexington Historical Society, where Clare sings with a group that performs period music. But the Battle of Lexington is their highest-profile event, and probably the most intense. On the green, Clare says, the line between role-play and reality can blur. "Every year, I genuinely cry at his death. At first I'm pretending to cry for the audience, but before I know it, it feels real in some dimension."

Nearby are two British soldiers from His Majesty's Tenth Regiment of Foot — Shaun Timberlake from Quincy, Massachusetts, and Chris Migala from Chelmsford — looking much friendlier than they did 20 minutes earlier. Timberlake, a captain, wears white gloves, a coat with fringe at the shoulders and, beneath his throat, a decorative silver plate called a gorget. Migala, who also serves in the Massachusetts National Guard, says reenacting can be a "sizable investment" of time and money. Many groups meet and drill at least once a month, and a high-quality period outfit might cost \$500. But why fight for the Crown? "It's the spit and polish," Timberlake says.

"Type A, Type B," explains Paul Dooley, of Medford, Massachusetts, contrasting the regulars' uniformity with the casual look of militiamen, who were mostly farmers and tradesmen. Their clothing and gear — at least at the start of the eight-year war — were motley: coats of various colors and

styles, non-military arms. Dooley wears the standard brick-red coat of a British grenadier and a tall bearskin hat called a busby. "It's definitely a different mindset."

"That's how perfectly nice guys slip into the dark side of the force," says Samuel Forman, a physician and 22-year member of the Lexington Minute Men.

Forman says he's also experienced a "reenactment high" — a bending of time during military events. "The present kind of fades away. It can be sheer terror: The British are coming at you, you know that they're firing blanks, but you're so into it that you feel you're there."

Later, I meet two finely dressed colonials outside of Peet's Coffee. Bob Allegretto, a retired shop teacher, and his friend, Jonas Brown, came



DAN FENN, 94, is a longtime Lexington Minute Man who has participated in the dawn reenactment around 25 times. He now gives a historical talk every Patriots' Day.

NPS/P. LUPSIEWICZ



to Lexington to engage with curious spectators. “As an educator, you want to share what you learn,” Allegretto says, swigging coffee from a 1770s-appropriate metal mug.

Like many reenactors, Allegretto and Brown were first drawn in by Civil War history, but their interests later expanded. “It’s not just about the guns and battles,” Allegretto says. “It’s about learning how people lived, what they did for a living, what they wore.” The two friends hand-stitch all their clothes based on meticulous research, and even their homes are around 300 years old. “So how seriously do we take it?” Allegretto asks. Brown answers: “We live it.”

Such obsession with period authenticity is common in the reenactor community, where conversations veer from the physics of musket balls (they arc) to the fact that colonial women’s dresses were secured with pins, not buttons, to accommodate pregnancy.

Still, for some, historical fidelity has its limits. Unlike Lexington (which sits just beyond the boundary of Minute Man), the National Park Service doesn’t do true battle reenactments, only “tactical demonstrations,” with no mimed deaths. “We don’t portray casualties, out of respect. That’s inconsistent with the memorial qualities of the battlefield under our care,” says Hollister. “These were real people. They lost their lives. Their families were thrown into turmoil and grief.”

This sense of reverence led Hollister to organize the Patriot Vigil, a new event this year, as a quiet counterpoint to the weekend’s action and fanfare. The next evening at dusk, around 100



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A PAINTING depicts Minute Men firing on British regulars in the 1775 Battle of Lexington.

people gather outside North Bridge Visitor Center, most of them in colonial garb. I spot Chris and Clare Hurley, who seem almost out of place in fleece and sneakers, though like the rest of the crowd, they carry antique lanterns. As the fifers warm up, a man shows us his wife’s homemade candles. Among the chatting reenactors there’s a feeling of reunion, or at least recognition. “I know faces because we see them across the battlefield,” Clare says.

Hollister soon commands us to step off: “Attention battalion, march!” Two by two, we walk down a sloping path to the slow beat of muffled drums, lanterns trailing in long rows. On the Concord River, geese honk in the reeds. We pass the Minute Man statue

by Daniel Chester French, who also designed the Lincoln Memorial statue, then cross the reconstructed bridge where the colonies’ first shots of the Revolution were fired. After breaking ranks, we listen as speakers read a poem, a blessing and finally the names of the colonial and British dead. As the readers’ faces glow under bonnets and felt hats in lantern light, the effect is transporting.

Before the fife and drum corps plays “Parting Glass,” an 18th-century tune, we observe a moment of silence for those we’re honoring. Their story, Hollister reminds us, is still being lived out. “The next chapters have always been for us,” he says, “for we the people.”

—DORIAN FOX



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Nature Fix

Tired of feeling like the only person of color on the trail, Ambreen Tariq is trying to make the great outdoors welcoming to all, one photo at a time.

In 1991, Ambreen Tariq and her family boarded a plane in India and touched down in Minnesota in the middle of winter. They had never seen snow before and hadn't packed coats or gloves. Those first cold, dark months were tough for the 8-year-old girl and her family. Her parents both worked two jobs. The kids at school bullied Tariq, mocking her brown skin, spicy lunches and Indian accent.

Then spring came, and Minnesotans headed outside to fish and camp. Tariq's parents, eager to embrace American culture, decided their family would, too. They couldn't afford a lengthy vacation, but they could buy a tent and a couple

of sleeping bags. Tariq loved every bit of camping — the solitude, the satisfaction of pitching a tent and cooking over a fire. "It was such a reprieve," she says. "Camping was the one moment when everything else just kind of shut out."

Yet even out in nature, they couldn't escape the feeling of otherness. Children gawked at their Indian food. Other families ignored them. Once Tariq started college, she gave up camping. As a Muslim American student in the years after 9/11, she was focused on standing up for civil rights. And, she says, she found it hard to tune out the barrage of messages, both subtle and overt, that "the outdoors is for white people."

But after graduating from law school and getting married in 2011, Tariq felt pulled again into the wilderness. She and her husband, Nader Jameel, a doctoral student in biology, had settled in the Washington, D.C., area, a few hours' drive from many expansive public lands. They bought some simple gear and headed out on their first shared camping trip — a bit of a fiasco since they arrived later than they had planned, brought the wrong hammer for tent stakes and struggled to start a fire. But Tariq and her husband went out again and again, camping in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, and, as the years passed and their skills progressed, in places such as Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park in Utah.

Yet that old sense of isolation was still there. As people of color and Muslim-Americans, Tariq says she and her husband often felt uncomfortable in the rural communities surrounding parklands. They rarely saw people who looked like them on their outdoor adventures.

TARIQ, pictured in Arches National Park, hopes to sweep away stereotypes about outdoorsy people.

Statistics show that people of color are underrepresented on public lands. While minorities make up about 40 percent of the population, they comprise only 20 percent of national park visitors, according to a 2009 National Park Service survey.

Last year, Tariq, who works for the federal government, was moved by the Park Service's centennial celebration and the agency's call to make public lands more welcoming to everyone. She started an Instagram account, @BrownPeopleCamping, to highlight the wilderness experiences of people of color and to connect with others trying to promote diversity in the outdoors. "I find it hard sometimes explaining to people in my community why I like to camp. Maybe I should stop trying to use so many words and just use my perspective instead," she wrote in one of her first posts. "When you go to places you believe you don't belong is when you see the profound."

Tariq, 34, hopes to sweep away old stereotypes about outdoorsy people. Hikers, climbers and kayakers aren't just skinny, youthful white people — despite what you see in gear catalogs. Nor does the outdoors belong to fans of extreme sports. "I openly and unapologetically declare that I'm a Muslim American city girl, and I am all about the outdoors," she says. "We need to celebrate people for getting outdoors and doing it however they want."

In her posts, Tariq has explored the struggles people of color face when traveling to parks and other public lands. She has written about her own experiences



© AMBREEN TARIQ

and those of others she has encountered, such as a group of Muslim teen environmentalists or a 97-year-old Japanese American woman whose family was sent to an incarceration camp during World War II. "There is some very deep-rooted and dark history for some people of color in the outdoors," she says.

Hers is one of several initiatives aimed at increasing the presence of minorities in the outdoors. Outdoor Afro organizes local chapters around the country for black people who love to camp, hike and raft. Since 2013, California outdoors advocate Teresa Baker has coordinated the annual African American National Parks Event, inviting black people to visit a park and post a photo on social media.

Tariq's posts have touched a nerve. More than 8,500 people now follow her on Instagram. Others have adopted #brownpeoplecamping and used it in their own social media posts. And while some white people have made derogatory comments, the vast majority have pledged to make the outdoors more welcoming to all. "I have so much respect for you and your message!!! For every hater there's folks like me listening and learning," commented one reader.

"The project itself has taken on a life of its own, and that's been

extremely empowering for me," Tariq says. In July, Alaska Airlines and Airstream sponsored Tariq and her husband on the first of two trips (the second will be to California), and the couple headed to the Pacific Northwest. In Olympic National Park, they hiked through the lush green Hoh Rain Forest and camped on rocky Rialto Beach. They climbed the steep trails of Mount Rainier and cooked fresh salmon, Korean beef short ribs and tandoori chicken over a campfire.

Those experiences outdoors reverberate long after they return home, Tariq says, and she dreams of eventually visiting all 59 national parks. She would love to see Montana and Wyoming and visit Maine's Acadia National Park — and document her adventures along the way. She hopes that her efforts will empower other people of color to explore the outdoors.

"What's left to discover in this fantastic world?" she wrote in one post from her Pacific Northwest trip. "I have seen oceans and I have seen deserts. I have been caught in sand storms and lightning storms. I have slept in swamps and at the edges of canyons. What more is there to make me gasp, wide-eyed in wonder?"

—JULIE SCHARPER



GIGI LOVE, the Park Service's first official troubadour, waits in Los Angeles' Union Station before setting out on an overnight train ride on the Coast Starlight.

land protection. At the time, Love was wrapping up production on a national-park-themed album.

As her folksy ode, "In the Grand," smoothed over the audience at Bright Angel, it won the attention of a nearby cluster of colleagues unwinding after a day spent discussing an innovative program known as Trails & Rails. A partnership among the Park Service, Amtrak and Texas A&M's Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences, the program places trained volunteers on Amtrak routes to spread awareness about parks. Catching the eye of Jim Mičulká, national coordinator for the partnership, one of the rail officials said of Love, "She's really good. You should think about putting her on the train." A sliver of an idea took shape.

A few weeks later, after a successful trial ride from Los Angeles to Portland, Love joined the ranks of nearly 700 other Trails & Rails VIPs — Volunteers in Parks — as the first-ever troubadour. This summer, between paying gigs and her weekly radio show, she embarked on an epic train tour, playing her park songs while traveling on lines whose names evoke a bygone era — Coast Starlight, California Zephyr and Sunset Limited. She traced the West Coast, wound through the Rockies and dipped from the Southwest into the Deep South, performing dozens of times in Amtrak observation cars and parks alike.

"People from all over the world are on the trains," Love said, and most "are kind of looking for something to do. So as soon as I start singing, it's a gathering."

For Love and Trains

A modern-day troubadour hops aboard and spreads her love of parks through song.

On the eve of the National Park Service centennial in the hubbub of Grand Canyon's Bright Angel bar, a woman with an open face framed beneath a swoop of bangs approached the stage. Removing her guitar from its sticker-clad case, Gigi Love slipped the strap over her head. "The canyon is a place

that calls my spirit home," she sang.

A self-professed seeker with a certain bohemian flair, this Moab-based singer-songwriter defies pigeonholing. She has a refreshingly genuine belief in the power of the arts and — as quickly became apparent at her performance that night — a soft spot for

© PETER NICHOLSON

The Trails & Rails program started in 2000 as a way “to reach out to nontraditional audiences at diverse sites who may not always visit national parks,” said Mičulká, a 43-year veteran of the Park Service. Reaching roughly half a million summer and weekend Amtrak riders per year, the onboard volunteers might highlight the role passenger trains have played in promoting parks, discuss how to get to parks or delve into the natural and cultural history of public lands. “That’s 500,000 people who didn’t step into a national park but who got the National Park Service message,” Mičulká said. The program has experimented with using living history volunteers, but Love’s acoustic performances are something new that he likened to a “campfire-on-the-train-type program.”

Love first picked up a guitar when she was 7. Later, as a teenager whose world was frequently upended by moves, she discovered that music provided an anchor and an avenue to making new friends. “Music was my only real hold on reality during that time,” she said.

After high school, Love hopped a Greyhound bus in Arlington, Texas, bound for college in a place she’d never been: St. George, Utah. “I arrived at St. George at night” she recalled. “The next morning, I woke up and was surrounded by red rock everywhere. I just felt like I had landed on another planet.”

It didn’t take her long to find her way to nearby Zion National Park. Whether scaling slabs of pumpkin-colored rock or challenging herself with excursions in

the river-carved Narrows, she felt liberated by all that wildness. “Everything fun that I’ve ever learned in a national park started in Zion” she said.

While Zion is the place that convinced Love she had the “potential to be brave and take risks,” it’s the Grand Canyon she holds most dear. Her all-time favorite haunt lies along the quiet North Rim — 40 bumpy miles beyond where good sense tells you to stop — at a point where she can unroll her sleeping bag and feel like she’s at the edge of the world. “It’s a very

transformative place,” she said. She credits these wide-open spaces with calming and humbling her and helping her “learn how to just be.”

Hoping to harness these lessons and use her music for good, Love pivoted from writing about people to writing about parks. With support from her husband, Peter Nicholson, a retired engineering professor who is also her manager, she embarked on a multiyear passion project that eventually evolved into an album of park-specific ballads peppered with regional imagery.

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LOVE, shown here in Yosemite, crisscrossed the country this summer, playing her music on trains that traced the West Coast, wound through the Rockies and dipped into the Deep South.

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“Glacier Symphony,” for example, was written during a rainy horseback ride into one of Glacier National Park’s high-mountain meadows. Somewhere along the way, Love had an epiphany about how the glaciers had carved out “everything that I was looking at ... the mountains, the valleys, the meadows.” This reminder about the inevitability of change in the natural world somehow helped assuage her despair over the gradual loss of the park’s namesakes and inspired the lyrics she dictated into her iPhone while astride her alabaster horse. She described it as a “prayer for the future.”

Performing her songs in the intimate setting of a train car has afforded Love a musician’s dream: an attentive, captive audience. Beyond simply educating passengers about national parks, Love wants to inspire people, further their appreciation of the arts and ignite (or reignite) their love for parks. What she’s

seen this year gives her hope.

Cocooned within lounge cars as America’s heartland hurtles by, Love has noticed the distinction between first class and coach passengers blur. Time slows. The land unrolls. And people with little in common find that the long hours and close quarters engender a degree of familiarity. Immigrants sit alongside families in transition who sit alongside elderly couples with bucket lists.

As a troubadour, Love met a New Orleans historian “full of Southern grace and style” traveling with her grandson. She chatted with a Los Angeles-bound filmmaker who finds inspiration in the faces and lives of his fellow passengers. She received Yellowstone wolf-watching tips from a man employed by the fossil fuel industry and overheard a young Chinese family bond with a family from Ohio over similar park experiences.

“The connection might only be for a brief moment,” she said, “but it’s a bridge.”

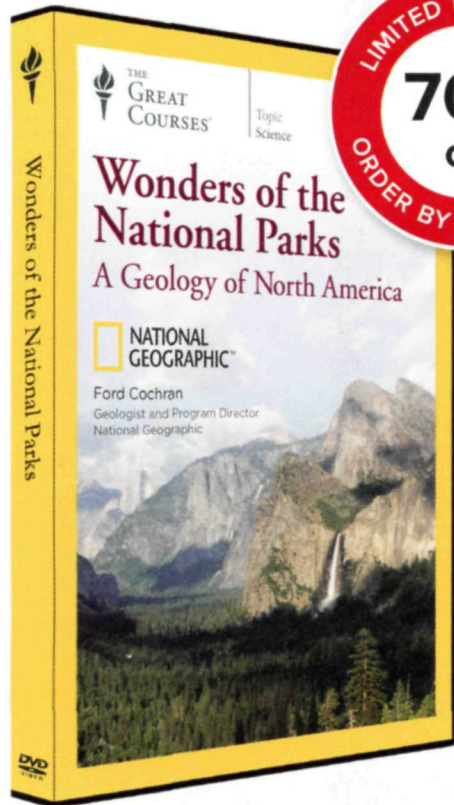
Tisha Anne Melvin of Hanceville, Alabama, a passenger traveling with her two young sons, witnessed how Love’s playing transformed the energy in the car. “It was a magnet,” she said. “Love just has this type of energy you can’t help but notice.” For Melvin, who was taking a 36-hour journey from Louisiana to Arizona on a train with no Wi-Fi, Love’s performances were “a godsend.”

Though the future of the troubadour program is uncertain, the payoff for this creative venture couldn’t be clearer to Love. “It’s crazy,” she said, “but the music is the unifying factor. Once the songs come out, all the barriers are broken down, and people just start talking about what they love about this beautiful Earth and our parks. It’s why I love being a musician and songwriter.”

—KATHERINE MCKINNEY



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PARK RANGERS and volunteers removed debris from nearly 50 miles of coastline at five of Alaska's national parks, including Katmai National Park and Preserve (pictured here).

NPS

Garbage In, Garbage Out

Volunteers and rangers removed more than 22,000 pounds of debris from Alaska's national park beaches. But will the trash just come back?

EVERY WINTER, BAYS AND INLETS that line the Gulf of Alaska are pummeled by high, angry waves. Water crashes up the shore — often reaching past the trees that stand guard at the back of each beach.

When the ocean calms and recedes each spring, many of Alaska's remote coastlines are far from the pristine pictures you see on postcards. Instead, the beaches are peppered with plastic bottles, bags, cans, lighters, cups, straws, buoys, ropes, fishing lines, flip-flops and other reminders of human civilization that have washed ashore.

The marine debris that accumulates on the shores of Alaska is more than just an eyesore. Oil drums, cigarettes, medical waste and plastics leach out

chemicals. Bears leave claw and teeth marks on coolers blown inland by storms and may ingest pieces of Styrofoam. Birds die with bellies packed full of plastic, or starve to death when tangled fishing lines clamp their beaks shut.

"It affects the environment by injuring and killing wildlife, human health by contaminating the food we consume, and the economy by entangling boat props or damaging tourist destinations," said Sharon Kim, the chief of resources at Kenai Fjords National Park. "Marine debris is by definition man-made," she added. "We created the mess. We should be actively responsible for cleaning it up."

In 2015, Kim was part of a large-scale collaboration between the state of Alaska and five of Alaska's coastal national parks — Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, and Katmai National Park and Preserve along the Gulf of Alaska, and Bering Land Bridge National Preserve and Cape Krusenstern National Monument by the

shore of the more northern Chukchi Sea — to remove marine debris from their most sullied beaches. Volunteers helped collect the garbage from nearly 50 miles of coastline. The end result: over 22,000 pounds of trash crammed into many hundreds of oversized sacks.

Scientists say billions of pieces of debris have accumulated in the oceans. As a result, washed-up trash is an increasingly common sight in Alaska and in many other coastal areas around the world. Wind and water currents arranged in large circular gyres move materials across vast oceans. Debris from Asia often travels across the northern part of the Pacific Ocean toward the U.S., whereas trash from the western South American coast moves north toward the equator before turning westward. Other pieces of debris end up in unexpected places after meandering from gyre to gyre.

In 2011, the tsunami that ravaged parts of Japan also sent the remains of entire neighborhoods floating across the Pacific, much of it ultimately heading directly into the Gulf of Alaska (Japan donated \$5 million to the U.S. to help with the cleanup). And as ice in the Arctic melts, both shipping and cruise routes through the Northwest Passage are on the rise. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this boost in traffic is increasing marine debris, which then floats down the coast of Alaska.

“Marine debris is like the problem of invasive species,” said Benjamin Pister, director of the National Park Service’s Ocean Alaska Science and Learning Center. “It only gets more expensive and more difficult to address as time goes by.”

Based on previous surveys and aerial imaging, Kim, Pister and other researchers selected 28 of the most debris-covered beaches in the five participating national parks. Then, they waited

In 2011, the tsunami that ravaged parts of Japan also sent the remains of entire neighborhoods floating across the Pacific.

for clear weather to clean each shoreline.

“None of these beaches have roads to them at all,” Kim said. “You’re either boating to them or taking a plane to them.”

Teams of Park Service workers and volunteers, including Boy Scouts, high school students and members of Alaska Native village organizations, hit the beaches. They walked in organized patterns to ensure they covered each beach in whole and sorted debris into categories — plastic, rubber, metal, rope or netting, foam, and other — before weighing, cataloging and bagging the trash. Sometimes with the help of a helicopter, they loaded the sacks onto a barge that made its way down the entire coast of Alaska, eventually ferrying the garbage to Seattle, where it was sorted and sent to landfills or recycling centers.

“It was a sad confirmation for a lot of us of the sheer volume of plastic that washes ashore,” Pister said. “If you talk to beachcombers from the 1970s, there was debris back then, but they mostly found glass. We found plastic everywhere.”

This was not only a cleanup effort but the first careful quantification of trash on these beaches, said Lori Polasek of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She collaborated with the parks to collect and analyze data during the cleanup effort. The data, she said, can be used as a benchmark to see whether trash is indeed on the rise.

Earlier this year, the team published the cleanup results in the journal *Marine Pollution Bulletin*. Based on the languages or brand names on packaging,

plastic bags and buoys, researchers found that some debris originated from Russia, Japan, Korea, Argentina, China, South Africa and Singapore. Some of the trash likely came from shipping crates that tipped off passing container ships during storms or accidents. In other cases, litter could have been thrown or dropped off fishing vessels, or the debris could have floated from the countries themselves. The trash collected also included local Alaskan grocery store bags and lines from near-shore fishing as well as refrigerators and ATVs that had been dumped on the beaches.

The immediate outcome of the cleanup is 28 temporarily spotless national park beaches, but the project isn’t over. Researchers will conduct annual surveys at some of the beaches to get a sense of how fast debris returns. Students at Alaskan high schools — some of whom were involved in the cleanup efforts — will monitor beaches as part of a curriculum on marine debris.

The continuous flow of garbage may seem an insurmountable problem, but Polasek said everyone can contribute to the solution with small changes, for example by avoiding excess packaging and using reusable bags and water bottles. Focusing on beach cleanups alone isn’t a long-term fix, Pister said.

“You can have all the money in the world, but the debris will come back again and again,” he said. “The solution is to stop it in the first place.” NP

SARAH C.P. WILLIAMS is a freelance writer who covers science, medicine and nature.



BLACK VULTURES are damaging visitors' cars at Everglades National Park, and park rangers are puzzled by the birds' behavior.

they had already ballooned into a major problem at Royal Palm, the starting point for the popular Anhinga Trail. Park rangers were puzzled by the vultures' behavior, but by 2010 they had received so many complaints that they decided to take action. Staff, even with the help of a dog, couldn't shoo away the birds all day long, and motion-activated sprinklers would have doused more visitors than vultures. Eventually, park officials decided to use a tactic that had succeeded elsewhere: hanging dead vultures from nearby trees. It dispersed the vultures at first, but the carcasses didn't last long in the Florida sun, and rangers found themselves fielding lots of questions from intrigued and alarmed visitors. Also, after a while, the vultures were no longer bothered by their dead brethren. Park wildlife biologist Lori Oberhofer has thought about providing vultures with spare tires and other pieces of rubber to poke at, but she's worried that it would attract more vultures to the parking lot.

Instead of trying to change the birds' behavior, park staff figured it might be easier to get people to adjust theirs. Since 2011, the park has been providing visitors with plastic tarps large enough to cover car roofs and windows, as well as bungee cords to secure them to the vehicles (they are now also available at Flamingo). Complaints have subsided, but Oberhofer said she's observed vultures pick at rubber through the tarp, and she's concerned that covers might not be a lasting solution.

"We're at a loss," she said. "We don't know what else we can do."

Vultures play an important ecological

Vulture Vandals

The 'garbage collectors' of the Everglades have a strange penchant for munching on windshield wipers. Can park staff stop them?

A **DAM GELBER SET OUT SO EARLY** one winter morning a few years ago that by the time he arrived at the Flamingo Marina in Everglades National Park, it was still pitch black. He couldn't see any birds or hear even a single bird chirping. So when he came back hours later from his fishing trip into the waters of Florida Bay, the environmental consultant was in for a shock. As he walked across the parking lot, he first noticed "a whole lot of bird poop" all over his pickup truck. Then he saw the rubber seals torn from his sunroof and dangling from his windows. When Gelber saw a couple of black vultures lurking nearby, he thought he was looking at the likely perpetrators.

"It was a really solid piece of work by the vultures," said Gelber, whose GMC Yukon suffered \$2,500 of damages. "It kind of put a damper on a nice day of fishing."

While vultures' car attacks were sporadic at Flamingo at that time,

and sanitary role, disposing of dead animals quickly and reducing the risk of diseases spreading. “They’re the garbage collectors,” Oberhofer said. Researchers estimated that the decline of the vulture population in India, for example, resulted in \$34 billion in additional health costs over a 14-year period because rabies infections increased significantly after feral dogs replaced vultures as scavengers.

U.S. populations of both turkey and black vultures also plummeted during the 20th century, but they’ve rebounded since the 1970s when the use of DDT was discontinued — the chemical pesticide had led to thinner eggshells that adult birds crushed when they sat on them — and raptors were afforded protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which generally prohibits people from hunting, capturing or killing listed birds. Oberhofer estimates that more than 1,000 black and turkey vultures now take up residence every winter at Buzzard’s Roost, a large cypress dome south of Royal Palm. Smaller groups of vultures roost in tree islands elsewhere in the park.

To figure out whether the park’s winged vandals were locals or transients, Everglades partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s wildlife research field station in Gainesville, Florida, to tag more than 300 black vultures. The park’s wildlife staff and USDA biologists baited them with dead pythons and placed large numbered tags on the birds’ wings (leg bands are not appropriate for vultures because they often defecate and urinate on their legs to cool themselves

Hanging dead vultures and made-in-China vulture effigies often work well to disperse roosts.

and kill bacteria, and the acidic mixture can corrode the metal and injure the birds). The data showed that a few birds traveled more than 200 miles from Everglades — including one spotted at Disney’s Animal Kingdom near Orlando — but most of the tagged vultures appeared to stay in or close to the park, said Michael Avery, a USDA wildlife biologist.

For the past 15 years, Avery and his team have been working on developing nonlethal ways to minimize human-vulture conflicts, and they’ve been busy. The birds frequently roost in large numbers on communication towers, residential trees and roofs, tearing shingles with their beaks and depositing layers of ammonia-scented droppings. Some vultures have even been known to destroy plastic cemetery flowers. Black vultures have attracted extra scrutiny because they occasionally prey on newborn calves, piglets and lambs, and some people have accused the raptors of going after their pets.

Avery has found that hanging dead vultures and made-in-China vulture effigies often work well to disperse roosts, and lasers and pyrotechnics can help, too. (Oberhofer said she just bought an “industrial-strength” laser pointer.) But figuring out why black vultures attack cars’ rubber and vinyl parts has been more challenging. Even

though vultures ingest little of what they tear apart, Avery first suspected vultures were attracted to certain compounds in the rubber, but when he tested the hypothesis, the results were inconclusive. “We’re not really sure why they do this,” he said.

Keith Bildstein, the director of conservation science at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania, has a theory. He pointed out that kea, sheep-eating parrots in New Zealand, also chew on cars’ window seals, and he’s observed the same behavior among striated caracaras in the Falkland Islands. Bildstein, who recently authored a book about raptor behavior, said black vultures are very social birds that often feed in large groups where competition is fierce. The birds with the strongest backs and necks get the choice morsels, so it makes sense for vultures to exercise those muscles. Because rubber seals and wiper blades happen to have a similar consistency to dead animals’ muscles and tendons, he thinks black vultures have turned Everglades’ parking lots into their own private gyms.

“When you think about a bird for which every meal is a food fight,” he said, “you start to understand why they want to go into training.” NP

NICOLAS BRULLIARD is associate editor of National Parks magazine.



Remember Aunt Harriet

BY RONA KOBELL • PHOTOS BY DAVE HARP

THESE RUTTED TRACKS in Poplar Neck run close to routes Harriet Tubman would have followed as she led enslaved people along the Choptank River to freedom.

She taught them courage and endurance. Now, Harriet Tubman's descendants can walk the paths she walked and pay their respects at a park honoring the great liberator.

Harriet Tubman's descendants are running late.

Tubman's great-great-niece, Valerie Ardelia Ross Manokey, and her great-great-great-nephew, Charles E.T. Ross, have agreed to meet me in Cambridge, on Maryland's Eastern Shore. From there, we will drive about 20 minutes to the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center. The recently completed facility, which sits on 17 acres of land, is part of a new national historical park and the crown jewel in a string of sites that tell the story of Tubman, a girl born into slavery who famously became a great liberator.

I'm hoping that as we visit some historic sites, Manokey and Ross can tell me more about the woman known as the Moses of her people, a wife and sister and mother and aunt who loved her brethren so fiercely that she repeatedly risked her life to free them. Since my tour guides are a few minutes behind, I wait in the back of the Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center in downtown Cambridge. William Jarmon, a retired teacher who volunteers at the museum, has just started a talk about Tubman's early life in the Cambridge area. He's speaking to a group from the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, one of Washington, D.C.'s oldest African American congregations.



Jarmon, a county native, understands the pull of this place Tubman called home. Many members of Tubman's family felt it too, he says. In fact, several still live here.

On cue, the back door swings open. Ross comes in first. A 52-year-old whose dreadlocks have been growing for nearly two decades, he embraces Jarmon. ("I'm a hugger," he tells me later.) Next comes Manokey, 81 and leaning on a cane. She's wearing a pressed white shirt, and her face is full of amazed joy at the assembled gathering. "I was just expecting one reporter!" she says.

When Jarmon introduces the pair as Tubman's descendants, the room erupts in applause. Several visitors take photos; a few ask for autographs. The pastor pronounces the event a "blessing."

Manokey wasn't planning to make a speech, but she approaches the lectern and steadies herself. She grew up on Pine Street, she tells the crowd, referencing the corridor that separated Cambridge's historic black neighborhood from the rest of the town. She lived here during the 1967 uprising, when the all-white fire department refused to extinguish the blaze that burned down the black elementary school. She has been through segre-

gation and poverty; she has survived cancer and a stroke that left her partially paralyzed. But all her life, when she considered complaining about hardship, she would recall her parents' words: Remember Aunt Harriet. If she could endure, so can you.

Her family started pushing for a Harriet Tubman memorial in the 1950s. At that time, black residents could smell hot biscuits and fried fish as they walked down Race Street, the town's unfortunately named main boulevard, but they were only allowed to buy carry-out and had to use the back doors. No white people wanted to talk about Harriet Tubman, she says, and they certainly didn't want to honor her.

"People told us, 'You'll never get anything,'" Manokey says. "But 'never' means you have just got to fight harder. You might get knocked back to your knees, but you are going to get back up."

Now, she adds, "I honor Harriet. I honor the name.

"I honor Harriet. I honor the name. I honor the stories that I have heard. And I thank God that I have lived long enough to see this."

I honor the stories that I have heard. And I thank God that I have lived long enough to see this."

'Something kept telling me to come home'

Once I'm able to pry Manokey away from her admirers, Ross helps his aunt into his truck, and the three of us set out toward the stands of skinny loblolly pines that are a signature feature of this part of the state. Only a few miles past the Walmart, the subdivisions and gas stations fade, and the landscape quickly turns rural. We whiz by farms and golden marshes with guts and creeks squiggling through. These waterways were once an escape route for Tubman and other enslaved people. Creaky, wooden bridges still cross creeks; locals dangle chicken neck as bait to catch blue crabs. Remoteness and rising sea levels have curbed development in some parts of the county, and much of the land looks as it would have in Tubman's time. Alan

Spears, NPCA's cultural resources director, put it this way: "If Harriet Tubman came back today, she could navigate that landscape."

Born in 1822 and named Araminta Ross, Harriet Tubman was one of nine children. Her mother, Rit, an enslaved woman, was assigned to cook and care for the family of her master, Edward Brodess, and scarcely had time for her own children; her father, Ben, was a skilled woodsman who eventually secured his freedom at age 45. When Tubman was a child, two of her sisters were sold down south. She never saw them again.

Shortly after Brodess died in 1849, Tubman made her escape to Philadelphia using a network of safe houses and hiding places established by Quakers, freed blacks, slaves and abolitionists. Many know the next chapter: She helped rescue 70 people, including her own parents, guiding them north using the stars and her formidable wits. Tubman was far from the only one to run; slavery, she said, was "the next thing to hell." But she appears to be one of the few to return — 13 times in all. "I was free," she said. "And

they should be free."

She later became a soldier for the Union Army, a spy, a nurse and a suffragist, eventually settling in Auburn, New York, where she continued to help formerly enslaved people find work and lodging, even though she was nearly destitute herself at times. She died there in 1913.

Ross and Manokey haven't made it to Auburn yet, but they say they're hoping to go one day. Ross steers by the road to the Brodess Farm, where Tubman's family was enslaved. The farm is part of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, a 125-mile driving tour that winds past 36 historic sites in Maryland and a few others in Delaware. They include churches, cemeteries and meeting houses. Some have been restored and are open to tours, but the Brodess house was torn down long ago, and the land is privately owned.

Manokey, Ross and I keep driving, around bends and twists and then past the turn for the Bucktown Village Store, one of the byway's highlights. Nestled among farm roads, the store has been restored to



THE LANDSCAPE of the Eastern Shore, including the vast, marshy Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, has changed little since the time Tubman was enslaved there.



© COURTESY OF DORCHESTER COUNTY TOURISM

MANAGED JOINTLY by the state of Maryland and the Park Service, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center opened to the public in March.

asked, “Who was Harriet Tubman?” The students answered: She was a woman. She was a slave. The teacher passed out a picture of Tubman to color and two crayons: one black, and one gray. End of lesson.

The next year, Manokey did the lesson herself. She told the kids much more about her ancestor, and she went shopping for crayons herself so she’d have more colors to pass out.

“I didn’t feel like I was a good teacher. I knew I was,” says Manokey, a mother of five. “I had

look as it did in Tubman’s day. Here, Tubman suffered a traumatic injury. An enslaved man had left home without permission, and his overseer caught up with him at the store. Tubman was there buying food. The overseer asked Tubman to tie up the slave, but she refused. He then threw a two-pound weight at the man, but it hit Tubman instead, causing her dizzy spells and seizures for the rest of her life.

Manokey remembers first hearing Harriet Tubman’s name when she was 5. Knowing that Tubman was in her, she says, made her fight harder for what she believed in.

The daughter of two canner workers, Manokey at 16 married a man who worked in one of the county’s famous fish houses processing seafood. She studied social work and went on to work at every county school except the most southerly, flood-prone one. “I had to draw a line, because I can’t swim,” she says. Eventually she became a teacher’s aide.

The schools didn’t teach much about Tubman then. One year, Manokey remembers, the teacher in her classroom

confidence. I had pride.”

Unlike Manokey — who stayed in Cambridge, even though she says the racism was “very thick” — Ross left after high school to attend the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. (“You were born drawing,” his aunt says.) He then moved to Atlanta for a career with the airlines. He was laid off after



© KAREN MINOT



the 9/11 attacks, “and something kept telling me to come home,” he says. He did, and now has a job as an education specialist, working with students facing in-school suspension. It is a job, Ross says, in which he draws on his famous ancestor for inspiration. “I’m the one who is supposed to be receiving something. Let me receive it,” he says. “I need to basically continue what she did.” He frequently uses art and music in the classroom and tells his students every day how worthy they are.

Among friends, he jokes he is “Prince Charles of Dorchester,” and among family, he is Yogi, known for his art as well as his cooking. He and Manokey dream of opening a soul-food restaurant one day.

It’s not just Tubman’s descendants who still live here. Ross likely shared his Cambridge-South Dorchester High School classes with students whose ancestors owned his ancestors. It wasn’t all that long ago, Manokey says, that the black and white parts of

town held their own parades.

Yet in some ways, this town of 12,500 has embraced change. Tubman’s stoic photo now adorns city streets and country roads, identifying the Underground Railroad sites to tourists. Many residents have welcomed the park and byway, which have given the area an economic boost. In 2008, Victoria Jackson-Stanley was elected the city’s first black mayor, running on a platform of “one Cambridge.”

‘Like a neglected weed’

When we arrive at the new visitor center, park manager Dana Paterra embraces my guides. She works for the Maryland Park Service, but the center, a \$21 million project, is managed jointly by the state and the National Park Service. The building has an open floor

FOR MANY YEARS, Harriet Tubman’s descendants — including Charles E.T. Ross and his aunt, Valerie Ardelia Ross Manokey (above) — pushed for a site that would honor their famous ancestor.



AFTER VANDALS spray-painted over a painting of Harriet Tubman, Charles Ross was asked to paint a new portrait of his great-great-great aunt for a small memorial park in Cambridge.

plan and includes a garden and pavilion outside. The land is surrounded by Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, and it's a great place to spot rare birds and waterfowl.

Our arrival causes some commotion. A ranger tells visitors that Ross and Manokey are Tubman's descendants, and again people approach for photos and autographs.

The center's exhibits begin with some background

about Tubman's life, in her own words, often against the backdrop of Dorchester County's tides and marshes. "I grew up like a neglected weed," the story begins, "ignorant of liberty, having no experience of it. Then I was not happy or contented."

In the Deep South, a single family might own hundreds of slaves. In Maryland, it was more common to own just a few. Maryland slave-owners liked to point that out and present themselves to the world as the enlightened enslavers.

Not so, says historian Kate Clifford Larson, author of the 2003 Tubman biography, "Bound for the Promised Land." Maryland slavery was still slavery. Larson, a consultant on the visitor center, says the displays represent an effort not only to honor a hero but to recognize those who endured.

"We've tried to not just always focus on Tubman, but the communities she worked in, the communities that raised her, the communities that she went back to," she says. Ross and Manokey's forebears played significant roles: "They kept the secrets. They held the stories," she says. "They protected those who were left behind."

An overzealous park ranger is so excited to see Manokey that he commandeers the wheelchair she is using. I catch up with the pair at one of Ross'

NPCA AT WORK

The first meeting of the Friends of Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center was held in August. NPCA invited local members and supporters to attend to learn more about how the new group will help preserve Tubman's story and legacy. Friends groups support parks in a number of ways: by increasing public awareness, volunteering, sponsoring special events, securing grants and planning fundraising events. For more information, call 410-221-2290.

“I grew up like a neglected weed, ignorant of liberty, having no experience of it. Then I was not happy or contented.”

favorite displays, the one that chronicles Tubman’s bravery in battle. Their ancestor would spend the remainder of her years fighting the U.S. government for back wages related to her military service during the Civil War. But Ross likes to focus on the rarity of a

woman outwitting Confederates.

We continue to the story of Tubman’s escape, a part Manokey relishes. Tubman simply walked out singing, passed her master and closed the gate. Next to the display, a photo shows the sun peeking through the tops of trees. “I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person,” reads the accompanying quote. “There was such a glory over everything; the sun came up like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in heaven.”

We stop and gaze at the photo as the spiritual “Deep River” plays solemnly. I remember something Larson told me, that it’s simplistic to just say Tubman was brave. Tubman was afraid every day, during every escape. It was her fear, Larson said, that protected her; that, and her ability to read the sky, the landscape and people.

Manokey seems to have inherited some of those traits; she is blunt, honest and insightful. She and I continue to the display about Harriet’s husband, John Tubman, a free man she married around 1844. (They had no biological children, but Harriet later adopted a daughter.) In 1851, Harriet came back for him, but he had taken a new wife and refused to go. At first furious, she realized that if he could do without her, she could do without him. I ask Manokey what she thinks about John’s decision. “That’s just a man being a man,” she says.

Build it around the land

Ross learned firsthand at “Harriet on the Hill” days, when he and family members lobbied Congress for the center, that money for new parks is tough to

secure. That was just one of many challenges Tubman’s descendants and park supporters faced. Also, where to put a historical park? Auburn, New York, which is now home to a related national park honoring Tubman, has significant landmarks including her house and the home for the aged she opened there. Dorchester County didn’t have anything like that.

“How do you establish a historic site when no artifacts are left?” Spears of NPCA asks. His answer: Build it around the land.

Finally, in the 1990s, with help from Patrick Noonan of the nonprofit The Conservation Fund, Tubman descendants, conservationists, local politi-



THE BUCKTOWN VILLAGE STORE, where Tubman suffered a terrible injury at the hands of an overseer, has been restored to look as it did in Tubman’s day.



THE CLASSIC

Dorchester County landscape: water, grasses, trees and sky.

cians, and state and federal agencies, the park slowly began to take shape. Even then, there was resistance. Acknowledging Tubman's bravery meant admitting that white Dorchester County families committed acts of almost unimaginable cruelty. That was not something many descendants

felt comfortable doing. A bullet hole was shot in a state sign marking an Underground Railroad site. In 2000, three years after the Maryland State Highway Administration renamed a stretch of Route 50 for Harriet Tubman, an artist painted her portrait there; in 2008, vandals spray-painted over it. Eventually, Ross was hired to paint a new one protected in plexiglass. Manokey says she likes the new painting much better, because it shows a younger Tubman and the marshy terrain.

Ultimately, President Barack Obama used the Antiquities Act to designate the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in 2013. The Conservation Fund donated the property, and Maryland offered additional funds. The opening dedication in March was not just a parade of dignitaries but a reunion for the New York and Maryland Tubmans. Slavery had broken up the family; Harriet brought them back together.

GETTING THERE

Some points of interest in the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park and along the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway include:

The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, 4068 Golden Hill Road, Church Creek. 410-221-2290.

The Bucktown Village Store, 4303 Bucktown Road. 410-901-9255.

Brodess Farm, Greenbrier Road, Bucktown. (Privately owned.)

Bestpitch Ferry Bridge, Bestpitch Ferry Road and Transquaking River, Bucktown.

Harriet Tubman Memorial Garden, U.S. 50 at Washington Street, Cambridge.

Dorchester County Courthouse, 206 High Street, Cambridge.

Harriet Tubman Museum, 424 Race Street, Cambridge. 410-228-0401.

For more information, go to www.nps.gov/hatu. Find a map of the self-driving tour along the byway at harriettubmanbyway.org.

'Still making changes'

On the ride back, Ross says he feels Tubman's presence most in the quiet of the woods, among the tulip poplars. As he drops me at my car downtown, I realize that I'd parked near the courthouse steps where his ancestors were sold to faraway plantations. They were the great-great-great-aunts and uncles and cousins whose stories he never got to hear. I have passed this courthouse, these steps, dozens of times, never knowing their history. In front of the building, a young couple is meeting up for a date.

They probably have no idea about the history of the place. But Ross thinks that one day they will. The more painful the history, the longer the reckoning. And Harriet Tubman's time, at long last, has truly come.

"She's still making changes today, and she's been buried over 100 years," he says. "That's the way you'd like your life to be."

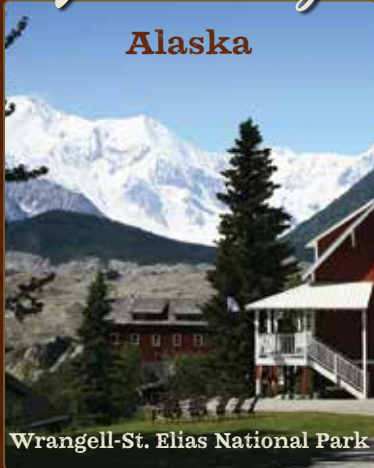
RONA KOBELL is a staff writer for the Chesapeake Bay Journal and a former Baltimore Sun reporter. Her work has appeared in many national publications.

Photographer and filmmaker **DAVE HARP** specializes in documenting the flora, fauna, people and landscape of the Chesapeake Bay region.

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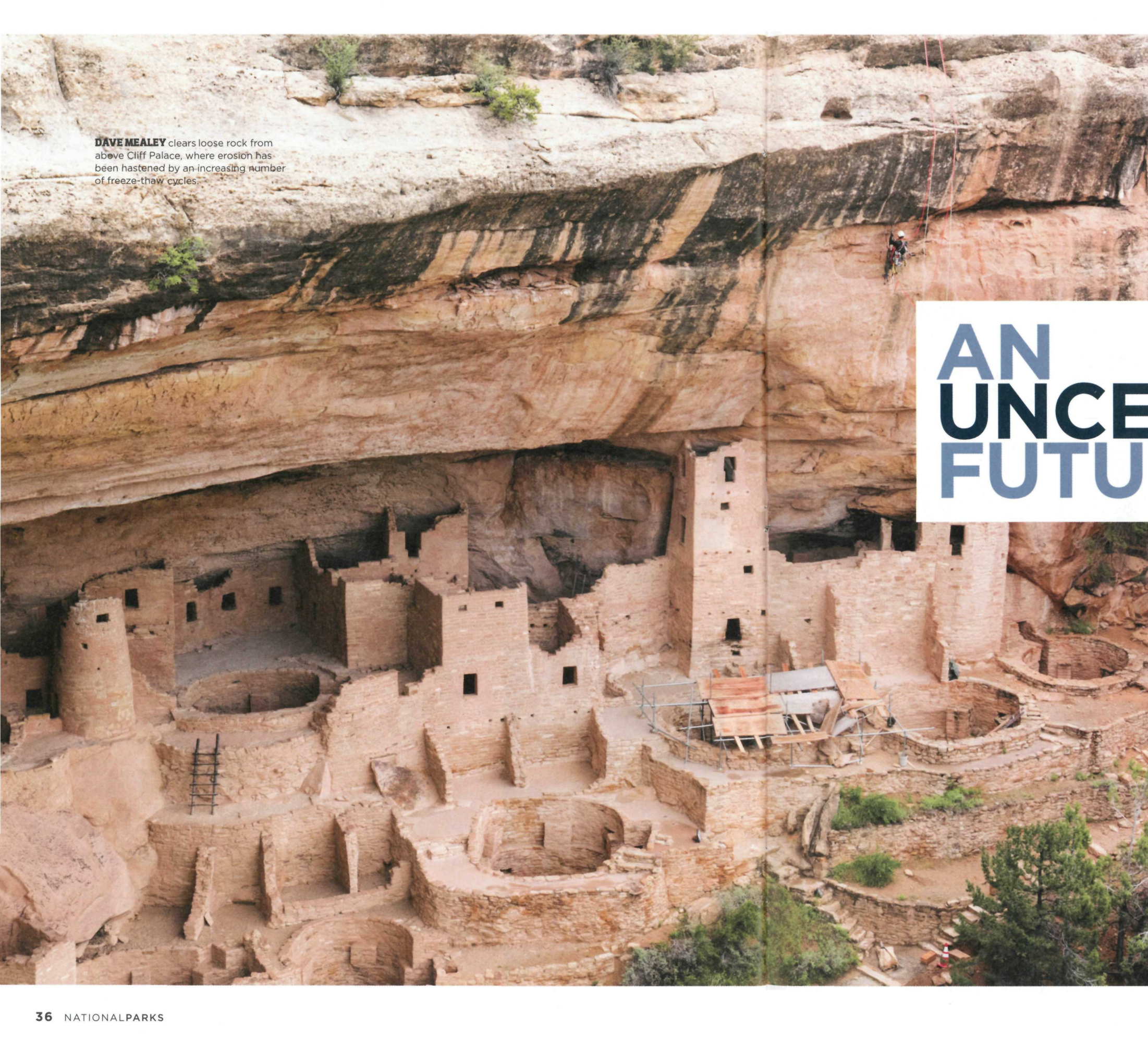
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DAVE MEALEY clears loose rock from above Cliff Palace, where erosion has been hastened by an increasing number of freeze-thaw cycles.

As climate change shapes the Southwest, Mesa Verde National Park strives to protect both ancient forests and vulnerable cliff dwellings.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

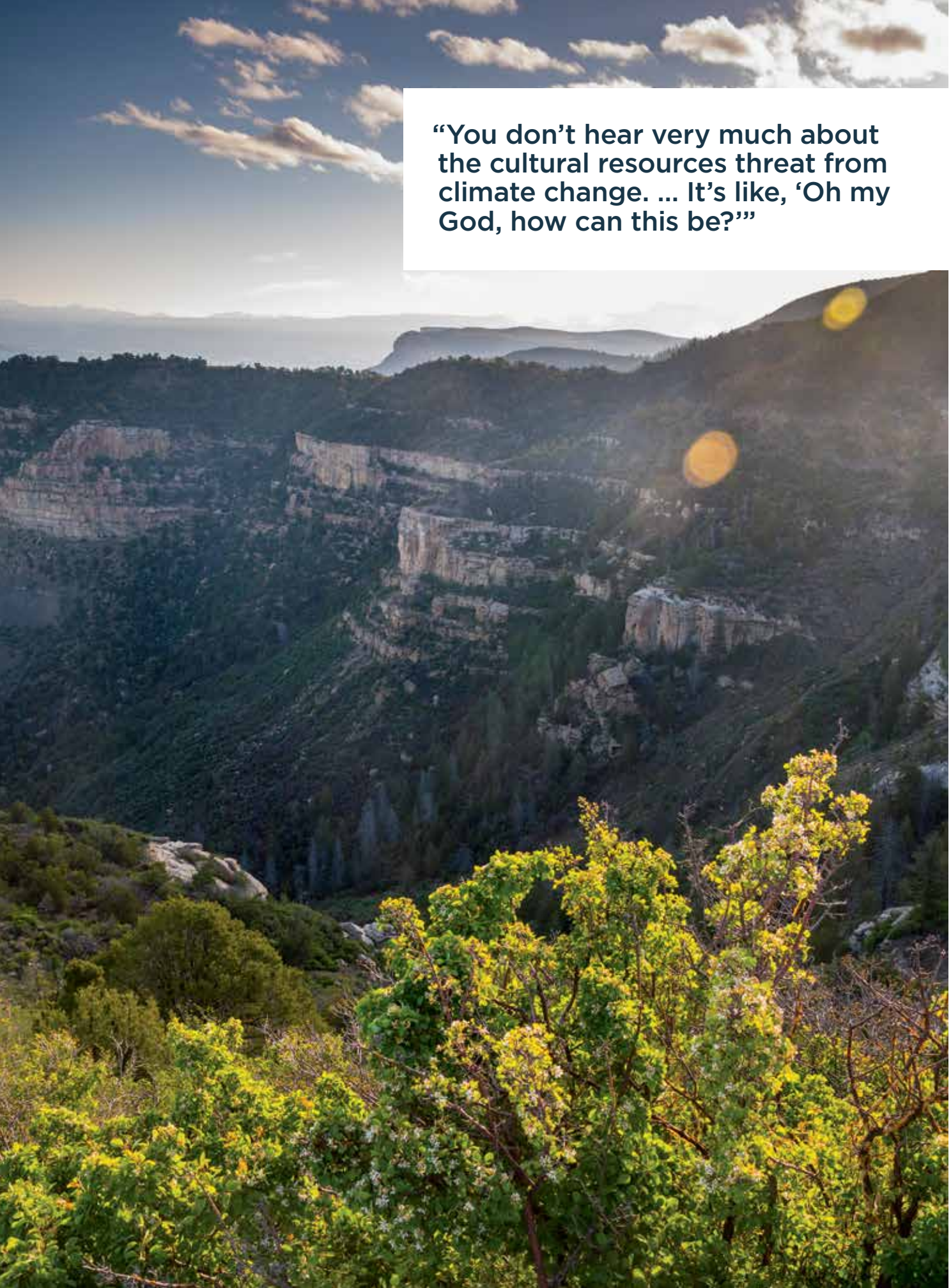
By Kate Siber

Hooked onto a rope slung around a tree, National Park Service rock climber Dave Mealey walked backward off a cliff above Spruce Tree House, one of the best-preserved Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings in Mesa Verde National Park. About 10 feet below the rim, he peered into a hole with a

bolt inside, evidence of a 1960s-era attempt to staple the crumbling bedrock together. He juggled the rod, picked up a piece of grout that came loose, tossed it up to his partner, Derek Beitner, and snapped a few photos. Across the canyon, crowds of visitors gaped with their cameras and phones aloft.

A specialized Park Service climbing team, the duo worked quickly, keeping an eye on the sky. That morning, a Tuesday in May, was unseasonably cold and stormy. Hours before, hail had pelted the pinyon-juniper woodlands, plonking loudly on car roofs and coating roads in a two-inch-thick layer of slippery white balls. “The weather has been really weird this year — the last few years, actually,” said Tim Hovezak, program manager for preservation archaeology at the Colorado park.

Hovezak, along with Park Service geotechnical engineer James Mason, had called in the climbers to inspect



“You don’t hear very much about the cultural resources threat from climate change. ... It’s like, ‘Oh my God, how can this be?’”

the bolts and the sandstone cliff. What they found would help Mason, Hovezak and other park staff determine what needed to be done to stabilize the rock. Spruce Tree House has been closed to visitors since late 2015 because of dangerous rockfall, which threatens both the ruins and visitors. After much study, park staff deliberated over solutions this summer: Bolt the rock together again? Set up a metal mesh net to catch flying rocks? Or aggressively clean the cliff of loose rock annually, the way a dentist scratches off plaque and tartar?

The same erosion that carved the sweeping alcoves in these sandstone cliffs will eventually lead to their demise, but staff believe that climate change may be hastening the disintegration. In particular, they blame freeze-thaw cycles, in which water seeps deep into the stone, then freezes and expands, wedging the rock apart. After the ice melts, water sinks deeper into the rock and repeats the cycle. As climate change brings wilder weather,



them down so that the park could open the site to visitors after a seasonal closure. Hovezak's team had built scaffolding to protect the ruins, and the stones clattered on the plywood below. A small crowd gathered on the canyon edge to watch the men dangle.

With a small hammer, Mealey tapped the rock to release fist-sized stones. *Plink plink plink*. Suddenly, to his surprise, an 800-pound trunk-shaped boulder broke loose. The audience gasped as it barreled down, smashing through the plywood and landing on the sandy floor of a ruin with a great boom that ruptured the silence of the canyon and echoed off the cliffs.

The effects of climate change on landscapes and wildlife in national parks are well documented. Glaciers are vanishing. Bird migration routes are changing. Precipitation patterns are shifting. But what about the archaeological and cultural resources the parks also protect?



A VIEW of the mesa and surrounding plains from the Montezuma Valley Overlook (far left). Middle and left: Lupine plants growing in a section of the park that had been burned in a wildfire.

temperatures swing above and below freezing more frequently. Anecdotally, Tim Hovezak, who leads a team of Park Service stonemasons who fix and care for the ruins, reports seeing significantly more rockfall in recent years, though it's difficult to collect data to show that.

In general, without a control group, it can be challenging to pinpoint exactly which phenomena, from crumbling cliffs to displaced species, are the result of global warming. "You can't run parallel universes and say, 'OK, here you don't have climate change and here you do.' You can theorize it's happening here, but you can't prove it," said George San Miguel, natural resource manager at Mesa Verde. "The question is, how much intervention should we do?"

The next day, under a partly cloudy sky, Mealey and Beitner tied ropes around trees above Cliff Palace, a magnificent stone village with 150 rooms and 23 ceremonial chambers known as kivas. Directed by Mason, who radioed to them from the opposite cliff, they took turns rappelling down. Their mission was to clear off rocks and sand that had loosened from the cliff and trundle

NPCA at Work

Because of extensive oil, gas and coal production near the Four Corners, the area was named a "methane hot spot" by NASA in 2016. A potent greenhouse gas, methane contributes to a warming climate globally. NPCA is working to reduce methane emissions in the Four Corners and across the nation. We are also working to address additional problems associated with industrial fuel development, such as reduced visibility caused by other pollutants, an issue in Mesa Verde and the surrounding area.

—Vanessa Mazal, Colorado program manager at NPCA

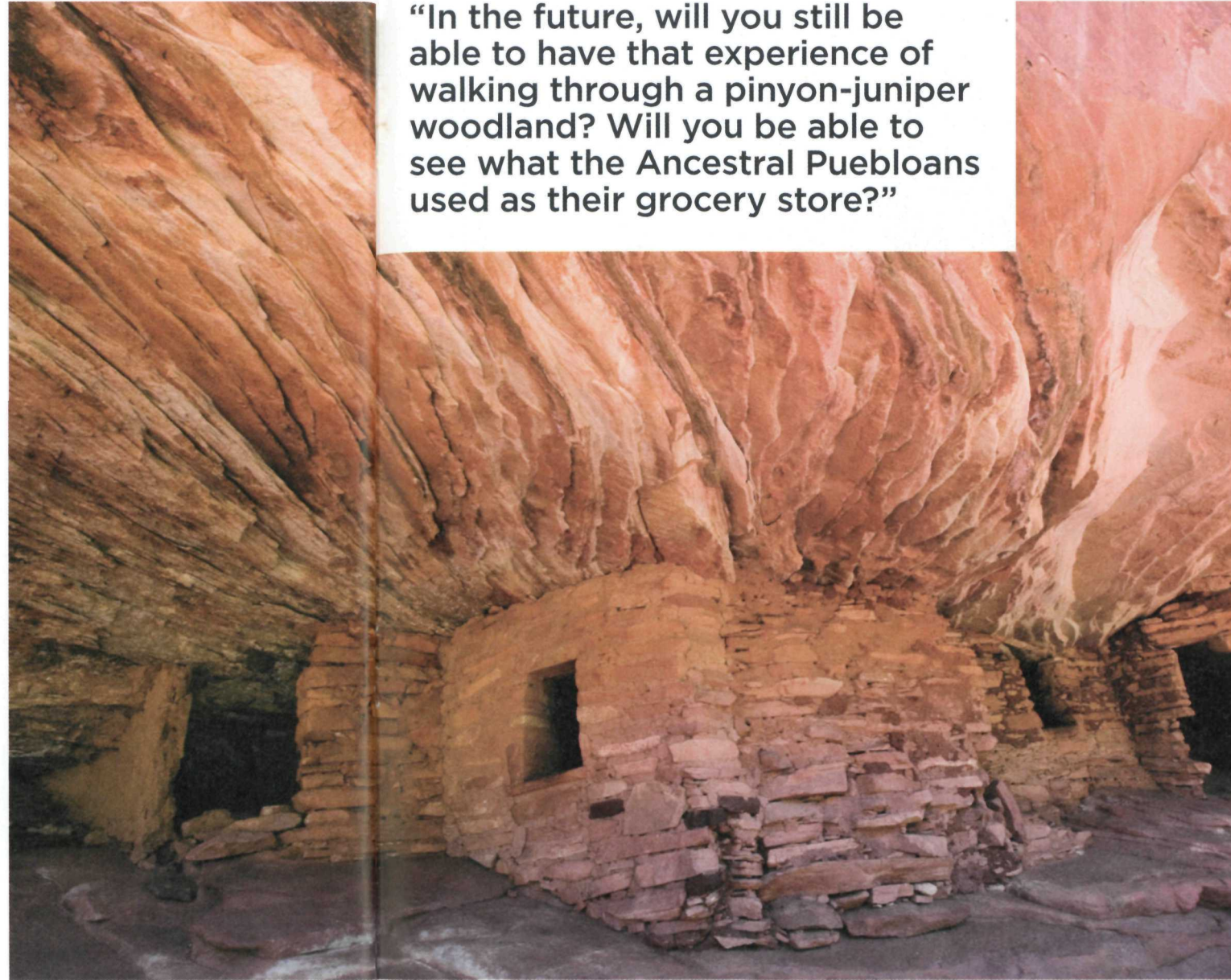


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“In the future, will you still be able to have that experience of walking through a pinyon-juniper woodland? Will you be able to see what the Ancestral Puebloans used as their grocery store?”



© TOM VEZDMINDEN PICTURES

MESA VERDE has lost about half of its forest cover since 1906, when it was founded, with fires burning 24,000 acres from just 2000 to 2003 (far left, top). Far left, bottom: Ranger Kay Barnett leads a Cliff Palace tour. Left: Part of the thrill of seeing Mesa Verde ruins is imagining what it must have been like to live in a sprawling stone village so many centuries ago.

cal sites, whether it's big raindrops or floods coming down a canyon," said George San Miguel. "Even smaller or lighter burning wildfires are going to be a risk to park resources." The Park Service considers the pinyon-juniper forests to be cultural treasures. Ancestral Puebloans used the trees for everything from house posts to firewood and depended on the pinyon's protein-rich, fat-rich nuts for sustenance.

"We want visitors to have the experience of stepping back in time and walking in the footsteps of these ancient people," said Kristy Sholly, chief of interpretation. "In the future, will you still be able to have that experience of walking through a pinyon-juniper woodland? Will you be able

"You don't hear very much about the cultural resources threat from climate change," said Vanessa Mazal, Colorado program manager for NPCA. "You think about the effect on natural resources, but the fact that there can be this amount of exposure that's degrading an ancient resource, that's surprising and gets people's attention. It's like, 'Oh my God, how can this be?'"

Sea-level rise threatens archaeological remains on shorelines from Alaska to Florida. Along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, more intense storms are expected to batter historic structures, such as Fort Jefferson in Florida's Dry Tortugas National Park. In Mesa Verde, the first national park established to protect archaeological treasures, cliff disintegration, wildfire, loss of surface water and the proliferation of invasive species are the biggest climate-related threats to park resources. Despite uncertainty around what the future holds, a diverse team of park

staffers is working to safeguard these irreplaceable dwellings and the plant and animal species that have lived here since the time of the ancients.

In southwest Colorado, the signs of climate change are already apparent. The mean average air temperatures have increased by 2 degrees over the last three decades, and bark beetles, which thrive in warmer conditions, have ravaged forests. Between the late 20th century and 2035, temperatures are expected to rise between 2 and 5 degrees. In August, a group of nonprofits, universities and federal agencies released a report that analyzed how changing conditions will affect the area's pinyon-juniper forests. The researchers predicted that in less than 20 years, summers at lower elevations could last one to three weeks longer, and the risk from wildfires will increase up to twelvefold.

Fire is the most noticeable sign of climate change in Mesa

Verde. Although no single fire can be attributed to global warming, scientists correlate the increasing number of wildfires with the changing climate. Mesa Verde has lost about half of its forest cover since 1906, when it was founded, with fires burning 24,000 acres from just 2000 to 2003. (More recently, fewer infernos have raged because detection methods have improved, allowing firefighters to suppress fires quickly, and local conditions have not been quite so dry.) Along the park's narrow winding roads, wooden signs bear the names and dates of fires in recognition of what happened to these once-lush forests. Fire also has scarred some ancient stone walls, and it caps the soil with a hydrophobic layer, preventing water from seeping in. As a result, water rushes over the land as if it were rock, and that can damage artifacts and exacerbate flash flooding.

"Moving water is one of the worst things for archaeologi-

to see what the Ancestral Puebloans used as their grocery store? If not, it isn't really the same story anymore."

To reduce the likelihood that lightning strikes will swell into uncontrollable blazes, park staff cut down small shrubs and trees, dubbed "fuel" in firefighting lingo. They thin forests near prime attractions like the cliff dwellings, some of which still feature original log beams and flammable artifacts. "But there's nothing we can do to radically alter all the vegetation in the park," said San Miguel. "We don't have the workers or money to do that." In the early 2000s, flames licked close to some dwellings identified by a 1990s study as particularly vulnerable to wildfire. Staff were concerned, but after the fires passed, they were relieved to find that the blazes did not damage the sites as expected, perhaps because the ruins were tucked in alcoves where the heat couldn't reach them.



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A sea of blackened trees can appear eerily beautiful, but they also portend deeper changes to plant and animal communities. Pinyons grow slowly and only start reproducing at about 50 or 60 years of age. Even in places where infernos raged decades ago, the forests aren't regenerating. A 2015 study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* suggests that the needleleaf evergreen forests in the Southwest will likely die out by 2100. In Mesa Verde, different casts of birds have moved into burned areas, supplanting forest species like the pinyon jay and gray vireo. And invasive non-native plants are taking root. One rare native plant is particularly susceptible to the changes: the Chapin Mesa milkvetch, a spindly tuft that grows only in the park and adjacent tribal lands.

On another Tuesday in May, I sat cross-legged on the ground in a burnt forest, staring unblinking at the plant, which bloomed with dozens of delicate white trumpet-like flowers. To a casual observer, I might have appeared like a Zen monk or perhaps simply crazy. But this was contemplation in the service of science. Along with several other locals, I volunteered to help Park Service ecologist Tova Spector and Renee Rondeau, an ecologist with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, perform a study on the plant.

Since 2001, researchers have studied this endemic species at the request of the Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wild-

ANCESTRAL PUEBLOANS lived at Mesa Verde for over 700 years, from A.D. 600 to 1300.

life Service, which recognizes it as a candidate for the endangered species list. In 2002, a wildfire swept through the study area, offering an unexpected opportunity to intimately observe how fire affects the plant.

At first, the milkvetch seemed to thrive in the burnt forests, outcompeting other plants. But 14 years after the fire, researchers saw that new seedlings were not sprouting. Over time, the plant fares much better in unburned forests and dwindles in burns. But why?

"It's kind of a detective story, and we're trying to figure it out," said Rondeau, as she packed up a bright orange backpack with supplies, including a yardstick, wind gauge and thermometer. Rondeau, a small, hardy, charcoal-haired woman with an outsize enthusiasm for plants, has lots of hypotheses: Perhaps the milkvetch is languishing in burnt areas because the soil is dryer from the direct sunlight or temperatures fluctuate more dramatically without the insulating effect of a forest. Or maybe a non-native grass that has thrived post-burn is to blame, or there are fewer insects in burnt forests and therefore less pollination.

This study was exploring the last idea by comparing the number of pollinators in burnt and old-growth forests. My

task: Count the pollinator visits at one randomly selected plant for precisely 10 minutes. After setting a timer, I plopped down and stared at its delicate stalks so I didn't miss a single buzzing critter. Crickets chirped. Meadowlarks trilled. One drowsy ant crawled into a flower, and a bee zoomed by. No pollinators.

"The bane of a biologist ... zeros," said Rondeau, who finished up her count at a different plant and recorded her findings — also zeros — on an iPad. "I hate zeros. It just doesn't tell you much." While any given field day might present leads or dead-ends, the multiyear study has already revealed information about this quirky plant that will inform the Fish and Wildlife Service's decision about whether to list it as threatened or endangered. Still, there are many unknowns — a fact that motivates Rondeau. "It's cool," she said, tromping through the field to the next plant, "to have so many mysteries to solve."

To the average layperson, who may be unaware of the link between the climate and phenomena such as wildfire, the effects of global warming are largely invisible at Mesa Verde. But staff hope to educate visitors and challenge people to think more deeply about the broad changes happening in the park and across the planet.

"Even as a park employee, when I came here a year ago from Alaska, I didn't expect to see the effects of climate change," said Sholly. "Visitors are also surprised to hear about it — and that's why I want to make sure we're getting the message out."

Sholly is overseeing the development of two interpretive

exhibits about climate change in the park for the visitor center and the museum. Rangers also often incorporate the topic into their tours of the cliff dwellings: Drought caused by climate change, archaeologists theorize, played a role in the mass exodus of the ancients from this area at the end of the 13th century.

"It's definitely something that we tie in with what's happening now," said Sholly. "Even though the changes back then were not human-caused, there are similar effects today — decreased water availability, more fires and changing ecosystems."

There is some evidence of violence among the Ancestral Puebloans at the end of their occupation, perhaps because of competition for resources. On a walk through the blackened fingers of burnt trees one afternoon, I contemplated the overwhelming nature of the changes we face now.

Part of the thrill of Mesa Verde National Park is imagining what it must have been like to live in a stone village so many centuries ago and comparing it to our own lives. I stopped at an overlook with views of Long House, a series of elegant towers and rooms perched in an alcove. The residents must have tackled great challenges and faced considerable danger surviving in this dry land. And yet, they built wonders. Their chapter, of course, has ended, and ours is still unfolding. How will we respond to the challenges of our own time?


KATE SIBER is a Durango, Colorado-based freelance writer and correspondent for Outside magazine. She wrote about grizzly bears, paleontology and an intrepid marathoner for the summer issue.



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THE *WILD* CONGAREE

"I'm scared," Chrissy called out in the dark.

I could barely hear her over the rain pounding our small backpacking tent. Boom! Another massive crack of thunder shook the air above our little spit of sand.

"I am, too," I said.

Lightning pulsed like a slow-motion strobe light, turning the tent a pale shade of blue every couple of seconds. Flash. Boom! Flash. Boom! Chrissy rolled over and reached out her hand. "No, I'm really scared. What if the river rises?"

"It won't," I said, even though I didn't really know what would happen.

"Maybe we should pack up our

gear, so we're ready in case it does," she said. The din of the storm made her voice sound small and distant.

"That's a great idea." At least it would give us something to do while we shuddered through the tempest. I unzipped the tent door, grabbed the sand-covered dry bags from the small vestibule and dragged them inside. Ten minutes later, the tent was clear except for our rain jackets, sleeping pads and one sleeping bag to share for the rest of the night.

With nothing else to do, we crouched on all fours on top of our sleeping pads. I vaguely remembered

BY GREG M. PETERS

THE VIEW from Bates Bridge of the Congaree River, a short, winding ribbon of flat water that forms where the Saluda and Broad Rivers meet in Columbia.



CHRISSY PETERS makes her way downstream. The plan was simple: float 50 miles down the Congaree River from downtown Columbia to the southern edge of Congaree National Park, just 25 crow-miles away.

© GREG M. PETERS



© KAREN MINOT

reading that that's what you're supposed to do if you're caught in a lightning storm, but I was fuzzy on the details and wasn't sure if we should be inside or outside the tent. We stayed in as violent gusts of wind shook the tent walls, bowing the poles and pulling the guylines from the sodden sand. My well-worn backpacking

tent, which had faithfully kept us dry for more than a decade, was no match for this storm: Heavy, fat drops of water dripped onto the floor, worsening with each gust of wind. The lightning and thunder continued unrelentingly.

“**THE ONLY THING** you have to worry about is sun poisoning,” Jesse Koch boomed, his deep voice softened by a South Carolina drawl. “Y’all got plenty of sunscreen?”

We did. And bug spray. And food. And water. And now, thanks to Koch, the gear shop manager, we had the paddles we needed and a shuttle driver to drive our rental car from the put-in to the take-out.

“All right then, y’all should be good to go. See ya Monday.”

It was three days before the tent-shaking thunderstorm. We’d arrived in Columbia, South Carolina’s capital, earlier in the day and had spent a couple of hours zipping here and there for provisions and last-minute items. Now that we’d connected with Koch, we were free to relax and enjoy the soft spring evening before our departure the next morning.

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“All right then, y’all should be good to go. See ya Monday.”

It was three days before the tent-shaking

Our plan was simple: float 50 miles down the Congaree River from downtown Columbia to the southern edge of Congaree National Park, just 25 crow-miles away. We’d camp along the river for two nights and paddle for three days. I’d brought inflatable stand-up paddleboards for the trip, folding them into duffel bags already half-stuffed with the lightweight backpacking gear we’d need for the adventure. After 10 years of marriage to this self-proclaimed water rat and outdoor adventurer, Chrissy is a capable paddler and seasoned camper, but this was her first multiday stand-up paddleboard trip. And despite having completed a handful of long paddleboard trips in seasons past, it was my first real paddle of the year, so I was a bit nervous about how we’d do. But as we set off to find Motor Supply Company Bistro, the farm-to-table restaurant Koch had recommended, those worries drifted away.

THE MORNING AIR WAS STILL COOL when we reached the Rosewood Landing launch ramp. I unloaded the deflated boards and piles of gear onto the gravel parking lot. Factories and industrial development stretched back from the river toward the quiet neighborhoods we’d passed on our drive there. Chrissy inflated the boards with a small hand pump while I sorted

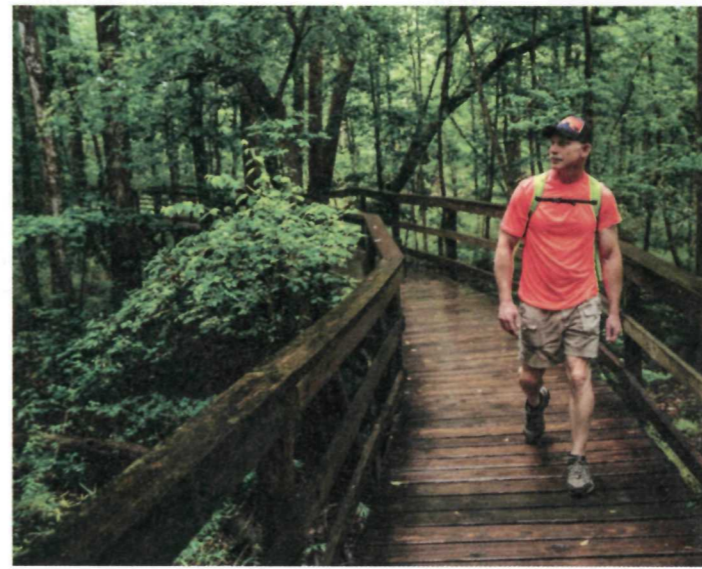
AFTER A MILE, WE SAW A SIGN ANNOUNCING THE LAST PUBLIC TAKE-OUT FOR 47 MILES. WE PADDLED ON.

gear and packed the dry bags. A kayaker carried his boat down the ramp and slipped out into the water, paddling upstream against the wide, slow river. Dogs played on the banks, leaping in and out of the water as their owners watched.

At 11:02, we posed for a photo and stepped onto the boards. It felt great to be on the water. We live in Montana, where a long, cold winter had lingered into what should have been springtime, and we were starved for sunshine and heat. Smiling and optimistic, we dipped our paddles into the warm water and started downstream. After a mile, we saw a sign announcing the last public take-out for 47 miles. We paddled on.

The Congaree River is a short, winding ribbon of flat water that forms where the Saluda and Broad Rivers meet in Columbia. From there, it crosses the “fall line,” where the hills of the Carolina Piedmont transition to flat coastal plain. As the landscape shifts, the rushing river slows down and starts to meander through a huge floodplain just south of the city. Wet and swampy, the wide floodplain is relatively undeveloped, and at its far end lies Congaree National Park. South of the park, the Congaree River meets the Wateree and together, as the Santee River, they flow nearly 150 miles to the Atlantic Ocean.

We were following the Congaree River Blue Trail, a 50-mile



FINDING REFUGE

from the mosquitoes along the edge of Cedar Creek (far left). Top middle: A pileated woodpecker. Above: A great blue skimmer dragonfly. Left: The park's 2.4-mile Boardwalk Loop Trail begins at the Harry Hampton Visitor Center.

water trail established in 2007 by a coalition of governmental agencies and advocacy groups, including American Rivers, to promote conservation and recreation on the river and in the park. A number of other similar blue trails wend their way across the country, and I stumbled across this one while researching a visit to the national park, which is what had initially drawn us to central South Carolina.

First established as a monument in 1976, Congaree became a national park in 2003 and now extends across 27,000 acres, many of them trail-less wilderness. The park contains the largest remaining expanse of continuous old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the country; massive trees, many the largest of their species, rise from the swampy landscape, nurtured by frequent flooding and nutrient-rich waters. Around 140,000 people visited Congaree in 2016, walking the 25 miles of trails, camping in one of the two campgrounds and standing in awe

beneath some of the tallest trees in the country.

But I wanted a richer, more intimate experience — to camp in the wild floodplain and paddle the same waters that nourish the park's famous trees and give life to its cacophonous birds. A springtime float along the river trail seemed the perfect option.

THE WIDE BROWN RIVER carried us gently downstream. Stubby, flat-bottomed skiffs zoomed up and down each side of the river, their small wakes rocking us as we bobbed along. Families fished beneath overhanging branches or lounged in thin strips of shade on sandbars where they had set up camp for the night. The upper river was busy, so we kept one eye on the passing boats and one on the river.

Despite the human traffic, wildlife buzzed on the river banks. We watched vultures glide from one bank to the other. A beaver waddled along a sandbar, awkward out of the water. Bright red

cardinals flitted through the pistachio-colored willows. Turtles splashed off logs into the current if we paddled too close. Broad-leafed trees draped in thick curtains of invasive kudzu lined every inch of the banks. Rising 50 feet high in places, the vegetation felt like an impenetrable wall of green hemming us in.

We found an empty sandbar for our campsite and pulled off the river an hour before sunset. A slight breeze kept most of the mosquitoes at bay, and we set up camp accompanied by constant bird-song and the soft murmur of the river. We ate our freeze-dried backpacker meals — shepherd's pie for me and vegetarian chili for Chrissy — and rested our tired muscles as the first planets appeared in the sky. The birds settled into their night's repose.

RISING 50 FEET HIGH IN PLACES, THE VEGETATION FELT LIKE AN IMPENETRABLE WALL OF GREEN HEMMING US IN.

The sounds of peepers and bullfrogs filled the space between a barred owl's otherworldly calls, growing louder as the Big Dipper, Leo and Virgo conjured themselves from the deepening darkness.

Morning dawned gray and cool. The sky was unreadable, a white slab of marble that stretched from horizon to horizon. It was impossible to tell if the clouds were moving, never mind which way they might be going. We boiled water for instant coffee and ate our breakfast of dehydrated eggs mixed with Chrissy's leftovers from the night before. Around 9 a.m., we pushed into the current and floated past a family fishing from a small skiff; they were the last people we would see until we finished the trip the next day. Even though we were only one day and 18 river miles or so from



© ADAM MOWERY

THE CEDAR CREEK CANOE TRAIL winds through the park for around 15 miles before reaching the Congaree River.

other litter, swirling in eddies or corralled by logs, gave any hint that we were just downstream of hundreds of thousands of people. Great blue herons hunted fish and frogs from the banks, and ospreys soared above, their high-pitched cries shrill and clear. We drifted apart, each of us alone with our thoughts, absorbed by the rhythm of paddling and the subtle shifts of moving water under our feet. After a couple of hours, we paddled past the park boundary and found a spot to pull off the river and stretch our legs.

The trail, the only one that runs from Congaree's visitor center to the river, was empty except for thick swarms of mosquitoes. We donned long-sleeved shirts and long pants and draped bandanas over our necks in an effort to keep them at bay. Movement was the only real solution, so we marched briskly along the path. The clouds thinned slightly and dappled light trickled through the bald cypress, laurel and live oak trees that rose tall from the leaf-covered ground. A quarter-mile from the river, we noticed a large pen, fenced with thick wire and sitting opposite a motion-triggered wildlife camera. A trapdoor, water trough and bait bag alluded to its purpose: catching the invasive feral hogs that root through the park, damaging sensitive vegetation, killing young trees and harming other animals.

We stepped past the enclosure and kept going down the trail, half-hoping for a glimpse of the destructive interlopers. We turned around after about 90 minutes when a couple of massive trees blocked the path. Back on the boards, time passed almost imperceptibly as we paddled past acre after acre of parkland. Early afternoon drifted into evening and evening into dusk. After several attempts, we finally found a good campsite, hastily pitched the tent, secured our gear and boiled water for our meals. Thirty

Columbia, the trip suddenly felt different, as if we had passed an imaginary line where civilization stopped and wilderness began. Our world collapsed into a tunnel of green zippered open by the slow-moving water.

Adding to the wild feel, the green wall of vegetation lining the river grew even thicker as we paddled. Only plastic bottles and

SIDE TRIP: COLUMBIA

Columbia has a small feel to it, despite its relatively large size. The Vista District boasts a fun array of hotels, restaurants, bars and galleries and serves as a great launching pad for a Congaree adventure. The University of South Carolina is located near the Vista as well, adding a youthful vibe to the neighborhood.

Those with an extra day

or two to explore can also check out the Soda City Market, which runs every Saturday, rain or shine, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Columbia's residents are proud of the city's diversity, and the market showcases the area's diverse cultures and talented craftspeople, cooks and farmers. The South Carolina State Museum, itself a historic landmark, is four

museums in one, housing displays dedicated to history, art, natural history, and science and technology.

For outdoor adventure that's not in (or along) Congaree National Park, 41-mile-long Lake Murray, just outside of Columbia, offers paddling, sailing and power-boating opportunities. Birders delight in Lunch Island, one of the largest

roosting sites of the purple martin in North America. Closer to town, Harbison State Forest provides more than 18 miles of multi-use trails and Sesquicentennial State Park contains 1,400 acres of pine forest with nature trails, paddling and campsites.



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minutes after dark, we collapsed in the tent, ready for sleep. Two hours later, we were shoving gear into our dry bags as the lightning storm raged overhead.

It rained into the morning. Fortunately, the worst of the storm had blown past by 3 a.m., so we'd dozed for a few hours before the birds woke us at dawn. I felt sleepy when I was making the coffee, but I was also somehow energized and confident. I knew we'd face more wind, more rain and probably more lightning in the last 12 miles of the trip, but in the light of day, it all seemed totally doable, almost easy.

By the time we were back on the water, the rain had stopped. Life pulsed from the woods on both sides of the river. An intense rhythmic hum rose and fell, drowning out even the most vocal birds. We debated its source before realizing that thousands of frogs were joining in a wild chorus to celebrate the night's storm. Mist drifted among the treetops, dark silhouettes against the pale gray sky. It felt as if we had traveled to a lost world.

When we rounded the final bend and glimpsed the bridge that marked our take-out, we hooted and hollered. Chrissy was excited for dry clothes and a shower. I was ready for a little civilization, too, but mostly, I wanted to relish our accomplishment. Here we were, just 25 miles from gleaming skyscrapers, fancy

hotels and fantastic restaurants, and yet I'd found that wild, lightning-cracked experience that I'd come looking for. The trip was evidence that we don't have to fly to exotic locations or spend two weeks backpacking through the Grand Canyon to feel the thrill of adventure and reap the hard-earned rewards that come when we take off into the unknown.

As we drove back to Columbia to meet Koch and turn in our paddles, we neared a sign marking the park's official entrance. I tapped the brakes and fingered the blinker, debating whether to turn and pick up a shirt or patch to prove we'd been there. Glancing in the rearview mirror, I saw the mounds of wet, sand-covered gear piled in the back, and then I saw Chrissy, quiet and composed in the passenger seat, her hair tangled and beautiful. My thoughts drifted back over the previous three days — lightning bugs dancing in the forest under a canopy of shimmering stars, a water snake diving under the current not 10 feet from my board, giant trees towering above the empty trail.

I hit the gas and drove on.

GREG M. PETERS writes from Missoula, Montana, where he finds plenty of adventures just dealing with regular life.

ADAM MOWERY is an outdoor lifestyle, adventure and landscape photographer based in North Carolina.



MOMENTS BEFORE setting off on their 50-mile journey, the author and his wife pose for a photograph.

COURTESY OF GREG M. PETERS

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

Congaree National Park's proximity to Columbia, South Carolina, makes it easy to get to. But despite being near the capital city (and many of the state's famous tourist hot spots), the park retains a quiet, unhurried feel. We tacked four days onto a family vacation in Hilton Head, making the easy drive from Savannah to Columbia and then back to catch our return flight.

Congaree has two rustic campgrounds, and once you're set up, you can explore the roughly 25 miles of hiking trails or arrange to paddle the park's waterways. Ambitious paddlers interested in replicating our trip can rent boats and arrange for shuttles at gear shops in Columbia. We used River Runner Outdoor Center located on Gervais Street.

Backcountry camping in the park is free and requires a permit that you can get at the visitor center. Much of the park is wilderness; almost all the park's trails are clustered near the visitor center.

If you plan your trip for mid-May or early June, be sure to head to the park after the sun goes down. Lightning bugs synchronize their flashes during these few weeks of the year as part of their mating efforts. The best viewing is down the boardwalk trail a bit. The annual show is gaining in popularity — so much so that Columbia's new minor league baseball team is named the "Fireflies."

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EXPLORE GETTYSBURG: Beyond The Battlefield

With its 6,000 acres filled with over 1,300 monuments, the hallowed ground of Gettysburg National Military Park is a highly sought out historic destination for many across the country, and even around the world. See the battlefield via car, bus and bike, or even horseback, carriage or Segway. There's no right way to tour the battlefield, but there are plenty of options to find the perfect fit for everyone.

You don't have to be a history buff or know all the details about the Civil War to get something out of Gettysburg, there are many museums that will help you out with that. The museums throughout town all highlight different aspects of the three-day battle that changed the history of this town forever, like the civilian's experience or a Civil War era soldier's life. Whether it's an orientation before taking to the battlefield, or a wrap up on a day in Gettysburg, you'll walk away knowing something you didn't know before.

Beyond the battlefield, the quaint, small-town culture of Gettysburg is just as rich as its history. So, between touring the battlefield, visiting a historic site or checking out a museum, take a stroll around town and see why Gettysburg is becoming known as a hotspot for food and craft beverage lovers alike with the many incredible restaurants, breweries, wineries and markets. Your hunger for history and good food will both be satisfied in Gettysburg.

No matter if you're touring the National Military Park, visiting a museum or taking a walk downtown, a visit to Gettysburg will surely leave you inspired.

HISTORIC TRAVEL DESTINATIONS



Pennsylvania Memorial, Gettysburg National Military Park
Courtesy Destination Gettysburg



Experiencing Port Oneida Fair
Courtesy Traverse City

TRAVERSE CITY: Michigan's "True North"

A fascinating part of Michigan's Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, recognized by historians as one of the country's best-preserved agricultural landscapes. First settled in 1852, Port Oneida has more than 350 historic farmsteads, barns, and outbuildings connected by a network of hiking trails with beautiful Lake Michigan overlooks. In this peaceful time capsule, hand-built homes and barns doze beside the jeweled waters of Sleeping Bear Bay, whose the background music is the buzzing of bees,

the chirping of crickets and the distant rumble of incoming surf.

Visit the Olsen House, a restored 19th century farmhouse, to learn the story of this 19th-century German settlement – or come in August for the Port Oneida Fair, a two-day celebration of traditional rural technology. The fair is held at six of the historic farmsteads in Port Oneida, each with a variety of artists, crafts, food, and activities for visitors. It's an opportunity to step back in time and imagine the life of the pioneers by helping to bale hay or watching a broom-maker at work. Teams of oxen and horses will be cutting, loading, and hauling hay, while artists and craftsmen demonstrate their skills.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

"The Most Beautiful Place in America"

-Good Morning America Viewers



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Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park
Courtesy Bev Rose



Pelicans Resting Along The Mississippi River in Crawford County.
Courtesy The Becoming Of The Driftless Rivers National Park

COME SEE THE SITES IN DAYTON, OHIO It's The Wright Place For Memorable Experiences

Come to DAYTON – aviation mecca! Have you read two-time Pulitzer Prize winning and NY Times best-selling author David McCullough's recent book, *The Wright Brothers*? If you haven't, you should; and regardless, you need to visit Dayton! Dayton, the Birthplace of Aviation and so much more, was home to the Wright Brothers. In Dayton, the Wrights invented and built their airplanes and really learned to fly. Dayton taught the world to fly! Come experience the sites of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park, and learn all about the Wrights and the birth of manned, powered flight! There are over 16 amazing aviation sites, all within close proximity to one another. Visit just seven of them, and we'll "air-mail" you a Wilbear Wright Aviator Teddy Bear. Bonus—the fourth building of the FREE National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum (19 acres, 360 aerospace vehicles), recently opened! Don't miss Dayton—within a day's drive of over 60% of the U.S. population.

DRIFTLESS RIVERS NATIONAL PARK A Proposed National Park

This marks the national debut of *The Becoming of The Driftless Rivers National Park*: The title is one of a book and also one of a profound process and great dream. The Driftless Rivers National Park Foundation proposes the creation of a great 375,000-acre national park in Wisconsin's magnificent Driftless Area.



The proposed park area will meet and exceed all criteria necessary for a new national park. To learn more, Google "driftless," visit the area in Autumn, or read the park proposal. Available for purchase at www.driftlessrivers.org.

Visit the DAYTON Aviation Heritage National Historical Park and other aviation sites!



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Dayton National Park Sites



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Original Wright Flyer III



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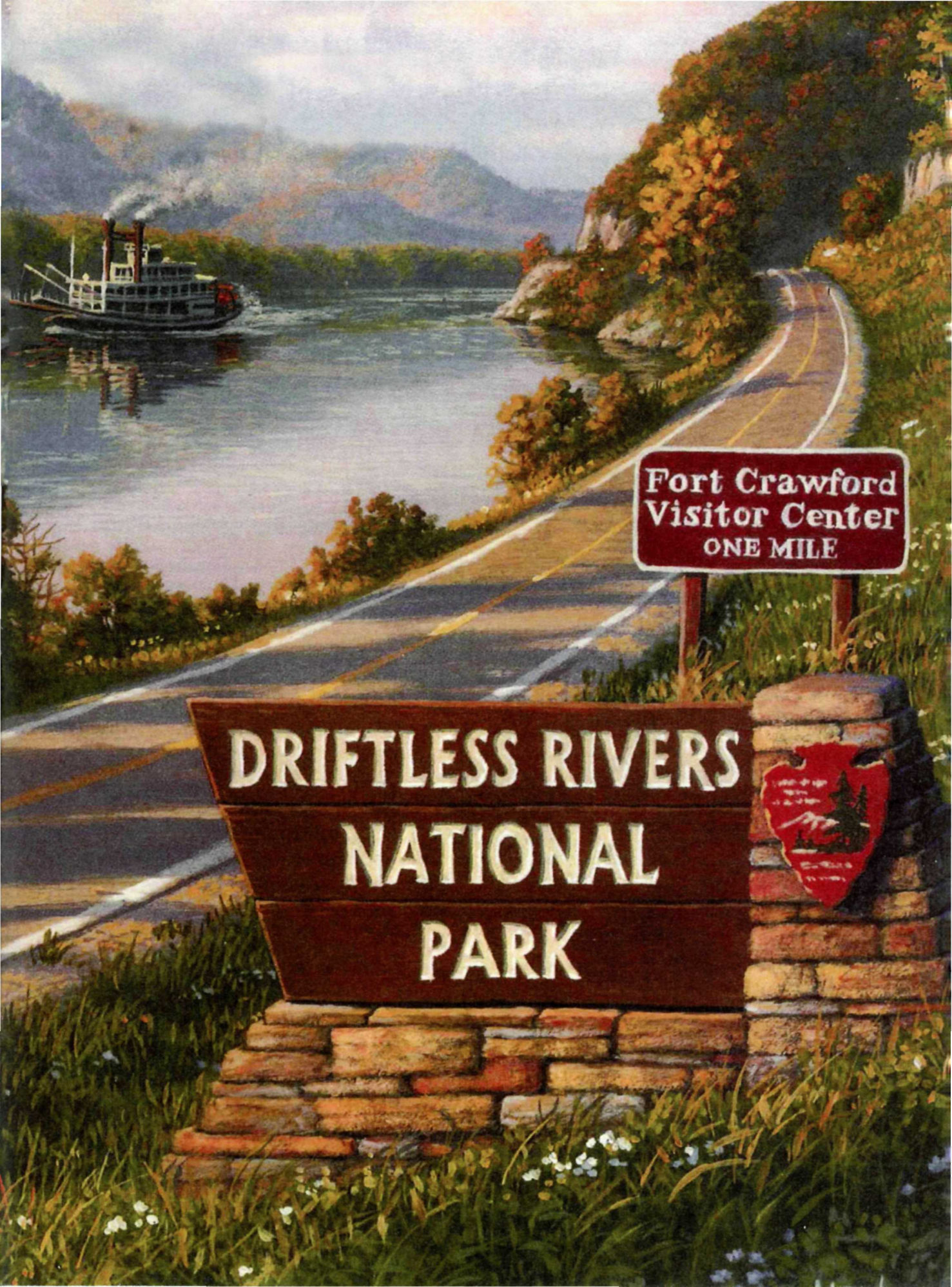
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ESTHER BURNELL cemented her reputation as an intrepid mountaineer when she snowshoed for 30 miles to meet friends on the other side of the Continental Divide.

Weeks earlier, Esther and Katherine, both homesteaders, had decided to celebrate the holiday with a picnic by a little stream halfway between their respective claims, near what is now Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. They hadn't heard from each other since hatching the plan, so each feared the other had chickened out. After hours of effort, they bumped into each other.

"I didn't think you would come!" they rejoiced before enjoying a Christmas dinner of canned tomato soup, bacon sandwiches and coffee under falling snow. When Esther had arrived in the area a few months before, Katherine — by then a seasoned homesteader — initially dismissed the newcomer as a frail city slicker. Now, sitting by the blazing fire, 27-year-old Esther was the picture of health and vigor. "She looked wonderfully pretty, animation transforming her into a beauty," Katherine later wrote.

Katherine was not the only local impressed by Esther's metamorphosis. A disciple of famed conservationist John Muir, Enos Mills, whose lifelong dream to create Rocky Mountain National Park had recently been fulfilled, took notice, too. But it wasn't only Esther's snowshoeing skills that wowed him. In her, he found a kindred spirit who used all her senses to appreciate the natural world and who thought there was no better teacher of nature than nature itself. And so Enos, who was running a nature school at the inn he operated on the trail to Longs Peak, offered to train Esther as a guide.

Esther's older sister Elizabeth joined her for the training, and in the summer of 1917 — one year before the National Park Service hired its first two women park rangers — the sisters became the first female certified nature guides in the National Park System.

Esther of the Rockies

She left the corporate world to homestead in the mountains and became the Park Service's first female nature guide.

ON CHRISTMAS MORNING, 1916, ESTHER BURNELL put on her snowshoes, left her cabin high in the Rockies and trudged through the snow for 8 miles. By her friend Katherine Garetson's account, it was the "dreariest winter ever known in the mountains."

REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF ENOS MILLS CABIN COLLECTION

She drew the plans for her cabin and helped build it. Rumor had it that she “shingled as fast as a man.”

Esther was born in Kansas, and she attended Lake Erie College near Cleveland before studying interior design at the Pratt Institute in New York. She went on to become an interior designer for the Sherwin-Williams Company but felt burnt out after years of hard work. Seeking a break, she decided to spend the summer in Estes Park, a town just outside the border of the new national park. Her sister joined her, but returned to her teaching job in California at the end of the season. Esther stayed.

She did some secretarial work for Enos, typing drafts of his book, “Your National Parks,” but spent much of her time exploring the nearby mountains by day and night. “It was a great area for women to get out and get some freedom, frankly,” said Eryn Mills, Esther’s great-granddaughter, in a phone interview.

It didn’t take long for Esther to resolve to trade her interior design career for a life in the mountains. “Here is a woman homesteader who comes from a very

comfortable life,” said Kurtis Kelly, a storyteller and reenactor who has performed at Rocky Mountain. “And she decides to leave all of that behind and go build a little cabin.”

Esther picked a spot 4 miles west of Estes Park. A meadow framed by a granite cliff and a forest of pines, firs and aspens offered just enough space for a small garden. On the train to Denver to file her claim, which would give her the right to the land as long as she farmed it for five years, Esther met Enos, who was on his way to St. Louis. He gave her a hint of his developing feelings for her: “Not leaving the country, I hope!”

Esther had no such intention. She drew the plans for her cabin and helped build it, and she made her own furniture. Rumor had it that she “shingled as fast as a man.” She named her cabin “Keewaydin,” a Native American word for “northwest winds.”

Esther prospered in her new life, often surprising locals with her derring-do. When advised to wait until daylight to return to her cabin because of roaming bears, Esther replied: “Well, I’ll certainly start at once. I have been wishing I might see a bear.” A 30-mile snowshoe walk across the Continental Divide to meet with friends cemented her reputation as an intrepid mountaineer.

Meanwhile, Enos was campaigning for the certification of women guides. “He found that women tried harder,” Eryn said. Rocky Mountain’s superintendent was initially reluctant, but he eventually

relented, acknowledging later that women guides filled a “long-felt want.” Park officials didn’t allow women to guide above the timberline unless accompanied by a male guide, but after she officially became certified, Elizabeth repeatedly violated this rule, routinely taking groups to the summit of 14,259-foot Longs Peak.

Esther was a natural at guiding, Eryn said, but her career was derailed by the very man who trained her. Enos would stop unannounced by her cabin on his horse, Cricket, and he contrived to get Esther to attend a lecture he gave about a romance between two goldfinches. During the lecture, he made frequent eye contact with Esther and rushed to her side afterward. “It was a very veiled kind of romantic plea to her,” said Jim Pickering, a local historian.

It worked. Enos and Esther were married in August 1918 at an intimate ceremony at his cabin — now a museum run by Eryn and her family. In the spring of 1919, their daughter Enda was born, and Esther became a nature guide to Enda, helping her identify flowers and follow coyote tracks in the snow.

Just three years after Enda’s birth, Enos died at the age of 52. But Esther didn’t indulge in self-pity. Besides raising Enda alone, she ran Enos’ Longs Peak Inn, published several of his books and took on his fight over access to Rocky Mountain. She died in Denver in 1964.

A few years ago, Eryn met an elderly woman who had worked for Esther at the inn in the 1940s. Eryn took her aside and asked her about her great-grandmother. “She gave me this intense look,” Eryn recounted, “and she said: ‘She was formidable.’” NP

NICOLAS BRULLIARD is associate editor of National Parks magazine.

THE FIRST HOMESTEADER?

According to some accounts, the first of more than 1.6 million homesteaders was Daniel Freeman, who reportedly filed his claim in Brownsville, Nebraska, a few minutes after midnight on Jan. 1, 1863. The site of his claim became the Homestead National Monument of America in 1936.



That Was Then



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GAZING INTO THE GRAND CANYON, Arizona, circa 1941.

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