

PARACHUTING INCIDENTS IN NATIONAL PARKS (1966-2005)

Most of this information was obtained via a thorough analysis of NPS Morning Reports and other historical data.

2005-02-06

Pinnacles National Monument (CA), BASE Jumping Incident

On the afternoon of Sunday, February 6th, three BASE jumps leapt sequentially from the middle tier of Balconies Cliffs, an ecologically sensitive area currently under visitor advisories for nesting prairie falcons, peregrine falcons and golden eagles. The park raptor monitor witnessed the jumps, as well as extreme disturbance to raptors in their nesting territories as a result of the sounds and motions of the deploying parachutes. The jumps were also seen by a ranger who was on the Balconies Cliffs trail almost directly underneath the BASE jumpers. The jumpers, later identified as Daren Loesch, 26, Ricardo Valbuena, 34, and Brendan Cork, 26, were immediately apprehended at the talus base of the Balconies Cliffs in an area closed to visitors due to revegetation efforts. All three were issued mandatory appearance citations for air delivery and were released after their equipment was seized as evidence. Numerous other charges are pending. Glenn Yanagi is the case ranger. [Submitted by Glenn Yanagi, Park Ranger]

Posted: February 18, 2005

2004-09-12

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, BASE Jumping Arrest

At dusk on Sunday, September 12th, Valley ranger Carly Lober was on foot patrol in El Capitan Meadow when she heard parachutes open above her. She saw Chad Peabody, 23, and Catherine Hansen, 19, of Bremerton and Gig Harbor, Washington, respectively, land at the east end of the meadow. They gathered up their chutes and ran into a grove of trees. Lober caught up to them as they were trying to finish packing their equipment into stash bags and arrested them. All their gear, including a helmet-cam video tape of the approach and jump, was seized as evidence. On September 14th, Peabody and Hansen appeared in federal magistrate's court in the park and pled guilty to illegal jumping charges. They were sentenced to a year of unsupervised probation, fined \$2,000 each, and forfeited all their jumping gear. Contact Information, Name: Dan Horner, Special Agent

Posted: September 29, 2004

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: One of the jumpers arrested had just returned from military service in Iraq where he was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism during combat.]

2004-02-??

New River Gorge NR (WV) – Illegal BASE Jumping

Jumpers were seen on the New River Gorge Bridge catwalk (outside the park) and arrested on the catwalk. They were charged with illegal aerial delivery, even though no jumps were made. Rangers

claim that jumps were made earlier in the day and were photographed by someone in the park. Why a photographer would be down in the park in the early morning hours is beyond me. Jumpers paid fines and gear was returned.

Posted: Never posted

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: The rangers have no jurisdiction on the catwalk and jumps were never made. They should have received a local trespassing charge, rather than a NPS charge that required the use of a parachute. The rangers at New River are acting illegally in my opinion. Even the landing area used by jumpers is private land, however, the rangers continue to arrest jumpers on private land and jumpers never flew over park property. The rangers have told the jumpers that if they are challenged, local (not NPS) laws against jumping from the bridge will be passed.]

2003-12-15

Wright Brothers National Memorial (NC), Historic Aircraft Highlight Aviation's Impact on Military

Clear, blue skies on Monday provided a perfect backdrop for the events of the day, which centered on aviation's impact on the military.

An impressive number of military planes soared overhead, watched by a record crowd of 23,700 people, the largest number of visitors ever to come to the park. The "Protecting the Home of the Brave" program featured flyovers and static displays of military aircraft. Some of the world's best pilots dazzled the crowd with a progression of military technology, from pre-World I through the Gulf War.

Planes that flew during the day included F-15, F-14, and F-18 fighters; historic T-6, T-34, T-37, T-38, T-1 and AT-38 trainers; and an array of utility aircraft, including the E-2C, E-8, CH-46, CH-53, and C-130.

A highlight of the day was a flight by the new V-22 Osprey, a high-speed, long-range, vertical lift aircraft that can take off and land like a helicopter and fly like an airplane.

The aerial show also included skydiving demonstrations by the U.S. Air Force Academy's Wings of Blue team and a helicopter rescue demonstration by the Coast Guard.

The main stage performance was made by country singer Aaron Tippin. A one-time commercial airline pilot, Tippin sang such tunes as "Where the Stars and Stripes and the Eagle Fly" and "You've Got to Stand for Something." [Submitted by Nancy Gray, IO Eastern IMT]

Posted: December 17, 2003

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: This may be another case where a Special Use Permit was granted for parachute jumps into a National Park]

2003-10-18

New River Gorge National River (WV) Annual Bridge Day Event

An estimated 125,000 people attended the 24th annual New River Gorge Bridge Day, held on Saturday, October 18th. The event was coordinated under a unified command system that involved 13 agencies, including the West Virginia State Police, the West Virginia National Guard, the Fayette County Sheriff's Department, the FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the National Park Service. **This year's BASE jumping activities were organized by Jason Bell and Bill Bird of Vertical Visions, who did an excellent job of organizing the jumpers and establishing safety protocols.** This year, the 346 registered BASE jumpers made 836 jumps from the New River Gorge Bridge during the event – believed to be the highest number ever recorded on Bridge Day. Jumping was suspended several times during the day for trains passing the landing zone, water rescues/pickups, and for one jumper who became stuck in a tree adjacent to the landing zone. The park's maintenance division tree crew removed the jumper from the tree with the aid of a bucket truck. Through most of the day, there was a BASE jumper going off the bridge approximately every 30 seconds. In addition, there were several multiple-person jumps, including one nine-way jump. All multiple-person jumps were coordinated with the NPS rangers and water rescue personnel. There were only four BASE jumper injuries that required medical transport, with all of the injured being treated and released the same day. Under the bridge, 295 rappellers made 557 rappels off the catwalk and 107 people went down a highline traverse to the Fayette Station Road below. **Overall, it was a very successful event.** [Submitted by Gary Hartley, Chief Ranger]

Posted: October 27, 2003

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Bridge Day has always been successful. I'm glad to see the NPS has something nice to say about us and hopefully our success here will help with access at other parks.]

2003-10-17

New River Gorge NR (WV) - BASE Jumping Arrest

Rangers dressed like fisherman and carried fishing poles and video cameras in a BASE jumper sting operation the day before Bridge Day (the largest BASE jumping event in the world) at the 700' Glade Creek Bridge. The jumpers thought they were fisherman and jumped. After landing, rangers arrested several jumpers and one jumper reported that a ranger drew his gun during the arrest. Billy Mills was one of the jumpers arrested. This is nothing but a major waste of taxpayer money. Rangers are actually staking out landing areas and waiting for parachutists to jump. When Gary Hartley, Chief Ranger at NERI, was asked about the sting operation, he simply said that he suspected jumpers were timing their jumps around ranger meetings before Bridge Day. So this year he decided to pull two rangers from the meeting and place them in the landing zone. Gary's conspiracy theory was the result of a jump made several years ago that reportedly coincided with the traditional ranger meeting for Bridge Day. With 500+ jumpers in town, I hardly suspect it's a conspiracy. If the public ever found out about this incident, the NPS might not look so good....

Posted: Never posted by NPS.

2003-07-15

Yosemite National Park (CA), BASE Jumping Arrests

At dusk on July 15th, Valley rangers were dispatched to the Mirror Lake area in response to a report of BASE jumpers seen coming off Half Dome. About 30 minutes later, three men, each carrying full backpacks that were consistent with concealing BASE gear, were observed briskly walking down the Mirror Lake Loop trail. When rangers questioned them, they gave answers that did not make sense. Kirby W. Hughes, who was holding a head-sized, ball-shaped object tightly wrapped in a shirt, told rangers that it was just his sweatshirt. Further investigation revealed that it was a skydiving helmet with a digital camcorder attached. Hughes and his cohorts, Allan D. Fox and Brian K. Cork, were all arrested for conspiracy and air delivery. A search of their packs incident to arrest revealed another skydiving helmet and camcorder, three parachutes and harnesses, and two Birdman wingsuits (flight suits with cloth "wings" under the arms and between the legs used to greatly increase horizontal glide and freefall time). [Submitted by Todd W. Bruno, Ranger, Valley District]

Posted: July 30, 2003

Yosemite National Park (CA), BASE Jumping Convictions

On November 16, 2004, the last of three BASE Jumpers arrested on July 15, 2003 was sentenced in magistrate's court in Yosemite. Allan Fox, Kirby Hughes, and Brian Cork were all arrested by Yosemite Valley rangers after several witnesses reported seeing parachutists jump from Half Dome. All three were charged with CFR violations for air delivery and conspiracy. Fox, who is a Reno, Nevada, police officer, and Hughes pled guilty on October 5, 2004. Under the terms of a plea agreement, they were each sentenced to 12 months probation, fined \$4,000, and given credit for two days custody served at the time of their arrests. Their attorneys negotiated for a higher fine in lieu of having to forfeit their parachutes and other gear. Cork pled guilty on November 16, 2004, and, also under the terms of a plea agreement, was sentenced to 12 months probation and fined \$2,000. He was also given credit for two days in jail already served and was ordered to forfeit all his jumping equipment. Under the plea agreements the conspiracy charges were dismissed. [Submitted by Dan Horner, Special Agent]

Posted: February 9, 2005

2003-??-??

New River Gorge NR (WV) - BASE Jumping Arrest

Several parachutists were arrested after jumping from the NRGB. Mark Kissner was one of the jumpers arrested.

Posted: Never posted by NPS.

2002-11-28

02-622, Canyon De Chelly National Monument (AZ), BASE Jumping

On the morning of November 28, a resident of the canyon called the park by cell phone and reported that ten people had been BASE jumping near the Antelope House ruin in the early hours of the morning. Rangers contacted four of the jumpers. Their parachute packs were seized as evidence, and citations were

issued for mandatory appearances on charges of illegal air delivery and trespassing. The investigation continues. [Submitted by William Yazzie, Chief Ranger]

Posted: December 6, 2002

2002-10-19

02-567, New River Gorge National River (WV), Special Event: Bridge Day

After being canceled in 2001 as a result of the September 11 attack, the annual Bridge Day event resumed this year, with an improved security plan approved by the governor that included closing all bridge lanes to vehicle traffic. Security for this year's Bridge Day was managed under a unified command system, with the joint operations center hosted by the park at its Burnwood facility. Security was provided by a consortium of 16 agencies, including the West Virginia State Police, West Virginia National Guard, Fayette County Sheriff's Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Marshals Service, and the National Park Service. Traditional BASE jumping activities continued this year under a special uses permit issued by the park following receipt of a waiver from Director Mainella permitting the activity within the park. This year's BASE activities were organized by Go Fast Sports, Inc., and proved to be among the safest events held to date. A total of 394 BASE jumpers made 745 jumps from the New River Gorge Bridge, with landings in the park. Only two BASE jumpers sustained injuries requiring medical transport, one a sprained ankle and the other a laceration requiring stitches. Under the bridge, 308 rappellers made over 500 rappels. One rappeller lost control at the bottom of the 800 foot plus descent; as a result, he free fell approximately 50 feet and suffered a fractured lumbar and a ruptured bladder. He was flown to the Charleston Area Medical Center via a Health-Net medical helicopter that was on standby in the park. A highlight of the day was a visit by West Virginia's Governor Bob Wise. The governor started the day by cutting the ribbon for first BASE jumper of the day, 73-year-old Jim Guyer. He then participated in a short whitewater rafting trip on the New River in an NPS raft guided by park ranger Bryan Hunter. The governor made additional stops at the park's BASE landing zone and joint operations center. [Submitted by Gary Hartley, Chief Ranger]

Posted: October 28, 2002

2001-11-03

01-591 – Yosemite NP (CA) – Illegal Air Delivery

On the afternoon of November 3rd, rangers received a report of a BASE jumper hitting the wall near the East Buttress of El Capitan. The reporting persons said that they had seen a white parachute and a person clad in a red jumpsuit hit the wall four times before disappearing from sight. Rangers investigated and just before nightfall were able to spot a white parachute attached to a red climbing haul bag stuck on a ledge on the cliff about 500 feet above the base of the wall. Rangers contacted two climbers at the base of the route who had just retreated off the wall. The climbers initially denied any knowledge of the incident, but one of them eventually admitted to pitching the haul bag with a parachute made from a porta-ledge rainfly before they rappelled off. One of them was arrested for making a false report, illegal air delivery and creating a hazardous condition. The other was cited for creating a hazardous condition and released to appear in court at a later date. The following day rangers climbed up to the stuck equipment and seized it as evidence. [Jim Tucker, DR, YOSE, 11/5]

Posted: November 7, 2001

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: It's obvious that the NPS is obsessed with catching BASE jumpers.]

2001-08-23

01-464 – Statue of Liberty NM (NY) – Rescue and Arrest

On the morning of August 23rd, Park Police officers saw a parasail powered by a motorized backpack flying in close proximity to the Statue of Liberty. The sail subsequently became entangled in the statue's torch, leaving the operator – later identified as Thierry Devaux, believed to be a French national – dangling from the parachute lines along the arm of the statue. USPP officers rescued Devaux by lowering a line to him and hoisting him up. He was uninjured and was placed under arrest. It's believed that Devaux planned to land on the torch, then bungee jump to the ground. **He had BASE jumping equipment in his possession** and was wearing a T-shirt with a political statement on the use of land mines. Devaux has been charged with reckless endangerment, trespassing, disorderly conduct, and air delivery. Additional charges will likely be filed by the U.S. attorney. The FAA has begun a civil investigation into the incident. Devaux was previously arrested at the Statue of Liberty in 1994 when a planned bungee jump was foiled. At that time, he was charged with defacing a national monument, trespassing, and destruction of government property. Devaux paid a fine for those infractions. [Lt. Chris Pappas, USPP, STLI, 8/23]

Posted: August 24, 2001

01-464 – Statue of Liberty NM (NY) – Follow-up: Parasailing Arrest

On the morning of August 23rd, Park Police officers saw a parasail powered by a motorized backpack flying in close proximity to the Statue of Liberty. The sail subsequently became entangled in the statue's torch, leaving the operator – later identified as Thierry Devaux, a French national – dangling from the parachute lines along the arm of the statue. USPP officers rescued Devaux by lowering a line to him and hoisting him up. He was uninjured. Devaux was charged with reckless endangerment, trespassing, disorderly conduct, and air delivery. Investigators subsequently determined that **he'd intended on landing on the torch, then bungee jumping to the ground**. Devaux pleaded guilty to the charges, and was sentenced on October 5th to three years' probation and a \$7,000 fine. Attempts by the U.S. Attorney's Office to obtain a postponement from the court to properly assess damage for potential ARPA charges were denied. The assessment was delayed by the response to the World Trade Center attack. The park will receive \$1,000 from the fine as damage recovery costs. As part of his plea, Devaux will forfeit his equipment, which will be sold off to pay his fine. The value of that equipment has been placed at about \$12,000. Devaux was previously arrested at the Statue of Liberty in 1994 when a planned bungee jump was foiled. At that time, he was charged with defacing a national monument, trespassing, and destruction of government property. Devaux paid a fine for those infractions. [Lt. John Marigliano, USPP, STLI, 10/9]

Posted: October 10, 2001

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Another example of the NPS's obsession with catching BASE jumpers. This powered parachuter (not parasailer) was not even charged with illegal aerial delivery and was probably

assumed to have BASE jumping equipment with him. The article states he planned to bungee jump from the torch, not BASE jump.]

2000-12-09

00-744 – New River Gorge NR (WV) – Illegal BASE Jumping

On the afternoon of December 9th, visitors in the Fayette Station area of the park called 911 via cellular phone and reported that several parachutists had just jumped off of the New River Gorge Bridge and landed on park property below. The visitors took photos of two of the parachutist in mid-air, then called 911 again with vehicle descriptions when the jumpers drove off. Rangers and officers from several other law enforcement agencies responded and stopped both vehicles. Four men – Jack Kirk of Landsdowne, Pennsylvania, Richard E. Whitney of Alexandria, Virginia, Donald G. Mathis of Louisville, Kentucky, and Dwayne E. Bradshaw also of Louisville – were issued mandatory appearance violation notices for aerial delivery. Mathis and Bradshaw got out of the second vehicle just before it was stopped and hid in a wooded field near the roadside. Rangers located the two men after a short search. Each of the four men was found to have a portable two-way radio in his possession. It appears that jumpers in the first vehicle radioed those in the second vehicle with a warning after the former was stopped. [Rick Brown, ACR, NERI, 12/11]

Posted: December 14, 2000

00-744 – New River Gorge NR (WV) – Follow-up: Illegal BASE Jumping

On the afternoon of December 9, 2000, visitors in the Fayette Station area of the park called 911 via cellular phone and reported that several parachutists had just jumped off of the New River Gorge Bridge and landed on park property below. The visitors took photos of two of the parachutist in mid-air, then called 911 again with vehicle descriptions when the jumpers drove off. Rangers and officers from several other law enforcement agencies responded and stopped both vehicles. Four men – Jack Kirk of Landsdowne, Pennsylvania, Richard Whitney of Alexandria, Virginia, Donald Mathis of Louisville, Kentucky, and Dwayne Bradshaw also of Louisville – were issued mandatory appearance violation notices for illegal aerial delivery. On April 6th, all four pled guilty in magistrate's court. Each was fined \$600. [Rick Brown, ACR, NERI, 4/8]

Posted: April 10, 2001

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: There are several incidents where the public reportedly snapped off picture of jumpers at the NRGB and then called police. I find it odd that photographers are able to do this, then call 911 with vehicle descriptions.]

2000-10-21

00-672 – New River Gorge NR (WV) – Special Event: Bridge Day

On Saturday, October 21st, the park participated in the 21st annual Bridge Day celebration. The event was attended by about 150,000 people. During Bridge Day, the northbound lanes of the world's largest single-span bridge are closed to vehicle traffic and people are allowed to walk out onto the bridge; vendor and

exhibitor booths are set up in the highway right-of-way on both sides of the bridge. The highlight of this year's event was a 15-person BASE parachute jump, which set a new world record. Overall, 300 BASE jumpers completed 770 jumps from the bridge. Rangers joined in several water and land rescues of BASE jumpers. Twelve injuries were reported, but only half required advanced medical treatment and transport. The remainder were treated on scene. Along with these jumps, a total of 243 rappellers completed 497 rappels off the bridge, descending more than 700 feet. Among them was superintendent Pete Hart, who became the first superintendent to rappel from the bridge. The event was managed in cooperation with the Bridge Day Committee and with the assistance of state, county and local agencies. [Gary Hartley, CR, NERI, 10/24]

Posted: October 27, 2000

2000-07-18

00-426 – Canyonlands NP (UT) – Search, Aircraft Crash with Two Fatalities

Noted BASE jumper Earl Redfern, 43, and fellow jumper Clint Ford, 22, were killed in a plane crash on July 18th about three miles north of the park. The aircraft was not located until 9 a.m. on July 23rd. An intensive air search for their plane was conducted by local pilots, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), and the Utah Highway Patrol (UHP). Five park employees who are also CAP members participated in the search effort. On the afternoon of Tuesday, July 18th, Redfern, who resided in Moab, Utah, and Ford, who resided in Brush, Colorado, departed the Canyonlands airport in Ford's Grumman AA-5 aircraft to look for potential BASE jumping sites. They did not file a flight plan. Temperature in the area at the time of departure were between about 105 and 108 degrees. When they failed to return from the flight, Redfern's employer, a local air taxi operator and another local pilot flew the area, looking for them. Their efforts proved fruitless, however, so they notified CAP, which began search operations. The UHP helicopter joined in the search on Saturday, July 22nd. On the morning of the 23rd, the crash site was found in Mineral Canyon, about 15 miles southwest of the airport. It appears that the aircraft clipped a wing on the edge of the canyon wall and fell to the base of the Windgate formation, where it burned beyond recognition. The bodies of the Redfern and Ford were recovered by Grand County Sheriff's Office personnel. Redfern was the leader of the group of BASE jumpers who were jumping in the same general area last December. One jumper's chute hung up on the cliff after deployment. Park personnel assisted the sheriff in extricating that jumper during a technical night operation. [Larry Van Slyke, CR, CANY, 7/24]

Posted: July 25, 2000

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Another negative BASE jumper article regarding an aircraft crash that had nothing to do with BASE jumping]

1999-11-10

99-267/617 - Yosemite NP (CA) - Follow-up: BASE Jumps

Early in November, BASE jumper Robin Heid applied for a permit for a public assembly of from 50 to 500 people to be held outside of magistrate's court and at El Capitan Meadow and for two memorial services in the El Capitan Meadow area. The purpose was to protest the Service's air delivery regulations

(36 CFR 2.17(a)(3)), which make BASE jumping illegal in national parks without a permit, to show support for four individuals appearing in court on BASE jumping related charges, and to hold memorial services for BASE jumpers Frank Gambalie III and Jan Davis. Gambalie drowned in June when he jumped into the Merced River while fleeing rangers; Davis died in October when her parachute failed to open after jumping from El Capitan. A permit was issued for 50 persons to assemble outside the court and in the El Capitan Meadow area. Approximately 30 people attended the demonstration and court proceedings. There were no incidents. About eight media representatives were present. [Scott Hinson, SA, YOSE, 11/9]

Posted: November 10, 1999

1999-10-22

99-617 - Yosemite NP (CA) - Demonstration; BASE Jumping Fatality

On Friday, October 22nd, Jan Davis, 60, died while attempting a BASE jump from El Capitan in Yosemite Valley. Davis' jump was part of an organized act of civil disobedience protesting the NPS air delivery regulations (36 CFR 2.17(a)), which make BASE jumping illegal in national park areas without a permit. The demonstration organizer, Avery Badenhop, who is the NPS permittee for the 300-plus BASE jumpers at Bridge Day at New River Gorge NR, wrote a letter to the superintendent informing him of his intention to hold the demonstration. At a meeting with the chief ranger before the event, Badenhop was informed that the jump was illegal, that those who did it would be charged criminally, and their equipment would be seized. Badenhop would not identify the number of persons who intended to make the illegal jump, but hinted that it might be as many as 50. He also said that there likely would be a large crowd at the landing area in support of the illegal jumpers, and that he intended to attract as much media coverage as he could. With the potential for the demonstration overwhelming the park's resources, a Pacific West SET team (USPP) was called in for the incident. Davis was the fourth of five jumpers who showed up at the top of El Cap to jump. The first three made successful jumps and landed to the cheers of about 150 people, some of who were waving flags and banners in support of BASE jumping in national park areas, and were taken into custody. Davis then launched and free-fell for more than 15 seconds until she hit the talus slope at the base of the cliff. Her body was evacuated by long-line under the park's contract helicopter. Those who witnessed the fall saw no sign of her pilot chute ever being deployed to initiate the opening of her main parachute. Badenhop, who was to be the fifth jumper, opted not to continue and walked off the mountain. At least three TV camera crews and an Associated Press reporter covered the demonstration, and broadcast and print coverage has been intense. Park special agents are investigating the incident; decisions about prosecution will be made following consultation with the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Contact Information

Name: Dan Horner, Special Agent

Posted: October 26, 1999

99-617 - Yosemite NP (CA) – Follow-up: BASE Jumping Demonstration, Fatality

On Friday, October 22nd, professional stuntwoman Jan Davis, 60, was killed when her parachute failed to open while attempting a BASE jump from El Capitan in Yosemite Valley. Davis' jump was part of an organized act of civil disobedience protesting the NPS air delivery regulations (36 CFR 2.17(a)), which make BASE jumping illegal in national park areas without a permit. On December 13th, jumpers Henry

Boger, Mick Knutson and Joseph Weber pled no contents to charges of illegal air delivery in magistrate's court in the park. Jumper Avery Badenhop pled no contest to aiding and abetting the air delivery of others. Under separate plea offers, each defendant agreed to a sentence of one year's probation, a \$2,000 fine, and payment of one-fourth of the \$6,155 restitution for the cost of recovering Davis' body. All parachute equipment used to make the illegal jumps was permanently forfeited. [Dan Horner, SA, YOSE, 12/13]

Posted: December 23, 1999

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: The cause of this fatality was due to the fact that Jan Davis used older parachute gear, because the rangers were going to confiscate it when she landed. The older gear had a pilot chute pouch in a different position than she was used to, and she instinctively tried to find the pilot chute at the location she was used to. If her gear wasn't to be confiscated, this fatality wouldn't exist.]

1999-10-16

99-626 - New River Gorge NR (WV) - Special Event

The 20th annual Bridge Day celebration was held on October 16th. The event was attended by about 175,000 people. The northbound lanes of the world's largest steel span bridge and the second highest bridge in the United States were closed to vehicle traffic and visitors were permitted to walk out on the bridge. Vendor and exhibition booths were set up in the highway right-of-way on both sides of the bridge. Highlights of the day's events included rappelling by almost 300 rappellers and jumps by over 300 BASE parachutists. The rappellers descended over 800 feet from about 20 rope anchor points; the BASE jumpers made 416 jumps over about six hours. Several two-person, four-person and six-person jumps were made. Six jumpers were injured - two required advanced life support, one for a broken pelvis and the other for compound fractures of the fibula and tibia bones in both legs. Rangers were involved with both rescues. The event was managed in cooperation with the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce and state, county and local police departments. Rick Brown served as IC for NPS resources. [Gary Hartley, CR, NERI, 10/19]

Posted: October 28, 1999

1999-??-??

Black Canyon (Colorado) - Illegal Jumping, Rescue

Wayne Crill jumped and was injured on landing. He required rescue by helicopter. Exact date unknown.

Posted: Never posted by NPS.

1999-10-08

94-557 - Glen Canyon (Utah/Arizona) - Follow-up: BASE Jumping Fatality

On October 8th, Dennis McGlynn of Truckee, California, began a three-month jail sentence for aiding and abetting the fatal illegal BASE jump of Paul Thompson at Lake Powell on September 15, 1994. McGlynn, head of a business called Gravity Sports Ltd., was the organizer and leader of "Cliff Camp '94," which was advertised as "an accelerated course in fixed object jumping." After the fatal jump, McGlynn hid in the rocks, leaving the others on the trip to deal with the rangers investigating the death. McGlynn's full role in the jump was not known until November 12, 1994, when he was the subject of a two-day cliff rescue by rangers at Lake Powell (94-644). After the rescue, BASE equipment and videos were seized, including a commercial video called "Gravity Storm '94." The video showed "Cliff Camp '94" and the beginning of Thompson's jump. In addition to the jail sentence, McGlynn was ordered to pay \$2,225.88 in restitution and given a term of 60 months probation. His company was ordered to pay a \$5,000 fine. This is the last of three BASE jumping cases from 1994 and 1995. Both of the other cases resulted in circuit court decisions. In U.S. v. Albers, in which the defendants were found guilty of air delivery and disorderly conduct, the Ninth Circuit ruled that the search and seizure of houseboats fell under the Carroll Doctrine. In U.S. v. Oxx, in which the defendants were found not guilty because the judge found that the government did not prove that the defendants did not have a permit, the Tenth Circuit ruled that 36 CFR 2.17(a)(3) clearly prohibits BASE jumping at Glen Canyon NRA and other national parks. Fred Morelli, the defendant's attorney in all three cases, has filed appeals. Morelli has stated that he plans to stage a jump at Lake Powell. [CRO, GLCA, 10/28]

Posted: October 29, 1999

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Prison terms for teaching fellow BASE jumpers how to jump is ridiculous.]

1999-10-06

Court Ruling - The Ninth Circuit has ruled that the search of a rented houseboat floating on Lake Powell based on probable cause that the houseboat contained evidence of BASE jumping violations was a valid search under the Carroll Doctrine for vehicle searches. In effect, the Ninth Circuit joined the Tenth Circuit in holding that a houseboat found on open public waters is a "vehicle" for the purposes of the Fourth Amendment and may be searched like any other vehicle if probable cause exists to believe the houseboat contains or is evidence of a crime. United States v. Albers, 136 F.3d 670 (9th Cir. 1998). [Don Usher, FLETC]

Posted: October 6, 1999

1999-08-06

99-484 - Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (MO) - Special Events

The St. Louis metro area sponsored several events which occurred concurrently through the weekend of Friday, August 6th, to Monday, August 9th:

State Games of America was issued a special use permit for use of the Grand Staircases in front of the Arch to seat participants and to use an area of the grounds for a parachute jump. Approximately 11,000 people attended the event.

Posted: August 19, 1999

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: This may be another case where a Special Use Permit was granted for parachute jumps into a National Park]

1999-06-09

99-267 - Yosemite NP (CA) - BASE Jump; Search

At first light on June 9th, a man jumped from El Capitan and parachuted to the floor of Yosemite Valley, landing in El Capitan Meadow. Rangers John Stobinski and Tom Schwartz saw the jump. As the jumper was disconnecting his harness, they identified themselves and ordered him to stop. He looked at the rangers, smiled and fled. The rangers gave chase for approximately 500 yards until the jumper entered the Merced River, swollen by spring run-off. He was swept downstream and was not seen again by the rangers. A search of a two-mile stretch of the Class 3 Merced River was conducted utilizing the park's contract helicopter and ten swiftwater-trained rescuers. The jumper was not located, and it's not certain if he got out of the river. Evidence indicates that he was an experienced and professional BASE jumper named Frank Gambalie. Gambalie is reported by close friends as reliable and punctual; he was expected home in Lake Tahoe on the evening of June 9th and had a job appointment the following morning. He didn't make either of these appointments, and, as far as investigators have been able to determine, has not called any friends or relatives. The search continued on June 10th. Gambalie's vehicle was found parked near a trailhead that leads to the top of El Capitan. No further sign of him has yet been found. [Scott Hinson, YOSE, 6/12]

Posted: June 15, 1999

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Some jumpers say this fatality was caused by persistent rangers chasing a jumper who committed a misdemeanor.]

1999-06-19 and 1999-06-21

99-314 - New River Gorge NR (WV) - BASE Jumping Arrest

Three parachutists jumped from the New River Gorge Bridge and landed on park land in two separate incidents on June 19th and 21st. On the 19th, rangers found a van parked on the dirt road below the bridge and set up surveillance. Several minutes later, they saw two men - Justin McClellan of Hamilton, Ohio, and Edward Trick of Maineville, Ohio - hike up a trail carrying parachutes with them. McClellan claimed that this was his first jump from the bridge and that he was new to BASE jumping and didn't log his jumps. Trick said that he has approximately 265 base jumps, is involved with a BASE jumping team, and would be helping organize Bridge Day in 1999. Trick has been jumping legally on Bridge Day for six years, but has twice been arrested by rangers for illegal jumps from the bridge. On the evening of the 21st, another ranger saw a parachutist jump from the catwalk of the bridge and land in the area below. A jeep was parked not far away. The driver was contacted and told the ranger that it belonged to her boyfriend, Steve Poehls, 25, of Keystone, Colorado. Moments later, the ranger heard the sounds of rustling nylon just below the road, then saw Poehls emerge from the bushes. Poehls' parachute was found about 20 feet away. Both eventually admitted to their part in the evening's entertainment. Poehls also said that he'd been caught by Fayette County deputies while standing on the bridge with a parachute in his

possession in 1997. All four persons were cited for aerial delivery violations and the three parachutes were seized as evidence. [Rick Brown, Protection Operations Leader, NERI, 6/25]

Posted: June 29, 1999

1998-12-30

99-764 – Canyonlands NP (UT) – BASE Accident; Rescue

Marilyn Schroering, a 24-year-old base jumper from Corpus Christi, Texas, was involved in a mishap while base jumping from Mineral Point, directly adjacent to the Island in the Sky District, late on the afternoon of December 30th. Schroering was attempting her fourth jump of the day and tenth of her career off 500-foot Wingate Cliff, which features a significant overhang. After takeoff, Schroering turned into the wall and hung the chute on a protruding rock approximately 270 feet from the top of the cliff. She was tangled in cordage from the chute; her breathing was restricted, and one leg was elevated to shoulder height. Grand County Search and Rescue asked the park for assistance in the technical rescue. The operation was run under a joint ICS arrangement (Colin Smith was NPS IC). Ranger George Paiva was lowered to Schroering's location, where he cut her out of the chute and cords. They were then raised to the top of the cliff. Schroering refused medical services and walked away. The incident has generated discussion at: www.basellogic.com/forum/board/469.shtml. [Steve Swanke, CANY, 1/3]

Posted: January 5, 1999

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: This incident DIDN'T even occur in a National Park. It occurred on BLM land, which we regularly and legally jump from!]

1998-10-17

98-684 - New River Gorge NR (WV) - Special Event

The annual Bridge Day event was held on and in the area of the New River Gorge Bridge on October 17th. During the one-day event, the northbound lanes of the bridge are closed to vehicles so that visitors can walk on the bridge and view fall colors. **The main attraction, however, continues to be BASE jumping** from the 876-foot high bridge to the landing area in the park below. The park issues a permit to a parachuting organization to allow jumpers to land in the park. The weather this year was perfect - sunny, temperatures in the mid 70s, and very little wind. The 355 registered parachutists made 750 jumps from the bridge. A world record was set when 16 people jumped from the bridge together in an approved, choreographed jump. The jump, which eclipsed the previous record set at the same location in 1997, went off without a hitch. There were 230 water landings over the course of the day, up significantly from last year. These jumpers were rescued by watercraft. Only three parachutists landed in trees, and none sustained serious injuries. Overall, only nine people required treatment, all but three minor. A group of about 210 people from several organizations rappelled from the bridge on 21 rappel lines, the longest of which was about 800 feet. None of the rappellers was injured. The event was managed under a unified incident command system involving the park and several state, county and local agencies. [Rick Brown, IC, NERI, 10/20]

Posted: October 22, 1998

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: More negative comments about BASE jumping. Based on our own statistics and knowledge about Bridge Day, we disagree with the 230 water landings, which would mean about 1 of every 3 jumpers landed in the water.]

1998-08-11

98-603 - New River Gorge NR (WV) - Base Jumping, Injury

Two parachutists - Thomas Ouellette, 25, and Matthew Byrd, 24 - jumped from the New River Gorge bridge around 8 p.m. on August 11th. Ouellette landed on the railroad tracks below the bridge and suffered a mild sprained ankle, but Byrd's parachute malfunctioned and he landed in the trees, fracturing a vertebra in his back and seriously injuring his knee. The park received a report of a critically injured parachutist around 9:30 p.m. Rangers and fire department volunteers searched the area for over an hour, but could not find him. Around 11 p.m., a local hospital advised that they had a patient who'd just been brought in with injuries received in a fall near New River. Rangers interviewed Byrd at the hospital and he admitted to jumping from the bridge. They also contacted Ouellette at the scene when he returned to recover Byrd's parachute. Ouellette also admitted to jumping from the bridge. Ouellette, Byrd and **Brian Wheatley, who drove their vehicle, were charged with illegal air delivery.** Byrd was transferred to a hospital in North Carolina on August 12th. He was still in serious condition at the time of the report. [Rick Brown, Protection Unit Leader, NERI, 8/12]

Posted: September 18, 1998

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Why would the hospital call the NPS to report a falling injury? Why was the driver of the vehicle charged?]

1998-07-20

98-447 - New River Gorge NR (WV) - Base Jumping Arrests

Late on the evening of July 20th, a motorist reported that five parachutists had jumped from the New River Gorge Bridge. The incident had occurred about 90 minutes before the call had been made. The responding ranger found Tom Brown of Monson, Massachusetts, sitting at the commercial outfitter takeout at Fayette Station. Brown said that he'd had an argument with his friends and that they left him there and drove away. The vehicle returned while the interview was underway. When the driver spotted the ranger, he quickly backed up and left. The vehicle was quickly stopped, and the occupants - Wayne Wilson of Lexington, Kentucky, and Greg Ballou of East Patchogue, New York - were interviewed. Brown and Ballou admitted to parachuting from the bridge; Wilson said that he was the driver and pickup person, but that he hadn't jumped. They said that five people had jumped, four landing in the takeout area and the fifth on the railroad tracks across the river. They gave details and named the other persons involved, but declined to reveal where their gear was stashed. As they left the takeout, rangers saw another man, identified as Mike Carpenter, standing near Rivers Rafting Company. Carpenter admitted to jumping from the bridge, revealed that all the gear was stashed under one of the rafting buses parked at Rivers', and took the ranger to the location. The ranger met with all five parachutists the next day. Brown, Ballou, Carpenter, Timothy Cronk and Christian Sewell were cited for disorderly conduct.

Nobody was injured in the jump, but the jumper who landed on the railroad tracks narrowly missed trees and a power line. [Rick Brown, Protection Unit Leader, NERI, 7/22]

Posted: July 30, 1998

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Every landing on the RR tracks is close to trees and power lines, so this jump isn't that different. Why the need to report that nobody was injured? More negative spin by New River rangers.]

1997-12-03

Unsolicited BASE Jumping Messages - A number of parks and offices have received unsolicited e-mail messages through the Internet from a BASE jumping organization which can be found at baseboard@websolution.com. Please note that there is a note at the end of the message which provides an address where you can send a message and have your address removed from their distribution list. [Bill Halainen, DEWA; Dwayne Collier, SOAR]

Posted: December 3, 1997

1997-11-11

97-777 - Arches NP (Utah) - BASE Jumping

Ranger Kyle Nelson overheard BLM radio traffic about two parachutists jumping from a cliff located within Arches NP and along the Colorado River on November 11th. The BASE jumpers landed in a clearing in a campground being developed by BLM. Nelson asked that the BLM employees witnessing the incident detain the jumpers, which they did; rangers Nelson and Jim Webster arrived shortly thereafter. Investigation and interviews with the two jumpers - Brian Choppin, 29, of Long Beach, California, and Dr. Michael Chesnut, 33, an emergency room physician from Lexington, Kentucky - revealed that they had jumped from a high cliff facing the Colorado River called Arches Point. Both claimed that they did not know that the take-off point was located within a national park. Their equipment was immediately seized and citations were issued two days later for air delivery (defined in CFR as "delivering or retrieving a person or object by parachute, helicopter, or other airborne means..."). Both paid their fines on December 12th and had their equipment returned to them on January 3rd. This is the first time that BASE jumping activity has been confirmed at Arches NP, although several reports have been taken in that area over the past three years. BASE jumping is occurring more frequently in the Moab area, and was broadly publicized by an organized event on BLM lands last spring, with at least one more event scheduled for later this year. [Jim Webster, CR, ARCH, 1/7]

Posted: January 8, 1998

1997-10-31

Appeals Court BASE Jumping Decision - On October 31st, a three-judge panel of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a previous district court decision that 36 CFR 2.17 (A)(3) was unconstitutional because it was ambiguous and did not clearly establish that BASE jumping (parachuting from fixed

objects including cliffs) was prohibited. The defendants had argued that their parachutes met the definition of aircraft and were allowed to land on the waters of Lake Powell. They also argued that jumping off a cliff constituted an emergency; therefore they could deliver themselves by parachute without a permit. The appellate court wrote in its decision that the BASE jumpers clearly used "parachutes" (not aircraft) as defined in 36 CFR 2.17 and that the regulation clearly stated the BASE jumpers conduct was criminal. The final statement by the appellate court regarding the BASE jumper's case was that "that argument, of course, will not fly." This decision will allow GLCA to proceed with the prosecution of as many as 20 BASE jumping cases that have been placed on hold during this appeals process. [David Sandbakken, LES, GLCA]

Posted: December 5, 1997

1997-10-18

97-645 - New River Gorge NR (WV) - Special Event

The annual "Bridge Day" event was held on and in the area of the New River Gorge bridge on October 18th. During this one-day event, the northbound lanes of the bridge are closed to traffic so that visitors can walk onto it to view fall colors and BASE jumpers can parachute from the 876-foot bridge to a landing area below on the New River. A special use permit is issued to a parachuting organization to allow jumpers to land on park property. The weather was nearly perfect for the event - overcast, cool (mid-50s), and with very little wind. This year, 320 registered parachutists made a total of about 720 jumps from the bridge, including an approved, choreographed eleven-person jump which went perfectly and set a world record. There were over 50 water landings in which chutists were rescued by watercraft, none of them resulting in injuries. One jumper landed in the trees when his parachute malfunctioned and suffered a fractured lower leg. Only a dozen people were treated on site for injuries, and these were limited to a scrapes, bruises, sprains and strains. There were six transports to a local hospital by ambulance for follow-up treatment. Another group of about 200 people from several organizations rappelled from the bridge on seven rappel lines. The longest rappel was about 800 feet. There were no accidents or other problems with this group. During the event, rangers also responded to a commercial rafting accident eight miles upriver from the event in which a visitor suffered a fractured femur. First aid was administered and the victim was evacuated about a mile overland to an ambulance. The Bridge Day event was managed under a unified incident command system; participating were the park and several state, county and local agencies. [Rick Brown, IC, NERI, 10/19]

Posted: October 20, 1997

1997-10-25

97-678 - Yosemite NP (CA) - BASE Jumping Arrests

Andy West and Edwin Harding were arrested by rangers for illegal BASE jumping as they landed in El Capitan Meadow at 3:45 a.m. on the morning of October 25th. Investigation revealed that West has made close to 100 BASE jumps in the park and has been acting as a guide for jumpers new to Yosemite, but that this was Harding's first such jump. Both pleaded guilty in magistrate's court. West was sentenced to two days' custody, a \$2,000 fine, permanent forfeiture of his parachute rig, and placed on two years' court

probation. Harding received three days in jail, a \$500 fine, forfeited his parachute rig (which he testified was worth nearly \$4,000) and was placed on a year's probation. [Dan Horner, CI, YOSE, 10/29]

Posted: October 31, 1997

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: The lowest fine yet!]

1997-09-24

97-586 - Glacier NP (MT) - Rescue

James Kauffman, 40, of Marion, Montana, made an illegal BASE jump from the summit of Mount Siyeh on September 24th. He immediately experienced problems and flew into the rock face. His parachute got snagged on rocks and he ended up dangling beneath it at a point about 400 feet below the summit. Kauffman's partners - two on the summit and one on the ground below - immediately called for assistance on the portable radios they were carrying. The emergency call was picked up by an individual near Browning, Montana, who eventually made contact with park dispatch through the Glacier County sheriff's office. Rangers responded via helicopter. One of the rangers rappelled to Kauffman and stabilized him. They were both then lifted to the summit, where Kauffman was picked up by helicopter and taken to a local hospital. He was treated for soft tissue injuries to one of his legs, then released. The eight park employees involved in the technical rescue were flown off the mountain at dusk. Kauffman will be cited for the offense. [Fred Vanhorn, GLAC, 9/29]

Posted: October 2, 1997

97-586 - Glacier NP (MT) - Follow-up on BASE Jumping Rescue

James Kauffman, a parachutist who illegally jumped off the summit of Mt. Siyeh last September 24th, has pled guilty to federal charges filed against him. Kauffman experienced problems immediately after jumping and flew into the rock face of a sheer 3,000-foot cliff. His parachute got snagged on rocks and he ended up dangling beneath it at a point about 400 feet below the summit. He hung there for several hours until rangers were able to rescue him. Following the conviction, the federal magistrate placed Kauffman on two years' probation and ordered him to pay nearly \$9,000 to cover the costs associated with his rescue. The conditions of Kauffman's probation require that he not violate any state, federal or local law; that he sell his parachute and apply the proceeds to the cost of his rescue; and that he stay out of the park during the period of his probation. [Amy Vanderbilt, PIO, GLAC, 3/26]

Posted: March 30, 1998

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: The judge forced this guy to sell his parachute.]

1997-09-08

97-561 - Canyon de Chelly NM (AZ) - BASE Jumping Arrests

On the evening of Monday, September 8th, residents of the Canyon del Muerto area of the park reported that three men had parked at a popular overlook, unloaded parachuting equipment, and BASE jumped into the canyon. BASE jumping has become an increasing popular sport at Canyon de Chelly, but it has

proven difficult to catch the participants. In this case, canyon residents were quick to report the vehicle, which was then staked out by park rangers and tribal police. Rangers Cal Bahe and William Yazzie, with the assistance of the Navajo tribal police, apprehended the trio when they returned to the vehicle late that night after hiking out of the canyon. Michael Muscat, 45, Clarence Ferguson, 24, and Aaron Neill, all from California, were cited for trespassing and air delivery. They paid all fines with credit cards; their equipment was returned to them on Wednesday. All three realized that BASE jumping was illegal in the area, but did it anyway. They followed a local woman as she hiked out of the canyon because they were not familiar with any of the trails. The local woman reported being "scared" by the men. They also stated that they were jumping whenever possible on their trip through the Southwest and may be heading towards Canyonlands and the Moab area. [Anna Marie Fender, Superintendent, CACH, 9/11]

Posted: September 12, 1997

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: More negative comments about BASE jumpers by NPS. Better lockdown the NP's because these guys are headed North!]

1996-11-12

BASE Jumping: BASE jumping is once again on the NPS front burner. Glen Canyon NRA recently had two cases heard in two district courts, one in Arizona and the other in Utah. The judge in Utah ruled that the regulation found at 36 CFR 2.17 (aircraft and air delivery) was ambiguous regarding BASE jumpers and dismissed the charges; the judge in Arizona, who heard a similar case, upheld the regulation and the charges. The NPS is appealing the Utah decision. [Dennis Burnett, RAD/WASO]

Posted: November 12, 1996

1996-10-21

96-613 - Yosemite NP (California) - BASE Jumping Fatality

Jeff Christman, 42, of Phoenix was killed early on the morning of October 22nd while BASE jumping off El Capitan. BASE jumping is illegal in the park. Christman was one of several jumpers on El Capitan that day; six others were arrested. BASE jumping was permitted in the park on a trial basis in 1980, but was discontinued due to the high number of injuries, illegal jumps, resource damages, and problems with spectator and visitor management. [Scott Gediman, YOSE]

Posted: October 23, 1996

96-613 - Yosemite NP (California) - Follow-up on BASE Jumping Fatality

On October 21, 1996, Jeff Christman, 42, of Phoenix was killed when he slammed into a cliff while BASE jumping off El Capitan. He was one of several jumpers on El Capitan that day; five others were arrested. Two of the five jumped with him, the other three aided and abetted the jump. Following lengthy pre-trial motions, the five all pleaded guilty to illegal air delivery charges under the terms of a plea agreement. They were sentenced in federal court on July 14th. Each was sentenced to limited supervised probation, fined \$2,000, and ordered to contribute to a combined sum of \$5,680 to the

Yosemite Mountain Safety Fund, which was established to provide support to parkwide SAR activities.
[Dan Horner, CI, YOSE, 7/21]

Posted: July 24, 1998

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: All problems with BASE jumping claimed by the NPS can be addressed and solved today, 25 years later.]

1996-10-19

96-612 - New River Gorge NR (West Virginia) - Special Event: Bridge Day

Bridge Day, the annual event in which one lane of the New River Gorge Bridge is closed to all but foot traffic, was held on October 19th. Although many visitors come to walk the bridge and view fall colors, the main attraction is the BASE (Buildings, Antennas, Spans, Earth) jumping that occurs from the 876-foot high bridge to the landing area below. On this one day of the year, the park issues a permit to the World BASE Association to allow parachute landings on park property. This year, the weather for the event was less than favorable - cold temperatures, some minor rain showers, and winds from 15 to 25 mph. The winds were also erratic, making it very difficult to steer parachutes and assuring an interesting day for rescue teams. This year, 379 registered parachutists made a total of 383 jumps from the bridge. There were 81 water landings requiring rescue by watercraft, but none of the jumpers was injured. Five jumpers landed in trees, and the park's SAR team performed technical rescues to retrieve two of them. One received a severe rectal laceration which required surgery. Although a total of 25 injuries were treated, most were minor scrapes, bruises, sprains and strains. There were nine ambulance transports, including a head injury suffered by a visitor on a commercial raft tour who was hit in the head by a parachutist landing in the raft. A group of about 200 people from several organizations also rappelled from the bridge on ten rappel lines, the longest of which was about 800 feet. There were no problems associated with this group. Senator Rockefeller, ten gubernatorial candidates, and several other governmental candidates from all parties attended the event to solicit support for their campaigns, adding another dimension to incident management. The event was managed under a unified incident command involving the park and several state, county and local agencies. [Rick Brown, IC, NERI]

Posted: October 23, 1996

1996-09-11

96-542 - Black Canyon (Colorado) - Arrest; Illegal Jumping

On September 11th, ranger Amy Bergonzi was assisting with an end of season trash cleanup in the canyon, which was being done with the aid of a helicopter, when she saw a man parachute from the Painted Wall. The man, later identified as Jeffrey Rohrbacker, 32, of Portland, Oregon, apparently did not see the helicopter prior to his jump, and was surprised when it arrived at his location minutes after he landed. Rohrbacker was cited for failure to obtain an inner canyon permit and unauthorized air delivery (the regulation which deals with illegal parachuting). His chute, helmet, and helmet-mounted video camera were seized as evidence. [Bob Cornelius, DR, BLCA]

Posted: September 19, 1996

1995-10-21

95-712 - New River Gorge (West Virginia) - Special Event

On Saturday, October 21st, the park hosted the annual Bridge Day event. An estimated 100,000 visitors attended, down from previous years because of forecasted rain showers. One lane of the four-lane bridge was closed off and pedestrians were allowed on the bridge to view the fall colors and to watch BASE jumpers and rappellers jump from it. A total of 361 registered parachutists made a total of 609 jumps; a world record was set when nine of them made a successful jump from the bridge at the same time. Another 161 persons rappelled and climbed from heights of between 350 and 650 feet without incident. Threatening heavy rains and high winds held off, which helped bring down the number of injuries and other emergency incidents during the day. There were only 54 water landings, one tree landing, and four injuries requiring treatment - three requiring transport to the hospital but resulting in same-day treatment and release. During the event, rangers conducted a technical rescue of three juveniles who ran away from an adjudicated juvenile group that was hiking in the area. They climbed down a steep drainage and became stranded on a cliff band about 45 feet above the grounds. They were rescued without incident. Edward Trick was arrested on October 20th for illegally parachuting off the bridge. Because of this and in accord with an agreement with the World BASE Association, Trick was prohibited from jumping under the terms of the permit the following day. Trick ignored the prohibition and jumped anyway. He was arrested at the bottom of the bridge; a U.S. magistrate judge fined him \$100 for the first jump and \$300 for the second. [Rick Brown, Acting CR, NERI]

Posted: October 31, 1995

1995-10-21

New River Gorge NR (WV) - Base Jumping Arrests

Edward Trick was arrested on October 20th for illegally parachuting off the bridge.

Posted: Never posted by NPS except in the morning report for Bridge Day 1995.

1995-08-24

Request for BASE Jumper Suspects

2) Information Request - New River Gorge is beginning preparations for Bridge Day, the annual October event which draws about 200,000 spectators and nearly 600 parachuting and repelling enthusiasts who jump from the 876-foot-high bridge. Due to increased competition for jumping sites nationwide, more and more parks are experiencing such activities. New River Gorge would like to hear from parks that have these activities to learn about their experiences and to develop a list of BASE jumping suspects that other parks would like them to keep a look out for. The park has had considerable success in apprehension, sentencing and extradition in the past. Contact Tony Liquori by phone at 304-574-0165 or via cc:Mail at "NERI RM&VP Canyon District". [Rick Brown, Acting CR, NERI]

Posted: August 24, 1995

1994-11-11

94-644 - Glen Canyon (Utah) - Rescue

On the evening of November 11th, the park received a report of a stranded climber on a small ledge in Ribbon Canyon. Rescuers responding from Halls Crossing and Bullfrog worked throughout the night attempting to reach and rescue Dennis McGlynn of Davis, California, who was perched on a small ledge about 115 feet above the canyon floor. Night time rescue operations were hindered by a light rain and poor quality sandstone rock. At first light, a rescue party consisting of rangers Matt Vandzura and Russ Miller and maintenance workers Pat Horning and Greg Taylor succeeded in attaining a position on a higher ledge from which Vandzura was able to traverse across to a position above McGlynn and from there complete the rescue by lowering him to the ground. McGlynn spent nearly 19 hours standing on the small ledge. He was clad in t-shirt, shorts, hiking shoes, and an inexpensive plastic rain poncho. The latter likely kept him from developing hypothermia. Investigation following the rescue indicated that McGlynn and his party were BASE jumpers who have frequently visited remote areas of the park and were all present in the nearby Escalante Canyon area when Paul Thompson died during a BASE jump in September. This particular rescue was not related to BASE jumping, however, as McGlynn was simply free climbing in a narrow side canyon. [Tommie Lee, CR, GLCA, 11/14]

Posted: November 17, 1994

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Why does BASE jumping get brought into stories like this?]

1994-11-06

94-637 - Zion (Utah) - BASE Jumping Arrests

On the afternoon of November 6th, four people were caught BASE jumping off of Angel's Landing in Zion Canyon. Acting on a tip from Lew Hansen, a park maintenance employee, rangers Fred Hoeger, Shawn McNally, Beth Martin and Ed Dunlavey responded to the area and contacted Marta Hewitt, Paul McGreevy, Frank Le Poole, and Michael Maguire. After multiple interviews, the four admitted to the jump and were cited under 36 CFR 2.17 (a)(3), air delivery by parachute. The jumpers subsequently led rangers to four separate locations where their equipment had been stashed. All equipment was seized pending court appearances, where forfeiture will be pursued. [David Buccello, Acting CR, ZION, 11/7]

Posted: November 10, 1994

1994-10-15

94-616 - New River Gorge (West Virginia) - Special Event

On Saturday, October 15th, the park hosted Bridge Day, an annual event in which one lane of the bridge is closed off so pedestrians can view fall colors and watch BASE jumpers and rappellers parachute or

rappel from the bridge. An estimated 200,000 people attended the event this year. The 430 parachutists who registered for the event made about 560 BASE jumps from the 876-foot-high bridge; another 155 persons rappelled or climbed ropes that were up to 650 feet long. A 400-foot tyrolean traverse was set up on one side of the bridge and a Canadian rescue organization led numerous traverses. There were fewer injuries and emergency incidents than in previous years, at least partly due to the beautiful weather and low winds. There were only 60 water landings, one tree landing, and 12 injuries (seven requiring transport to local hospitals for broken bones) associated with BASE jumping activities. Rangers arrested three jumpers on outstanding warrants for BASE jumping off of El Capitan in Yosemite and for failure to appear at court. Arrested were Gordon W. Legg, Jr., Jess Neuger, and John C. Hoover. [Rick Brown, DR, Canyon District, 10/19]

Posted: October 27, 1994

1994-09-15

94-557 - Glen Canyon (Utah/Arizona) - Falling Fatality

On the afternoon of September 15th, rangers received a cellular phone request for medical assistance for a person with life-threatening injuries who'd fallen from a cliff near the mouth of the Escalante arm of Lake Powell. Upon arrival, they found that Paul Thompson, 51, of Dixon, California, had already expired. Thompson was part of a group of seven BASE jumpers who'd made several parachute jumps from the cliff face just south of the Escalante confluence. Witnesses said that his chute deployed upon jumping, but that Thompson got twisted around and struck the cliff face several times because of the parachute's pendulum effect. The chute then collapsed and Thompson fell a significant distance, struck a rock, and landed in the water. Companions in a recovery boat witnessed the event and picked him up almost immediately. They said that they'd performed CPR, but that they were unsuccessful due to severe face, chest, and pelvic trauma. BASE jumping has not been a problem for Glen Canyon in past years. [Tomie Lee, CR, GLCA, 9/16]

Posted: September 15, 1994

1993-10-16

93-784 - New River Gorge (West Virginia) - Special Event

Bridge Day was held on October 16th at the New River Gorge Bridge in Fayetteville, West Virginia. The annual event drew a crowd to the area estimated at over 125,000. The event has international fame for its high adventure activities, including parachuting, bungee jumping and rappelling off the bridge. During the period between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., 458 registered BASE jumpers made a total of 502 parachute jumps from the bridge, approximately 125 rappellers ascended and descended distances from 600 to 800 feet, and a world record bungee jump was made. A total of 102 parachutists landed in the park and required rescue by NPS personnel. There were 13 injuries from BASE jumping accidents, including nine that required transport to and treatment at a local hospital. The bungee jump was made by seven people in a custom-made metal basket which plunged about 850 feet into the gorge to a point about 25 feet above the river before springing back. One injury occurred from the jump when the bungee basket did not release properly and trapped one of the participants between one of the bridle ropes and the basket. This person suffered severe rope burns across the chest and shoulder and was taken to a local hospital. The

worst injury of the day occurred when an 18-year-old male fell about 25 feet from a cliff face in the area of the bridge buttress while free climbing. He suffered a fractured thoracic vertebrae and his spinal cord was severed; he's expected to remain permanently paralyzed from the fracture point down. The Mid-Atlantic Region's all-risk management (ARM) team participated in the management of the event for the first time. The event went very smoothly, relatively speaking, with few major injuries to participants and none to the over 35 NPS employees involved in rescue operations, EMS and law enforcement. One contracted boat rescuer was injured when his thumb got caught in the bight of a parachute cord and was severed while rescuing a parachutist from the river. [Rick Brown, Canyon DR, NERI, 10/22]

Posted: November 1, 1993

1993-09-25

93-742 - Yosemite (California) - Fatal BASE Jump

Early on the morning of September 25th, Keith Jones called park dispatch and reported that he'd recently witnessed a BASE jumping accident at El Capitan. Jones said that he feared that the accident involved a person he'd dropped off at the Yosemite Falls trailhead the previous day. Jones claimed he didn't know the person's name, but that he knew she was planning to BASE jump off El Capitan on the morning of the 25th. He also said that he'd seen three parachutes deployed near the face of El Capitan that morning, but that he'd also seen what appeared to be a human body free fall all the way to the top of the tree line at the base of El Capitan. He'd lost sight of it, but thought he'd heard it strike the rocks there. Investigating rangers found severely traumatized human remains below the New Dawn Wall route on El Capitan with two parachutes tangled in the trees above. The victim had not been positively identified at the time of the report. Investigators subsequently determined that Jones was a principal participant in the jump; he was arrested and placed in custody on charges of illegal air delivery and conspiracy. Jones continues to deny any knowledge of the victim's identity, and claims to have no information of or connection with the three successful jumpers. [Leslie Crossland, YOSE, 9/28]

Posted: September 29, 1993

1992-10-17

92-567 - New River Gorge (West Virginia) - Special Event

Bridge Day, an annual event in the park, occurred on October 17th and attracted about 200,000 visitors. Although many visited the visitor center and other areas of the park, parachutists jumping from the 876-foot-high bridge were the main attraction. Just under 300 parachutists made 550 jumps; 44 landed in the river below the bridge, and **rangers made 29 water rescues during the day**. Two others landed in trees. Eleven injuries occurred which required transport of the victims to the hospital. Two of these were serious leg injuries. [Kinsey Shilling, CR, NERI, 10/19]

Posted: October 21, 1992

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: Rangers are now doing water rescue?]

1992-09-21

92-540 - Yosemite (California) - Rescue

Dispatch received a call reporting a climbing accident on the northwest face of Half Dome on the morning of September 21st. Although the anonymous caller said he was calling from Sunnyside campground in Yosemite Valley, the 911 system display showed that it was coming from Fish Camp, just outside the park's south entrance and an hour by car from the Valley. Rangers conducted a reconnaissance of Half Dome but failed to find any climbers in distress. Because of the similarity of this report to past BASE jumper parachuting accidents, rangers decided to conduct an aerial search for a fallen parachutist. At about 12:30 p.m., searchers in the park's contract helicopter found Jess Neuger, 35, of Lake Worth, Florida, lying at the base of Half Dome, approximately 2,000 feet below the summit. Park medics landed nearby and found that Neuger had a fractured femur, fractured pelvis, and unstable vital signs. The provided advanced life support, then short-hauled Neuger by helicopter to the Valley, after which he was taken to a hospital in Modesto. Doctors estimate that it will take Neuger at least a year to recover from his injuries. Investigators found that Neuger and a second parachutist had jumped from the summit at about 6:30 a.m. Witnesses said that Neuger's chute didn't deploy properly and that it never fully opened before he hit the ground. The second parachutist apparently landed without problem in lower Tenaya Canyon. He has not yet been identified, but several investigative leads are being pursued. Neuger had in his possession a scanner programmed to pick up all Yosemite radio frequencies and a portable two-way radio. He will be charged with CFR violations for air delivery and creating a hazardous condition. In addition to other penalties, prosecutors will seek full restitution of the \$3,000 rescue cost. [Dave Brennan, YOSE, 9/29]

Posted: October 1, 1992

[JUMPER COMMENTARY: I've talked to both jumpers in this incident. The injured jumper reports that rangers refused rescue until he identified his jumping partner.]

1992-09-14

92-504 - Jefferson National Expansion (Missouri) - Illegal Jump

Just after 7 a.m. on September 14th, an unidentified man scaled the Gateway Arch by "suction cupping" up one leg and successfully base-jumped by parachuting to the ground. The jumper landed between the legs of the arch, where he was met by two individuals who had been photographing the jump; the trio then gathered their gear and headed to waiting vehicles. The jump had been observed by park staff, however, and pursuit was begun. The jumper made it to a waiting car and sped away. The other two individuals went to a vehicle at the river-front parking area, but were stopped by a park maintenance man as they attempted to leave the area. Rangers arrived immediately thereafter, took the pair into custody, and confiscated 35 mm and video equipment and a voice-activated transceiver. The jumper later called a local radio station and described his escape. He said that he started his climb at 3:30 a.m. using eight-inch suction cups, and that it took him two and a quarter hours to reach the summit. The man also said, among other things, that he'd base-jumped the World Trade Center in New York, that he was not from St. Louis, that his girlfriend had driven the getaway vehicle and that the people photographing the jump were unknown to him and just happened to be present. Rangers discount the latter statement, since the individuals ran towards the jumper, left park grounds with him, and had the transceiver, which they apparently used to communicate with him. Suction cup marks have been found on the south leg of the

arch, and two water bottles have been found on the top. One of the bottles contained some written material, which is being inspected. The jumper has contacted a local television station and offered to sell the video tape from his helmet camera for \$2,000. [Daryl Stone, JEFF, 9/14]

Posted: September 16, 1992

92-504 - Jefferson National Expansion (Missouri) - Follow-up on Illegal Jump

On December 15th, John Vincent pled guilty in U.S. district court to one count of climbing a national monument (36 CFR 2.1) and one count of parachuting without a permit (36 CFR 2.17) stemming from his illegal jump from the top of the arch on September 14th. Police from St. Louis County assisted rangers in identifying Vincent following the incident. Part of Vincent's plea agreement is that he will cooperate and provide witness testimony against his two associates and co-defendants, who both conspired with and aided and abetted Vincent. Vincent also forfeited all rights to the videotape and photos of the jump, which were seized as evidence. Sentencing is set for March 12th. [John Weddle, CI, JNEM, 12/17]

Posted: December 18, 1992

92-504 - Jefferson National Expansion (Missouri) - Follow-up on Illegal Jump

On December 15, 1992, John Vincent pled guilty in U.S. district court to one count of climbing a national monument (36 CFR 2.1) and one count of parachuting without a permit (36 CFR 2.17) stemming from his illegal jump from the top of the arch on September 14, 1992. Part of Vincent's plea agreement stipulated that he would cooperate and provide witness testimony against his two associates and co-defendants, who both conspired with and aided and abetted Vincent. One of the associates, Ronald Carroll, was subsequently charged with conspiracy (18 USC Section 2 and 371) and creation of a hazardous condition (36 CFR 2.34). On April 30th, Vincent and Carroll were sentenced on those charges. Carroll was sentenced to a year's probation and a \$250 fine for each of the two charges, with the probation sentences to run concurrently. Vincent was sentenced to a year's probation and a \$500 fine on each of the two charges against him; again, the probation sentences are to run concurrently. Both men also were sentenced to small amounts of community service. The comments of judge David Noce upon sentencing are worth repeating: "There are places in our country where the sufficiently skilled can savor the exhilaration and personal satisfaction of accomplishing courageous and intrepid acts, of reaching dreamed of heights, and for coursing dangerous adventures. Many such places are entrusted to the National Park Service. There are other places appropriately set aside and safeguarded for personal enjoyment without hazard, for the exhilaration of mere observation, and for the appreciation of the imaginings and workings of others. Many such places are also committed to the National Park Service for safekeeping. The St. Louis Arch and the grounds of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial are in the latter category." [John Weddle, CI, JEFF, 6/16]

Posted: June 17, 1993

92-504 - Jefferson National Expansion (Missouri) - Follow-up on Illegal Jump

John Vincent, the man who climbed and BASE-jumped off the Gateway Arch on September 14, 1992, is on his way to jail for 90 days. Vincent originally pled guilty to the misdemeanor and was sentenced to a \$1,000 fine, 25 hours of community service, and a year's probation. On December 19th, however, Vincent had to appear before a federal magistrate judge for violating terms of his probation, for failing to report to his probation officer, and for two recent encounters with the police. The judge revoked his probation and ordered Vincent to serve 90 days in jail, beginning December 29th. The assistant U.S.

attorney noted in court that "Mr. Vincent has a serious attitude problem." A request for a delay on the jail reporting date made by Vincent's attorney was denied. [Deryl Stone, CR, JEFF, 12/20]

Posted: December 21, 1993

1992-04-23

92-165 - Yosemite (California) - Rescue; Illegal BASE Jumping

At about 6:45 a.m. on April 23rd, rangers Russell Marsh and Cameron Jacobi responded to cries for help from the east face of El Capitan and found two uninjured climbers beckoning for help for a person who was apparently at the base of the cliff near the start of The Nose route. Jacobi was able to find the victim, 28-year-old Chris Hartfield of Colin, California, and provide him with medical assistance for a severe head laceration and multiple fractures. During his evaluation of Hartfield, Jacobi determined that he was probably a BASE jumper, though no parachute was found in the area to confirm this. Hartfield was transported to El Capitan Meadow by a carry-out team, then transported by helicopter to Modesto. Hartfield later told Marsh that he had experienced some type of parachute failure after jumping off El Capitan. The park prosecutor is reviewing the possibility of filing criminal charges against Hartfield. [cc:Mail message from Herb Gercke, RAD/WRO, 5/4]

Posted: May 5, 1992

1984

Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Ohio

Molding the park's birthday party and the National Folk Festival together, CVN7RA produced the first annual Cuyahoga Valley Festival in September 1986. Fifteen thousand people attended over a two-day period to listen to various types of music, poetry, and dramatic performances; [see skydiving exhibitions](#) and wandering mimes, clowns, and puppeteers; eat ethnic foods; and learn about the management mosaic partners at information booths. Evening entertainment includes a dance prior to a concert. Two hundred fifty VIPs and corporate and private sector funding make the Cuyahoga Valley Festival a success each year. Donation boxes and a modest entry fee initiated in 1990 help defray expenses.

1983-10-29

St. Louis Arch BASE Jump Arrest

Other requests or attempts at similar stunts, despite the tacit warning of Mr. Swyers' tragic death, continued throughout the decade. At 7:15 a.m. on October 29, 1983, Ranger Roger Cleven noticed a man trying to climb the north leg of the Gateway Arch, wearing suction cups on his hands and feet. The man had ascended about 20 feet, but Cleven was able to talk him out of continuing. The following day, this same man, 21-year-old David Adcock of Houston, Texas, scaled the Equitable Building in downtown St. Louis dressed in a blue suit and blue fright wig. Adcock intended to parachute from the building, but attracted such a crowd, including St. Louis police and fire companies, that after scaling the building he rappelled to the ground instead. Adcock used the alias "Skip Stanley, the Blue Bandit." He was apparently

quite serious about climbing the Arch; he had given a batch of T-shirts to vendors outside Busch Stadium (there was a football game on the Sunday of his climb) which read "1983 Arch Climb." [4]

[4] *"Human fly's climb gives grid fans an early show," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, October 31, 1983, pp. 1 and 10A; "Stunt Man Scales Equitable Building," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, October 31, 1983; "Climber Surprised By Police Anger," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 1, 1983; and "Blue Bandit 'outraces' police warrant here," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, November 1, 1983.*

Posted: http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/jeff/adhi2-13.htm

1980-08-21

St. Louis Arch Skydiving Fatalities and similar incidents

The other major way in which people tried to "conquer" the Gateway Arch was by scaling it and/or parachuting from it. The first instance of this behavior ended in tragedy. On Saturday, November 22, 1980, at approximately 8:55 a.m., Kenneth Swyers of Overland, Missouri, "was seen parachuting above the Gateway Arch. It appeared that Swyers landed on top of the Arch and that he was thrown off balance when the wind caught his parachute." Swyers' parachute deflated and [he] fell down the North Leg of the Arch. Approximately [half-way] down Swyers attempted to deploy his auxiliary parachute, however it failed to open and Swyers landed on his head on the concrete terrazzo. Swyers was pronounced dead at the St. Louis City Hospital at 0950 hours." [2]

The 33-year-old Swyers requested permission to make a parachute jump in the vicinity of the Arch on August 21, 1980, which was denied by Charles Ross, special assistant to the superintendent. Swyers watched a television program the night before his death which showed daredevil acts of parachute jumping. Swyers was himself a parachute enthusiast who had made more than 1,600 jumps, and on the morning of his death, he left a note for his wife to come to the Arch to photograph his jump. Few park employees or visitors were on the grounds before 9:00 a.m. in late November when Swyers made his jump. Park Technician Lisa Hanfgarn, hurrying to get to work on time, thought she saw an object fall down the North Leg of the Arch as she entered the doors to the complex. She reported this to Seasonal Park Technician Liz Schmidt (of the law enforcement division), who was monitoring the north entrance doors. Schmidt went outside to discover the body of Swyers lying in the midst of his parachutes, and immediately radioed to law enforcement rangers requesting assistance, an ambulance and the city police. Two St. Louis city policemen, who witnessed the jump from Wharf Street, arrived on the scene and documented the fatal injury to Swyers. An ambulance was on the scene by 8:59 a.m. Mr. Swyers' wife was on the grounds at the time of the accident and saw her husband fall to his death. She came forward at the accident scene, viewing her husband's body and eventually covering his face with his parachute. A large crowd gathered, composed of visitors, police and medical personnel. Park Technician Schmidt later testified that the weather was blustery, cold and windy, and that it was not a good day for a jump, near the Arch or elsewhere. The FAA was immediately notified, and an investigation eventually turned up the pilot who ferried Swyers over the Arch to make his fatal jump. As a result, Richard Skurat of Overland, Missouri had his pilot's license suspended for 90 days by the FAA in December 1980. [3]

In February 1986, Hollywood stuntman Dan Koko requested permission to make a free-fall jump from the top of the Gateway Arch on the 4th of July, during the Veiled Prophet Fair. Koko held the world record for successfully jumping free-fall (into large cushions without a parachute); he jumped from a height of 326 feet off a Las Vegas hotel roof in 1984. Permission for the jump was denied by the park. [5]

[2] Case Incident Report number 80-11, 11/26/80, JEFF File A7623, JEFF historian's office.

[3] Board of Inquiry Report Into the Death of Kenneth Swyers, November 22, 1980; JEFF document, December 4, 1980; JEFF File A7623, JEFF historian's office. See also "Parachutist Killed In Jump Onto Top Of The Arch," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 23, 1980, p. 1; "FAA Seeks Parachutist's Pilot" and "Arch always fascinated jumper, wife says," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, November 24, 1980, p. 1; "Chutist was denied permission for jump," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, November 25, 1980; "Friends Continue to Deny Sky Diver Aimed For Arch," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 26, 1980, p. 8A; "Arch Has Tempted Daredevils Ever Since Its Completion," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 30, 1980, pp. 1 and 7; "Pilot grounded," St. Paul Dispatch (Minnesota), December 18, 1980.

[5] "High Jumper — Hollywood Stuntman Eager To Leap Off Gateway Arch," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, February 12, 1986; and "Arch jump won't get off ground," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, February 13, 1986. In 1980, the park received a request from the That's Incredible television program to conduct a similar type of stunt. See "TV show had sought stunt jump from Arch," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, November 25, 1980. On September 14, 1992, John C. Vincent of New Orleans successfully scaled the outside of the Arch with suction cups during the night, and jumped off with a parachute at 7 a.m. This jump will be covered in its entirety in the next JEFF administrative history

Posted: http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/jeff/adhi2-13.htm

1975-07-04

Jefferson National Expansion (Missouri)

As July 4 approached, numerous activities took place on and around the grounds. The Park Service provided space via special use permits for groups to hold bicentennial observances. Memorial staff members cooperated with area agencies to stage many activities, among them the Bicentennial Horizons of American Music and The Performing Arts (BHAM), which sponsored numerous music, dance, theater, film, and multi-media events. The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra presented concerts under the Arch to thousands of people. The Fourth of July Spectacular, sponsored by Famous-Barr department store and coordinated with Federal, state, and local officials, was held during the afternoon and early evening. It drew the largest crowd ever assembled in St. Louis. More than 800,000 people reviewed the boat racing, water-skiing (the river was closed to all commercial traffic for several hours), aviation events, stunt flying, **parachuting**, and a fifty-minute fireworks spectacle.

Posted: http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/jeff/adhi1-8.htm

1966-07-24

First El Capitan Jump Yosemite National Park

Mike Pelkey and Brian Schubert made the first El Capitan jump in recorded history. The Park Superintendent confiscated their gear and camera equipment and kept them in the park for three days while they checked for any existing rules to charge them with. They were not able to find anything

prohibiting parachuting from their mountaintops at that time and both jumpers were released. This is the first recorded jump in Yosemite National Park and also the first incident where rangers discriminated and hassled jumpers for no valid reason.