

# Investigative Services Branch

Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Services

National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior



# HIGHLIGHTS *of* 2020



# Who We Are and What We Do

## MISSION

*The immediate and long-term protection of park resources, visitors, assets, employees, and residents. We accomplish this through detection, investigation, apprehension, and successful prosecution of persons who violate laws of the United States of America while within, or while affecting, the National Park System.*

## VISION

*Provide the highest-quality investigative and law enforcement support to parks, regions, and other stakeholders.*

## VALUES

*Honesty. Integrity.  
Respect. Service.*

The Investigative Services Branch of the National Park Service provides critical investigative and other law enforcement support to a wide range of customers.

ISB Special Agents carry out an expansive portfolio of investigative and law enforcement activities for parks and regional offices across the National Park System.

As our special agents investigate complex, sensitive, and/or long-term cases of all types of crimes, we work closely with US Park Rangers in the field every day. Investigations include crimes of violence, major property crimes, fraud, embezzlement, major resource violations, drug cultivation, and other incidents.

We are available year-round and around the clock, and we typically cover the costs associated with deployment of assets.

## INVESTIGATIVE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Case Preparation Guidance and Support
- Computer Forensics Support and Investigation
- Covert and Undercover Operations
- Crime Scene Management and Processing
- Criminal Investigations
- Intelligence Analysis and Support
- Interviews and Interrogations
- Investigative Skills Instruction
- Officer Involved Shooting Response Team
- Operations Planning and Support
- Outside Agency Liaison
- Sources of Information Management
- Technical Surveillance Support and Equipment
- Tip Line use — Any Park, Any Time
- Training and Mentoring
- Wildland and Structure Fire Investigation



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Highlights of the NPS Investigative Services Branch is produced in-house and meets federal IT Accessibility standards (section 508-compliance). Questions and comments are welcome.

**COVER:** An ISB Special Agent and US Park Rangers in the field. NPS photo | Sunrise over a backcountry trail in Rocky Mountain National Park. NPS photo | A bald eagle in Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve. NPS photo.

**PHOTO, PAGE 2:** An ISB Special Agent in the field. NPS photo.

**PHOTO, ABOVE:** Sunrise lights lodgepole pines near Nymph Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park. NPS photo.

All maps created by Brandon Lemire (NPS).

# Message From Hunter Bailey

► CHIEF OF THE NPS INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BRANCH



Chief Hunter Bailey. NPS photo.

**Dear Family, Partners, and Friends of the National Park Service:**

It continues to be an honor and privilege for the team of the Investigative Services Branch (ISB) to serve each of you. The words in our Mission Statement on the inside cover identify not just what we do but who we are. Each and every day, ISB Special Agents, Intelligence Analyst, Victim Specialists, and Program Specialists work tirelessly in support of this very purpose. In doing so, violators are held accountable, victims are heard and served, and our national park resources are protected for future generations.

Let me begin by recognizing Assistant Agent in Charge Jeff Sullivan, whose extraordinary work and career are highlighted on page 13. The organization and program we see today are due in great part to his exceptional dedication, vision, and leadership. Sullivan retired from the National Park Service (NPS) at the end of 2020; we are grateful to have had the privilege to work alongside and learn from such a distinguished individual, peer, and investigator. We wish him all the best!

Very early in 2020 we were all presented with new and significant challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic went global. As government offices shifted toward a remote work posture, ISB took a tactical pause. We revisited both how we accomplish our work and how to best protect and support our team given these new conditions. We needed to adapt quickly and take prompt action. With the dedication and creativity of many, we developed and activated operational protocols to help prioritize case work, find new and creative ways to work some case types remotely, and ensure the workforce used personal protective equipment where appropriate and took necessary travel precautions. We found ways to meet critical mission needs for high priority cases while protecting the workforce to the greatest extent possible.

The pandemic also introduced tremendous stress and impacts to life outside of work — read some first-hand accounts from our team on pages 10-11. ISB is proud to have leveraged our new programs introduced on pages 8-9, promoting employee health, wellness, and resiliency (HWR). We also sought to provide maximum scheduling flexibility so that our team could effectively balance the needs of family during this challenging time. As 2021 will no doubt present all new challenges, we continue to stand at the ready to adapt, innovate, and be of service.

In light of all that, 2020 was a very successful year for ISB. Throughout this report you will have the opportunity to see first-hand some of incredible

investigative work this team performs. The breadth and scope of cases is one of the most impressive and unique characteristics about the ISB program. Complex criminal investigations of crimes against persons, society, children, resources, and property are among those in our portfolio, which represents one of the most broad and diverse of any investigative program within the federal arena. Our extraordinarily dedicated Program Specialists, Intelligence Analyst, and Digital Evidence Forensics Team carried out essential behind-the-scenes support to make possible the accomplishments within this report.

ISB also served and supported the NPS in other ways, including deployments to assist our US Park Ranger and US Park Police brothers and sisters during civil unrest in our nation's capital as well as special events around the country for the Fourth of July. Training and continuing education were challenging throughout 2020 due to social distancing guidelines, but ISB rose to the occasion by providing many virtual training sessions to the NPS law enforcement community as part of service-wide webinars.

Our portfolio expanded in 2020 to include the NPS Victim Assistance Program (VAP). We are excited about this new partnership as

their work is a natural extension of what we do.

More about their critical support for victims of crimes as well as investigations is highlighted on page 14. The coming year will bring continued growth and success as additional Victim Specialists come on board to serve NPS units across the four ISB Field Offices, the US Park Ranger workforce, and most importantly, the victims and witnesses of crime who are afforded specific rights under the law. Special thanks to Tara Ross, VAP Program Manager, for her commitment and dedication over many years in developing this important and exemplary program.

In closing, on behalf of the entire ISB team, we are incredibly grateful for your continued support. Many

champions and partners are out there; you are indeed critical and important contributors to our overall success. We invite you to spend some time with this annual report and absorb some of the incredible work ISB has accomplished this past year. We hope you reach out to team members you may know, and spread the word to others who may be unfamiliar with our team and our mission. We look forward to the year ahead, the ongoing opportunity to continue to support the mission of the National Park Service, serve the visiting public and our other customers, and help the victims of crime in 2021 and far beyond.

In dedicated service,

*Hunter Bailey*

Chief, NPS Investigative Services Branch



*A bald eagle in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. NPS photo by J Kaftan.*

# Message From Christopher Smith

► SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE OF THE NPS INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BRANCH



SAC Christopher Smith. NPS photo.

Like the rest of the country in 2020, the Investigative Services Branch (ISB) of the National Park Service (NPS) faced the first global pandemic in the program's history. We were fortunate enough to hold our annual ISB In-Service training in February, right before the impact of COVID-19 became real.

Much of the year was spent navigating lockdowns, trying to keep our employees safe while still responding to crimes, bringing about justice for victims, and holding violators accountable. Early on, ISB established safety protocols in an attempt to prescribe actions ISB Special Agents would take to protect themselves while performing their necessary work.

While many folks in our country sheltered with their families during 2020, some came to NPS lands and committed criminal acts. Multiple significant investigations over the year required extended personnel deployments and the surging of ISB resources.

I am incredibly proud of how the ISB Special Agents performed their critical duties while keeping themselves and those they contacted safe. Not a single confirmed work-related COVID-19 exposure resulting in illness occurred in the program — a significant feat for a group of investigators traveling the country interacting with countless victims, witnesses, and suspects.

Many of the judicial districts ISB works within experienced some type of shutdown or restrictions. This created a backlog of prosecutions. While many investigations were still open and active at the close of the 2020 calendar year — and therefore are not described in this annual report — the investigations highlighted on these pages are representative of the work these special agents perform every day. Once restrictions began to lift and courts opened up, they experienced a significant swell in charges filed and judicial activities that our investigators continue to manage.

Behind the scenes, special agents are supported by an incredible group of professionals serving in Program Support, Intelligence, and Victim Services. These dedicated employees are incredibly committed, work long hours, and do whatever needs to be done to support victims and ensure violators are held accountable. This combination is what makes the ISB team strong.

The end of 2020 saw a changing of the guard in ISB. With over 36 years of government civil service, ISB's Pacific Field Office (PFO) Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) Jeff Sullivan retired on December 31st. For more

than three decades, he investigated the most serious crimes occurring on NPS lands and was a leader and mentor to many in the NPS.

Aaron Smith was selected as the new PFO ASAC by the ISB hiring team. Smith had been a special agent with ISB for four years, working out of the ISB office in Yosemite National Park. He brings a wealth of experience and leadership roles, and has served as a Special Events Team and Special Response Team member and all-hazard responder. He is the recipient of the 2019 Department of Interior Valor Award, the Pacific West Region Harry Yount Award, and numerous other awards.

In May, the NPS Victim Assistance Program was moved under the ISB umbrella. This critical program is managed by Tara Ross and serves victims of crimes across the National Park System; read more on page 14.

ISB continued to invest in health, wellness, and resiliency (HWR) during 2020, devoting a significant section of the ISB In-Service to the topic and soliciting the input of Laura McGladrey, a Senior Instructor of Clinical Teaching and nationally renowned speaker on psychological first aid and provider resilience. The program established a framework covering all intervals for employees, from pre-employment to post-retirement, and the tools and support they may need. We also incorporated these themes into both the special agent and ASAC performance rating criteria. More about this integral HWR program is on pages 8-9.

In short, 2020 was a challenging year for everyone. ISB was able to adapt, fulfilling our mission while doing our best to keep our team safe. The impact of criminal acts doesn't stop because of a pandemic; ISB's pursuit of justice to hold violators accountable and to ensure victims are heard didn't stop, either.

Respectfully,

*Christopher Smith*

Special Agent in Charge of ISB



*A bald eagle in Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve. NPS photo.*

# Health, Wellness, Resiliency

## A PURPOSEFUL APPROACH



Exposure to traumatic events comes with the territory for ISB Special Agents and other law enforcement officers. Investigations take months or years to complete, causing investigators to be continually exposed to the same traumatic events over and over — during the initial report, interviews, case investigation, court processes, and sentencing.

Recognizing the need for a formal plan to address the stress and trauma that special agents are routinely exposed to, the ISB leadership team sought untapped ways to mitigate the impacts and increase resiliency among the ISB workforce. They began to roll out the foundations of a new, holistic Health, Wellness, and Resiliency (HWR) program during the annual ISB In-Service training held in February 2020.

With framework created by Chief Hunter Bailey and SAC Christopher Smith, the new plan encompassed pre-employment, recruiting, onboarding, continuing education, employee wellness, monitoring, resources and intervention, and post-employment/retirement phases for employees.

All employees helped refine the plan to meet ISB's unique needs during the In-Service, which included an 8-hour block of HWR instruction and exercises led by Laura "Glad" McGladry. Participation was outstanding, with the entire ISB workforce generating ideas to help increase employee resiliency and morale, as well as support mental and physical health.

Immediately after the In-Service, operations shifted with the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic. ASAC Christopher Kuvlesky served in a temporary promotion as Special Agent in Charge of Program Support to primarily focus on the new HWR program.

In addition to drafting a detailed plan, he initiated some innovative program changes such as establishing the National Duty Agent, which alleviates the need for "on-call" investigators across ISB's four field offices. Each special agent serves as the National Duty Agent for two weeks per year, down from 5-10 weeks per year in the previous model.

Further, special agents returning from travel for cases involving significant likelihood of traumatic event or exposure are granted time for rest, recovery, and self-care. The draft HWR program was also used in the recruitment and interview process of the Pacific Field Office ASAC position hired in the fall of 2020.

### More info and resources:

[www.nps.gov/ISB](http://www.nps.gov/ISB) > Support for Responders

[afsp.org/get-help](http://afsp.org/get-help)

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255

**ABOVE:** An ISB Special Agent in the field. NPS photo.



With an eye towards making HWR an indelible part of our everyday functions, it was also added as an optional element of our annual employee performance and appraisal plans. This element fosters the individual's role in their own resiliency and provides opportunity for rewards for working toward those goals.

The year also saw the launch of ISB's new Individual Resiliency Plan. This optional program helps employees work with their supervisors to report individual resiliency levels, complete physical fitness time, and capture other resiliency-raising activities. Employees able to complete their plans are eligible for time-off awards.

**T**hese steps help promote a cultural shift within our organization, emphasizing and integrating HWR in who we are and what we do.

*Today and every day is a good day to start the conversation about mental health, because a conversation could save a life. We don't always know who is struggling, but we do know that making a connection reduces the risk of suicide. It is something we can all do to help — and we don't have to wait for signs of struggle to get started.*

*If you are a law enforcement officer having difficulty processing the traumatic events you have been exposed to, **YOU ARE COMPLETELY NORMAL.***

*Seeking help when experiencing stress, depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts is a sign of courage, not one of weakness.*

*Seeking help for a colleague is an act of compassion and strength, not an act of disloyalty.*



# An Odd Year in the Life

## SPECIAL FEATURE

*Like you, our operations and very lifestyles changed in March 2020. As we all faced an unfolding pandemic, employees of the NPS Investigative Services Branch (ISB) closed their offices and worked from home — or from the road. While some of us already had home offices, this transition marked the start of new challenges for many. 2020 was a year like no other, but “crime doesn’t wait for a pandemic to end,” noted a special agent. “The pursuit of justice for our victims doesn’t wait, either.”*

### Casework: a Pandemic Impact

Investigations never stopped, but the pandemic changed how we were able to conduct them. Smaller crowds in the national parks made surveillance more challenging. Strict travel restrictions and differing health protocols across states and regions hampered our operations further. Some cases were delayed for months.

“We put a hold on interviews we would normally have done,” said one special agent. Increased PPE (personal protective equipment) precautions have added a complexity to the process. “Our branch has done a good job of giving us PPE, pre-travel screening, and general COVID guidance,” said a special agent, “so that has cushioned the blow.” But it also adds greater difficulty in that investigators cannot fully see facial expressions during in-person interviews.

The court system slowed to a crawl, ceased altogether, or grappled with virtual proceedings. Struggling to obtain grand jury indictments for cases, one special agent noted that “this has been the most frustrating challenge thus far.” As court processes resume, the likelihood looms large of scheduling overlaps for multiple trials and hearings.

### Work/Home Life: a Pandemic Upset

For those of us with kids, we suddenly had to carve out a classroom as well as a secure workspace. “I started working from home almost exclusively about the same time all the schools closed and went to online learning,” said one special agent with two school-age

kids and a spouse who is an educator. Each needed dedicated class/office areas — sometimes finding space on different floors of the house. “With cooperation,” said a special agent, “it’s manageable.”

“I have found myself scheduling conference calls with the US Attorney’s Office around our homeschooling schedule,” explained another special agent. “The thought of not being bothered while you are on the phone is not really a reality.”

Those of us with younger kids rearranged our work schedules. “When the pandemic started,” noted a special agent, “the daycare closed for about 3½ months. My wife and I were told to telework until further notice. She worked during the day while I watched our kids. I worked nights, sometimes until very early in the morning.”

**Gone to the dogs:** *“Since my recent officemates are canine, I’ve become accustomed to talking and attempting to collaborate on projects and investigations with dogs,” says one special agent.*

*“However, I find they are not very team-oriented unless it involves toys or food. And to date, they have not yet come up with any useful insight to investigative strategies.”*

## The Bad: Pandemic Frustrations

From the mundane to the monumental, the personal to the professional, we felt the frustrations of the sustained upheaval wrought by the pandemic. Perhaps the biggest was the same as everyone's — the inability to visit high-risk family members. But even the little things add up, like inadequate internet connection or hard-to-come-by office/school equipment.

Blending work and home life often meant little or no breaks, higher stress, and left us with feelings of guilt.

"Trying to get work done with kids home is really difficult," said a special agent. "There are so many competing demands for time and attention. It's sometimes hard to feel successful in either domain, work or home. I feel bad about not being productive at work because I'm attending a child's needs. I feel bad about neglecting the kids because I'm working. A real Catch-22."

"Sleep deprivation has risen," observed another special agent. "It's not likely to go away unless something else gives or breaks, meaning work output, trying to be Super Mom or Super Dad, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, finding time for oneself, family, friends, etc."

The pandemic also seemed to affect the types of our investigations. "Though the volume of investigations was lower, the cases were more violent and serious," noted one special agent.

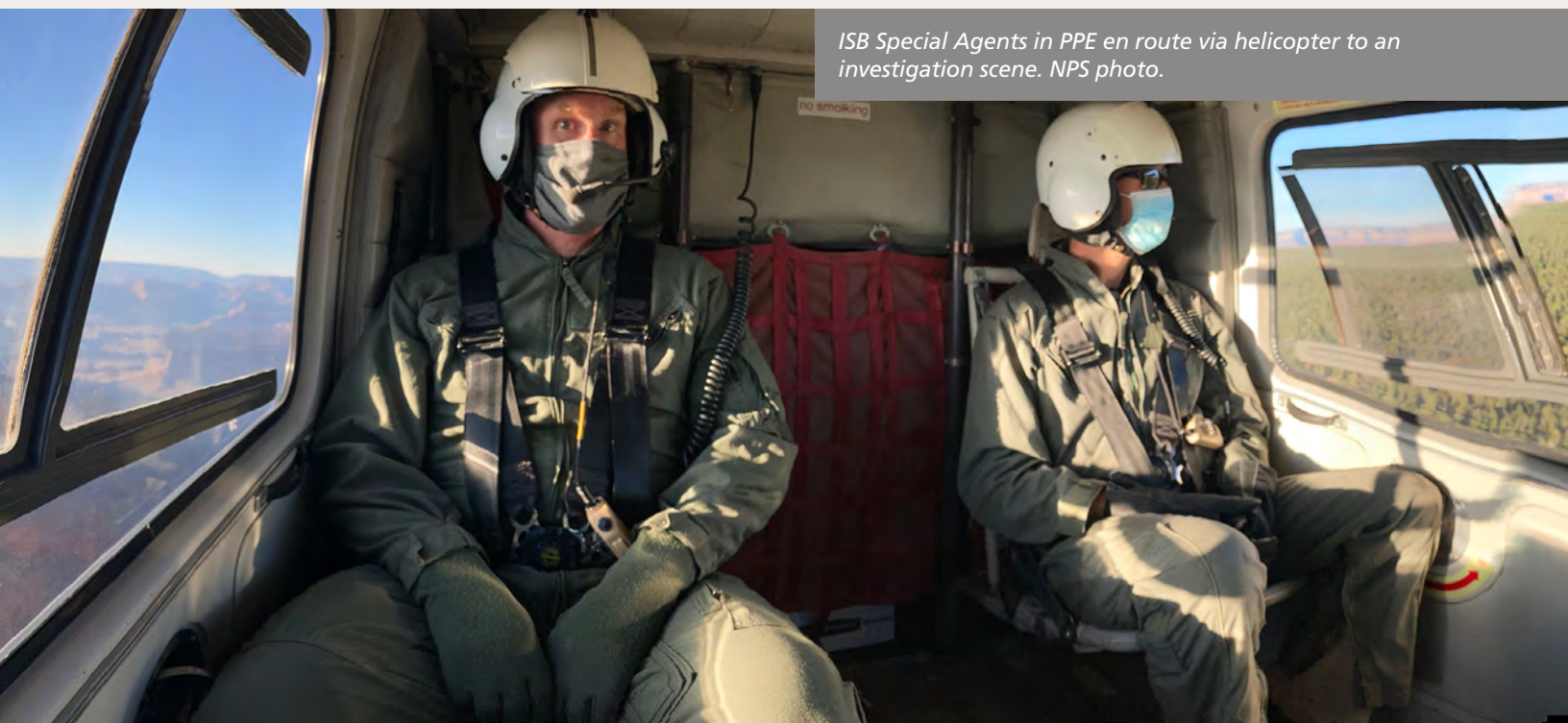
## The Good: Unexpected Silver Linings

Did anything positive come out of the past year? Yes! "I was reminded of the important things in life," said a special agent. "I'm more grateful and humble." Sometimes, the biggest challenges turned out to be the biggest blessings. As we overcame the pitfalls of working from home — distractions, overtaxed equipment, proximity to the kitchen — we made adjustments to our spaces and our routines and even began to flourish.

Though we are operating as a remote work-force more than ever before, in some ways our conversations have become closer. "The communication and updates on agency, ISB family, and health, wellness, and resilience have been helpful," noted one special agent.

Leaders were quick to get us the necessary supplies to stay safe and protect our health and that of our families. "ISB management got out ahead of the rest," said another special agent, "by acquiring PPE and innovating procedures. I appreciate the leadership team's dedicated effort to keep us all safe while allowing work to continue."

We also made time to get outside, often finding it an extraordinary time to be in the parks. We learned to check in with one another more often, and pay closer attention to how we are doing.



*ISB Special Agents in PPE en route via helicopter to an investigation scene. NPS photo.*

# Awards & Recognitions

*Each year, ISB employees (Special Agents, Intelligence Analyst, and support staff) receive accolades from our agency and partnering stakeholders. What follows are a few notable acknowledgements.*

## US Department of the Interior Superior Service Awards

Throughout his career with the NPS Investigative Services Branch, an Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) has proactively and assertively recognized the critical role that information technology systems play in the advancement of an effective and professional investigation program. This ASAC blended his expertise in management and supervision of investigations with a keen interest and aptitude in information technology, which resulted in program-wide advancements in the management of criminal investigation records. His extraordinary vision, leadership, and dedication in this essential —

but often overlooked — supporting activity of investigations has served as an effective force multiplier for ISB and the National Park Service.

An ISB Special Agent was recognized for his representation of the epitome of what it is to be a skilled, detail-oriented, and methodical investigator. His extraordinary skill, tenacity, and dedication have made him one of the most successful and respected investigators within the Investigative Services Branch and our partnering agencies. He readily accepts and works some of the most complex and difficult cases, and consistently produces successful results which serve the victims of crime, the National Park Service, our visitors, and communities.

## Heart of Gold Award

Each year, Coconino County (AZ) Victim Witness Services recognizes members of law enforcement who have demonstrated extraordinary compassion and dedication to working with victims of crime with the Heart of Gold Award. In presenting the award to an ISB Special Agent, they recognized his heart for justice and his care for those victimized by crime. The special agent works diligently to ensure that victim advocacy is part of the multi-disciplinary team approach to criminal investigation at the system and local levels of law enforcement within the National Park Service.

## Length of Government Service Awards:

In 2020, one ISB employee surpassed the rare milestone of 35 years of government service, another attained 25 years, three employees achieved 20 years, one reached 15 years, and another marked 10 years. Congratulations, and thank you for your service!



*Bison in Yellowstone National Park. NPS photo by J Frank.*

# Awards & Recognitions

## CELEBRATING THE 35+ YEAR LEGACY OF (RETIRED) ASAC JEFF SULLIVAN

For over three decades, Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) Jeff Sullivan answered the call and worked tirelessly to protect the people and resources of our national parks. He led the Pacific Field Office of the NPS Investigative Services Branch (ISB), supporting park sites in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, Hawai'i, and the Pacific Islands. Throughout his 35+ years of government service, ASAC Sullivan embodied the core values of the National Park Service (NPS).

He started his NPS career in the early 1980s as a US Park Ranger in Ozark National Scenic Riverways before serving at Grand Canyon National Park and Yosemite National Park.

ASAC Sullivan always had a true passion for criminal investigations and became one of the first NPS Special Agents. Read more about the development of the dedicated work unit specializing in complex investigations now known as the NPS Investigative Services Branch at [www.nps.gov/orgs/1563/our-story.htm](http://www.nps.gov/orgs/1563/our-story.htm)

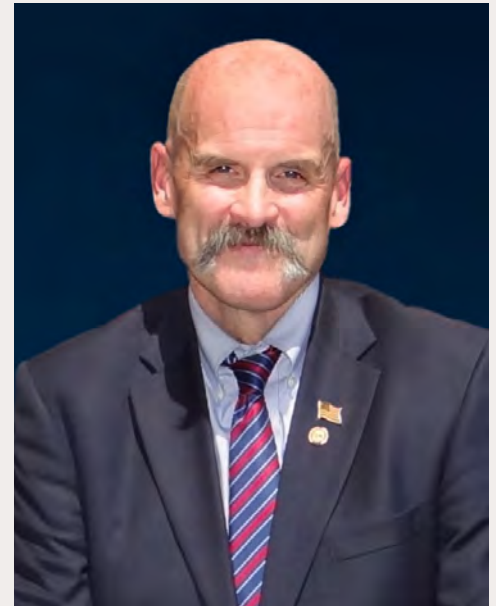
Throughout his noteworthy career, ASAC Sullivan conducted thousands of significant investigations across the National Park System. He investigated many high-profile crimes ranging from commercial and natural resource violations to serial murders.

Additionally, he served as an undercover special agent in multi-year covert investigations that focused on combating commercial, natural resource, and wildlife crimes, as well as violations of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). He established, developed, and led numerous teams and task forces, and served as the first supervisor for the NPS Office of Professional Responsibility, helping to form that work group into what it is today.

Often sought as an instructor, ASAC Sullivan taught law enforcement classes for state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies. Passionate about teaching, he instructed classes that varied from advanced firearms to the investigation of crimes against national resources and persons.

ASAC Sullivan's work and character were also recognized with the 2017 Harry Yount National Park Ranger Award for his positive impacts on the people who protect our national parks today and for future generations.

Thank you, ASAC Sullivan, for your dedication and service, and congratulations on your retirement!



*Jeff Sullivan*

# NPS Victim Assistance Program

## SERVING ACROSS THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

The NPS Victim Assistance Program (VAP) became an extension of NPS Investigative Services Branch (ISB) in May 2020, with Tara Ross as the program manager. This critical program fills the NPS-identified need for consistent and best practices for providing victims of crime their federal victims' rights and services as required by law.

Once VAP was granted funding from the Office of Victims of Crime (OVC) for four Victim Specialists, the program got to work on crafting updated position descriptions and recruiting skilled personnel to fill the roles. Victim Specialists are now stationed in strategic areas of the National Park System to support crime victims and work with ISB Special Agents and US Park Rangers service-wide.

Even before VAP joined ISB, victim advocates were employed in seasonal roles stationed at a handful of parks. The move to ISB allowed the program to create permanent, full-time positions to provide these vital services with more depth and consistency.

In 2020, VAP provided direct services to the victims of and witnesses to crime in many National Park Service sites. These services included an explanation of their rights, referrals for continued and expanded support, and access to financial remedies.

VAP Program Manager Tara Ross is a regular presenter at numerous agency trainings, covering topics including victim assistance, human trafficking, conflict resolution, abnormal behavior, and collateral duty victim advocacy. The program also helps send special agents and rangers to advanced training such as Forensic Experiential Trauma Interviewing, Crimes Against Children, and Digital Intelligence, and more.

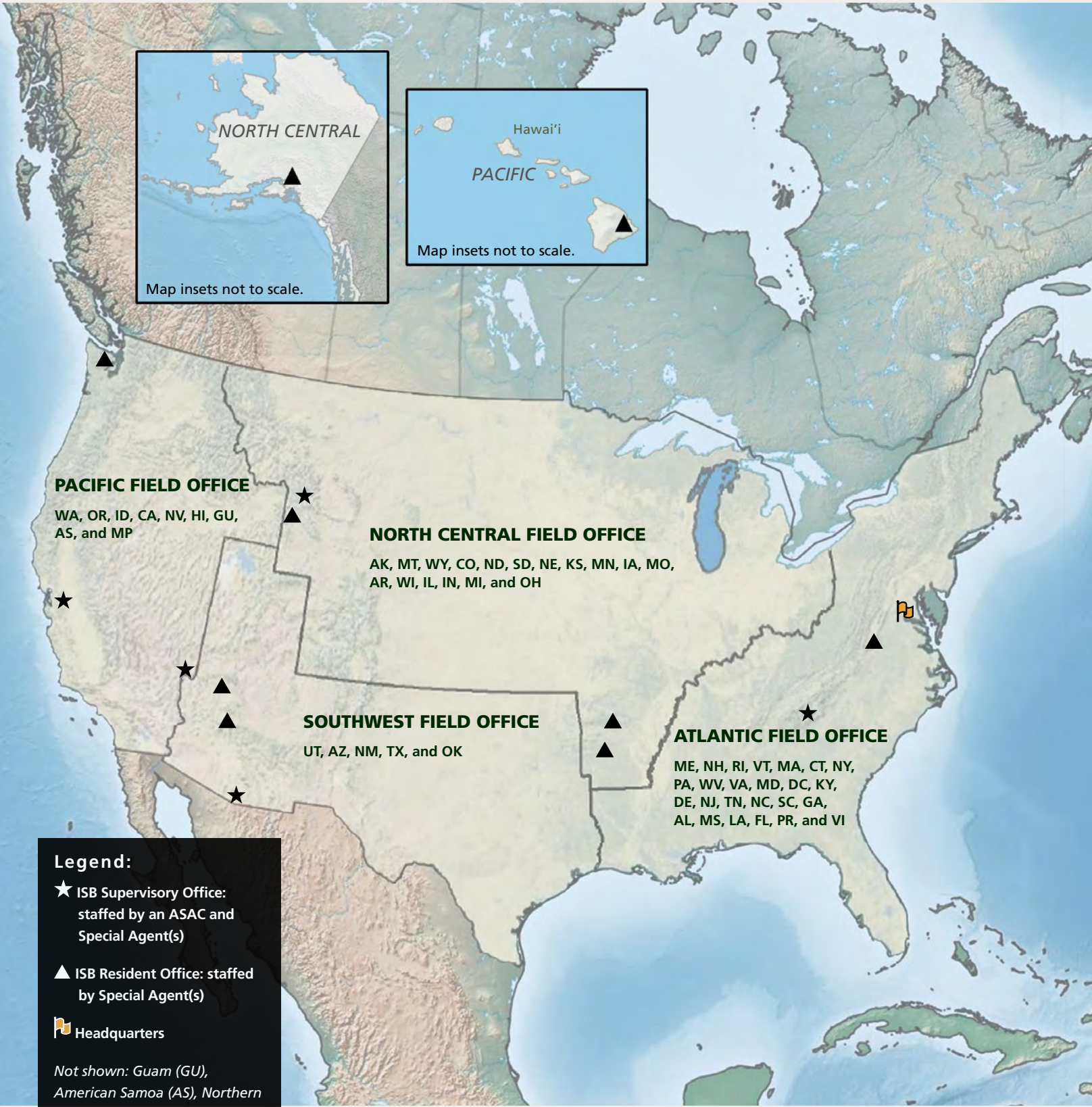
Victim Specialists also provided technical assistance and mentoring for US Park Rangers and direct services to victims as requested by park personnel. They continue to be involved in and support ongoing ISB-led investigations, as well.



*An NPS Victim Specialist near the historic Roosevelt Arch in Yellowstone National Park. NPS photo.*

# FIELD OFFICES

OF THE NPS INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BRANCH



**NORTH CENTRAL**

Map insets not to scale.

Hawai'i

**PACIFIC**

Map insets not to scale.

**PACIFIC FIELD OFFICE**  
WA, OR, ID, CA, NV, HI, GU,  
AS, and MP

**NORTH CENTRAL FIELD OFFICE**  
AK, MT, WY, CO, ND, SD, NE, KS, MN, IA, MO,  
AR, WI, IL, IN, MI, and OH

**SOUTHWEST FIELD OFFICE**  
UT, AZ, NM, TX, and OK

**ATLANTIC FIELD OFFICE**  
ME, NH, RI, VT, MA, CT, NY,  
PA, WV, VA, MD, DC, KY,  
DE, NJ, TN, NC, SC, GA,  
AL, MS, LA, FL, PR, and VI

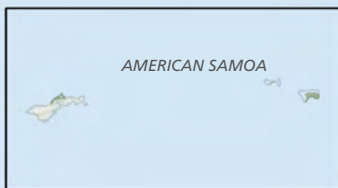
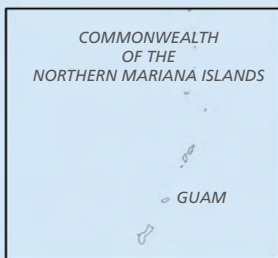
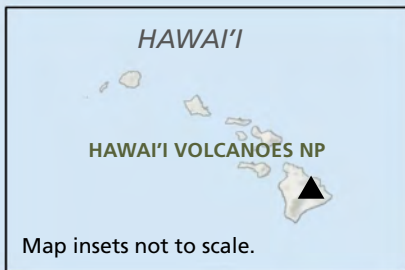
**Legend:**

- ★ ISB Supervisory Office: staffed by an ASAC and Special Agent(s)
- ▲ ISB Resident Office: staffed by Special Agent(s)
- 🏠 Headquarters

*Not shown: Guam (GU), American Samoa (AS), Northern Mariana Islands (MP), Puerto Rico (PR), US Virgin Islands (VI)*

# PACIFIC

FIELD OFFICE



**Legend:**

- ▲ ISB Resident Office: staffed by Special Agent(s)
- ★ ISB Supervisory Office: staffed by an ASAC and Special Agent(s)



# PACIFIC Field Office

The Pacific Field Office of the Investigative Services Branch (ISB), seated in Yosemite National Park, provides investigations and law enforcement support services for large sections of three Unified Interior Regions — Columbia-Pacific Northwest, California-Great Basin, and Lower Colorado Basin. Resident Offices are staffed at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and Olympic National Park. The field office serves and supports 76 National Park Service units. Of these, 29 are in California, 17 are in Washington, 9 are in Hawai'i, 6 are in Idaho, 7 are in Oregon, 4 are in Nevada, 1 is in Arizona, and 3 NPS sites are in the territories of the South Pacific Islands.

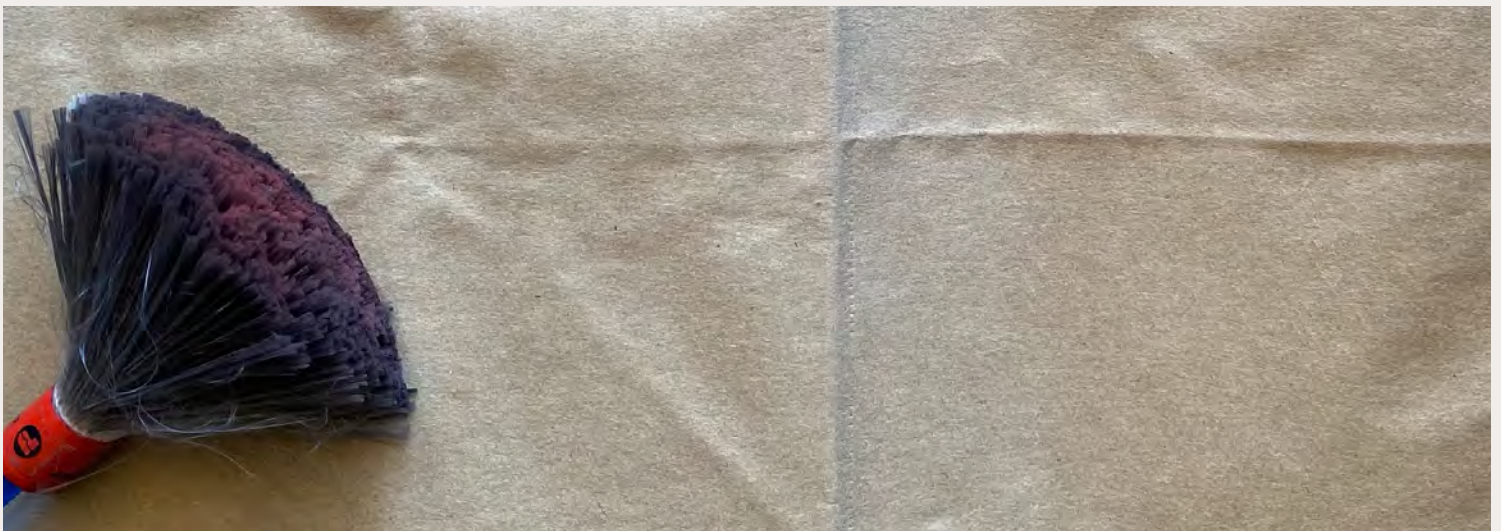
In October 2020, the Pacific and Southwest field offices realigned, shifting the Lake Mead Resident Office to the Southwest.

2020 was an unusually dynamic year even aside from the global pandemic. The field office started the year with 10 investigators working cases, but could not operate at full capacity for much of the year as it navigated the effects of special staffing assignments, COVID-19, field office realignment, the retirement of ASAC Jeff Sullivan, and the promotion of Special Agent Aaron Smith to the ASAC position. At year's end, the Pacific Field Office had four investigators working active caseloads and one on detail to the office of the Special Agent in Charge.

Caseload necessarily diminished with restricted intake of new investigations to protect the health and welfare of the limited special agent pool available. Violent crimes continued to be assigned and accounted for roughly 66% of the Pacific Field Office's casework in 2020. Investigators worked a total of 76 open cases during the year, and offered remote assistance to parks with property and resource crimes. Forty-five investigations are carrying over into 2021; at the start of the new year, 26 of those cases were in court awaiting indictment, trial, or sentencing. The pandemic caused a heavy backlog of cases pending court hearings and trials — a trend that will continue for the foreseeable future.

A seasonal US Park Ranger served an internship with the Pacific Field Office during their off-season, as well. This intern provided valuable assistance to investigators by doing research, organizing cold case files, and preparing those files for upload into IMARS to enhance future investigation and archiving. The intern also assisted investigators by reviewing documents, helping to analyze records, and researching information and leads for investigative follow-up.

Some cases of interest in 2020 are highlighted on the following pages.



# PACIFIC Field Office

## YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

### COLD CASE RESOLVED: SUMMIT MEADOW JANE DOE



*Forensic artists' image of what the homicide victim may have looked like. NPS case file.*



*Summit Meadow in Yosemite National Park. NPS photo.*

The partial remains of a homicide victim were found in Yosemite National Park's Summit Meadow along Glacier Point Road in 1983.

ISB Special Agents worked with multiple laboratories and agencies in an effort to identify the victim. A forensic anthropology exam and a CT scan of the victim's skull helped forensic artists create a digital facial reconstruction of what she may have looked like. This facial reconstruction was made from the victim's skull without the jaw. Forensic Anthropologists believed the victim was at least in her late teens but could have been as old as 30.

The suspect in this case, Henry Lee Lucas, was interviewed in the 1980s and died in prison in 2001. He had information about this murder that had not been made public and could only be known by the person who committed the crime. Lucas stated the victim was a female hitchhiker that he picked up on Highway 41 between Fresno, California and Yosemite National Park in the early 1980s.

In the fall of 2020, ISB worked with Marshall University and Parabon Nano Labs to genotype the DNA and get a better profile to include ancestry, origin locations, as well as a better physical description for the unidentified victim. Through this process a more realistic composite photo was produced. ISB and Parabon followed up on leads by identifying potential relatives in the United States.

Culminating decades of work, leveraging new technologies, and bringing closure for a family missing a loved one, this victim of a long-ago homicide was positively identified in 2021.

*Cold cases include missing persons, accidents, or crimes that have yet to be solved and have no active leads. New information could come from new witness testimony, new or retained physical evidence, activities of a suspect, or other sources.*

*A roster of cold cases being investigated by the Special Agents of the NPS Investigative Services Branch is available at [www.nps.gov/ISB](http://www.nps.gov/ISB) > Cold Cases.*

# PACIFIC Field Office

## YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

### ASSAULT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)

In October 2020, Joshua Leonard was sentenced to serve 10 months in prison followed by a year of supervised release. He pleaded guilty to a charge that stemmed from an incident in January 2020.

While en route to the park, Leonard assaulted the victim, striking them multiple times and burning them with a torch. He then forced the victim out of the vehicle and left them on the roadside.



Tuolumne River in Yosemite National Park. NPS photo.

**W**e are dedicated to supporting victims and witnesses of all ages

*We understand that being a victim of a crime can be devastating - victims experience physical, financial, social, spiritual, and emotional distress associated with the crime. The aftermath of crime may feel overwhelming, but you are not alone, and help is available.*

*“The crimes against people that we investigate come from all over the system and involve parks of a variety of jurisdictions,” says Special Agent in Charge Christopher Smith. “By providing good victim support and assigning a victim specialist or coordinating to ensure that victim gets the services they need, we help provide the foundation they need to recover. Ultimately, that is our goal - that justice is done and that they can return to their lives, and have a full and complete life.”*

*Our goal is to ensure that every victim of or witness to a crime that occurs within the National Park Service community is treated with dignity and respect.*

*Our responsibility is to inform you of your legal rights and to provide the necessary support and services you are entitled to throughout the continuum of care. You have options and may qualify for financial reimbursement.*

See more at [nps.gov/ISB](https://www.nps.gov/ISB) > Victim-Witness Assistance

# PACIFIC Field Office

## OLYMPIC AND MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARKS

### AUTO BURGLARIES

Following an investigation by US Park Rangers and ISB Special Agents in collaboration with several other agencies, a repeat offender who victimized more than 40 hikers and campers was sentenced in April 2020 to serve two years in federal prison to follow a 25-month state prison term. Michael Wayne Pickering, age 41, burgled at least four dozen cars at more than seven different trailheads and parking lots in Olympic and Mount Rainier national parks. Pickering must also serve three years of supervised release following prison.

Court documents describe how, on March 28, 2019, Pickering smashed windows and stole thousands

of dollars of equipment from vehicles parked at the Graves Creek Trailhead and Fletcher Canyon Trailhead in Olympic National Park. This was the beginning of a month-long theft spree.

In crimes the judge described at the sentencing hearing as “planned and methodical,” Pickering used credit and debit cards stolen from the vehicles to make purchases at various stores — the overall financial damage was more than \$50,000.

Pickering was stopped when he was caught shortly after walking out of a store where he used victims’ bank cards. He had a window punch (a tool used to break car windows)

and three credit cards in a victim’s name in his pocket.

In addition to credit and debit cards, Pickering stole expensive electronics, car and house keys, diaries, clean clothes, makeup, and toiletries. When investigators searched his residence, they found Pickering had been stockpiling much of the gear he stole or selling it online. He used the stolen debit and credit cards to purchase flat screen TVs, gaming systems, a drone, and clothes.

The investigation also revealed that Pickering had a 15-year history of property crimes including burglary, identity theft, and trespassing in and around Olympic National Park.

Mount Rainier National Park. NPS photo by C Meleedy.



*“The victims in this case didn’t just suffer a financial loss, they were emotionally damaged as well. Some returned from what was supposed to be a relaxing time in nature, to find themselves stranded with a damaged vehicle, their electronics, clothes and money stolen, marooned in the national park, with no cell phone service. For some it has forever changed their interest in outdoor activities.”*

US Attorney Brian Moran,  
Western District of Washington

# PACIFIC Field Office

## OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

### SENTENCING FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A CHILD

In October 2020, Miguel Angel Medel Lopez was sentenced to serve 108 months to life in prison after being convicted of first degree rape of a child and first degree child molestation. The charges stemmed from an incident that occurred in mid-2012 at a location initially believed to be within park boundaries.

At the time, Medel Lopez had access to and drove the young victim and two other children to a cabin near Lake Pleasant. He then brought the victim and another child into the bedroom, leaving the third child outside the room. Medel Lopez sexually assaulted the victim while a children's program played on the television.

An ISB Special Agent took the case on in 2019, handing the lead to a detective with the Clallam County Sheriff's Office (WA) when it was determined the offense took place in their jurisdiction.

A jury found Medel Lopez guilty following a four-day trial that included testimony from the brave and tenacious survivor, still a juvenile when they testified in court. Medel Lopez is subject to indefinite sex offender registration, lifetime community custody under the supervision of the Department of Corrections, and a lifetime sexual assault protection order prohibiting him from having any contact with the victim.

*"The victim in this case showed tremendous courage and persistence. I am glad that [they] continued to advocate for [themselves] so [they] could see justice delivered. [They] serve as an example that it is never too late to speak up if someone has caused you serious harm."*

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Steve Johnson



Reflections on a lake in Olympic National Park. NPS photo by J Burger.

# North Central

## FIELD OFFICE



ALASKA

ANCHORAGE

MONTANA

NORTH DAKOTA

MINNESOTA

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

IDAHO

GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DAKOTA

WYOMING

WISCONSIN

MICHIGAN

UTAH

NEBRASKA

IOWA

ILLINOIS

INDIANA

OHIO

COLORADO

KANSAS

MISSOURI

KENTUCKY

ARIZONA

NEW MEXICO

OKLAHOMA

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER

ARKANSAS

TENNESSEE

GEORGIA

HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

MISSISSIPPI

ALABAMA

LOUISIANA

TEXAS

### Legend:

▲ ISB Resident Office: staffed by Special Agent(s)

★ ISB Supervisory Office: staffed by an ASAC and Special Agent(s)

# NORTH CENTRAL Field Office

The North Central Field Office of the NPS Investigative Services Branch (ISB) includes the Unified Interior Regions of the Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi Basin, Upper Colorado Basin, and Alaska. Seventeen states and 110 NPS sites fall under its umbrella.

Words like “challenging” and “exhausting” got worn out in 2020. Though there were definitely difficulties, this team worked to overcome each hurdle, responding to and dealing with each new situation.

After a new special agent came onboard at the ISB Resident Office in Hot Springs National Park, the Washington Support Office provided funding and support for the ISB computer forensics program. This included the purchase of advanced digital intelligence equipment, vehicle infotainment forensics, and the training to maintain extensive certifications.

This past year was the first time a Detailer joined the ISB Resident Office in Alaska. A partnership between ISB and Kenai Fjords National Park enabled a US Park Ranger to assist the special agents in their case work and delve into thousands of pages of search warrant returns.

We thank the ranger for their work, and the superintendent and chief ranger for their support. The success of this Detail has laid the groundwork for future opportunities and partnerships with Alaska national parks and the Alaska Regional Office.

Please see the next pages for significant cases investigated by the North Central Field Office in 2020. They range from the tragic to the unprecedented, with special agents serving on special teams to assist the US Park Police during times of civil unrest and with Yellowstone National Park’s first felony Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) indictment.



# NORTH CENTRAL Field Office

## HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

### ASSAULT AND WEAPON VIOLATIONS

Following an investigation by a team of US Park Rangers and ISB Special Agents, a man was sentenced in November 2020 to serve 166 months in federal prison for assault and weapons violations in Hot Springs National Park. Cedric Allen Wiley, age 30, previously pleaded guilty to one count of Assault with a Dangerous Weapon with Intent to do Bodily Harm and one count of Discharge of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence.

On February 21, 2019, at approximately 7:00 p.m., US Park Rangers responded to a reported shooting that occurred along Summit Drive of West Mountain within the boundaries of Hot Springs National Park. They determined that one person had been shot in the back.

Investigators identified a possible suspect(s) based on information provided by the victim both on scene and at the hospital. Additionally, the victim later confirmed that Wiley was the person who shot them.

The victim reported to investigators that, prior to the shooting, they had been riding around in a vehicle with

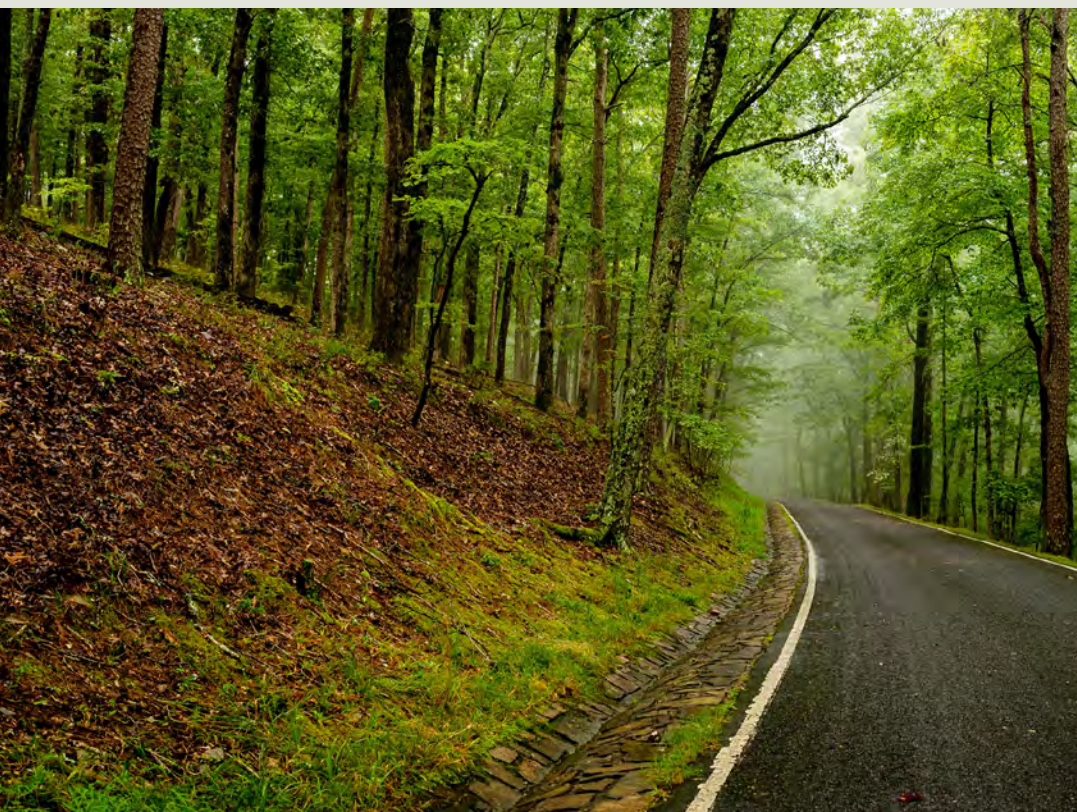
Wiley and others when they stopped in Hot Springs National Park. While there, Wiley turned around, drew a weapon from his person, and fired the weapon as the victim ran toward the shoulder of the road.

The victim suffered a gunshot wound to the back and went over the embankment. As the victim ran into the woods and down the embankment, Wiley continued to shoot at them. Wiley left the scene and the victim was transported to a local hospital for medical treatment.

During an interview with investigators in February 2019, Wiley admitted he contacted the victim to arrange a meeting with them. Wiley stated that he was upset with the victim and that he shot the victim in the national park on February 21, 2019, with a firearm that Wiley had obtained prior to the shooting. Wiley was indicted by a federal grand jury in June 2019, and entered a guilty plea in August 2019.

Upon completion of his prison term, Wiley must serve 3 years of supervised release.

Summit Drive of West Mountain, Hot Springs National Park. NPS photo.



*“Investigating and prosecuting violent crimes such as this one is a top priority in the Department of Justice and the Western District of Arkansas. We will continue to work relentlessly to make our communities safer by ensuring that violent criminals are prosecuted using the full extent of our federal and state resources.”*

First Assistant US Attorney  
David Fowlke



# NORTH CENTRAL Field Office

## OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS

### HOMICIDE



Jacks Fork River near Buck Hollow in Ozark National Scenic Riverways. NPS photo.

On May 21, 2020, US Park Rangers discovered Brittany Gorman's unoccupied pickup truck within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways at Buck Hollow in southern Texas County, MO. Items found at the scene indicated that Gorman may have been injured.

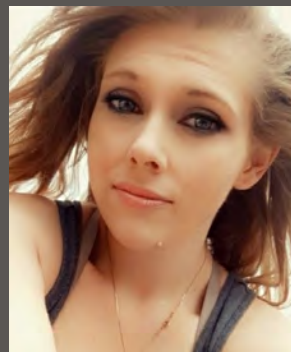
Deputies from the Texas County Sheriff's Office along with Missouri State Highway Patrol personnel responded to Buck Hollow to assist the rangers.

A joint investigation was initiated by the NPS Investigative Services Branch, Texas County Sheriff's Office, and the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

The investigation culminated in the arrest of a suspect on May 30, 2020.

The suspect led investigators to a location in the Mark Twain National Forest in Ozark County where human remains were found. The remains were subsequently identified as those of Brittany Gorman.

Texas County Prosecuting Attorney Parke Stevens charged Dylan J. Hanger, age 28, of Mountain View, Missouri with Murder 2nd Degree and Tampering with Physical Evidence. Hanger, presumed innocent until proven guilty, is being held in the Texas County Jail without bond.



Investigative file photo of Brittany Gorman.

*"The tragic outcome of this investigation is not what I had hoped and prayed for since Brittany was reported missing. I want to commend the investigative team of Deputies, National Park Service Special Agents and Rangers, Missouri State Highway Patrol investigators and surrounding law enforcement agencies that worked extensively over the past ten days to find Brittany and ultimately seek justice upon her behalf. I am also thankful to the public for providing information to the investigative team throughout this process."*

Texas County Sheriff  
Scott Lindsey

# NORTH CENTRAL Field Office

## YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

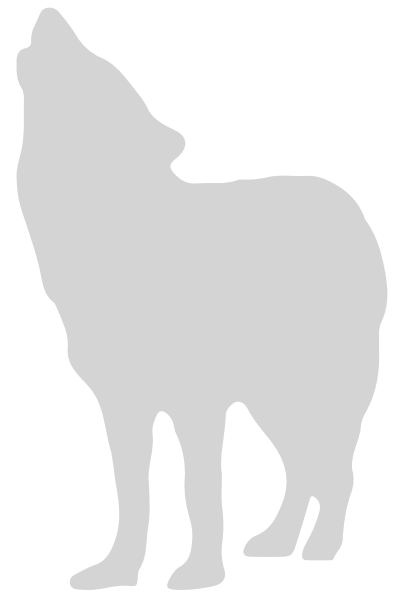
### FELONY ARPA VIOLATION

A man claiming to have been seeking the elusive Forrest Fenn treasure was indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2020 on charges of excavating or trafficking in archeological resources and injury or depredation to United States property — violations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA).

Rodrick D. Craythorn, age 52, was found digging in the historic Fort Yellowstone Cemetery between October 1, 2019 and May 24, 2020. ISB Special Agents and US Park Rangers of Yellowstone National Park conducted the ensuing investigation.

Fenn, an art dealer and author from Santa Fe, hid a treasure chest containing gold, rare coins, jewelry, and gemstones somewhere in the Rocky Mountains. The Fenn treasure spurred a decade-long search as treasure hunters used clues from a book Fenn had written to scour the west in hopes of finding the fortune. The chest was located in Wyoming by another person in June 2020. Forrest Fenn passed away several months later.

Craythorn pleaded guilty to the charges in January 2021 and was sentenced in March 2021. He was ordered to serve six months in prison followed by six months of home detention. Thereafter, he will serve two years of supervised release. Craythorn must also pay \$31,566 in restitution.



Damage by Craythorn in the Fort Yellowstone Cemetery. NPS photo.

*“This is the most significant investigation of damage to archeological resources in Yellowstone National Park’s recent history. I want to sincerely thank law enforcement officers, special agents, archeological staff, the Department of Justice District of Wyoming and the US District Court Judge for their outstanding work on this complex case.”*

Superintendent Cam Sholly



*A wolf stands in a wintry clearing in Yellowstone National Park. NPS photo by J Frank.*

# SOUTHWEST

## FIELD OFFICE



LAKE MEAD NATIONAL  
RECREATION AREA

GRAND CANYON  
NATIONAL PARK

FLAGSTAFF, AZ

ARIZONA

TUCSON, AZ

NEW MEXICO

COLORADO

WYOMING

SOUTH DAKOTA

NEBRASKA

KANSAS

OKLAHOMA

TEXAS

### Legend:

- ▲ ISB Resident Office: staffed by Special Agent(s)
- ★ ISB Supervisory Office: staffed by an ASAC and Special Agent(s)

# SOUTHWEST Field Office

The Southwest Field Office (SWFO) serves National Park Service units in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and as of October 2020, part of Nevada. These diverse NPS sites lie within the Unified Interior Regions of the Lower Colorado Basin, Upper Colorado Basin, and Arkansas-Rio Grande-Texas Gulf. ISB Special Agents are stationed at Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Saguaro National Park, and in Tucson and Flagstaff, AZ.

In 2020, these investigators worked diligently to bring justice for victims of crime, meet our public trust obligations, and provide support to our partners and stakeholders. As with any work unit, travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic proved a challenge, requiring flexibility and adaptation to establish safety for our workforce and those we interact with. Despite these challenges, we found mitigations that enabled travel across great distances to work critical cases. We also continued to support numerous parks with investigative planning and assistance for their cases.

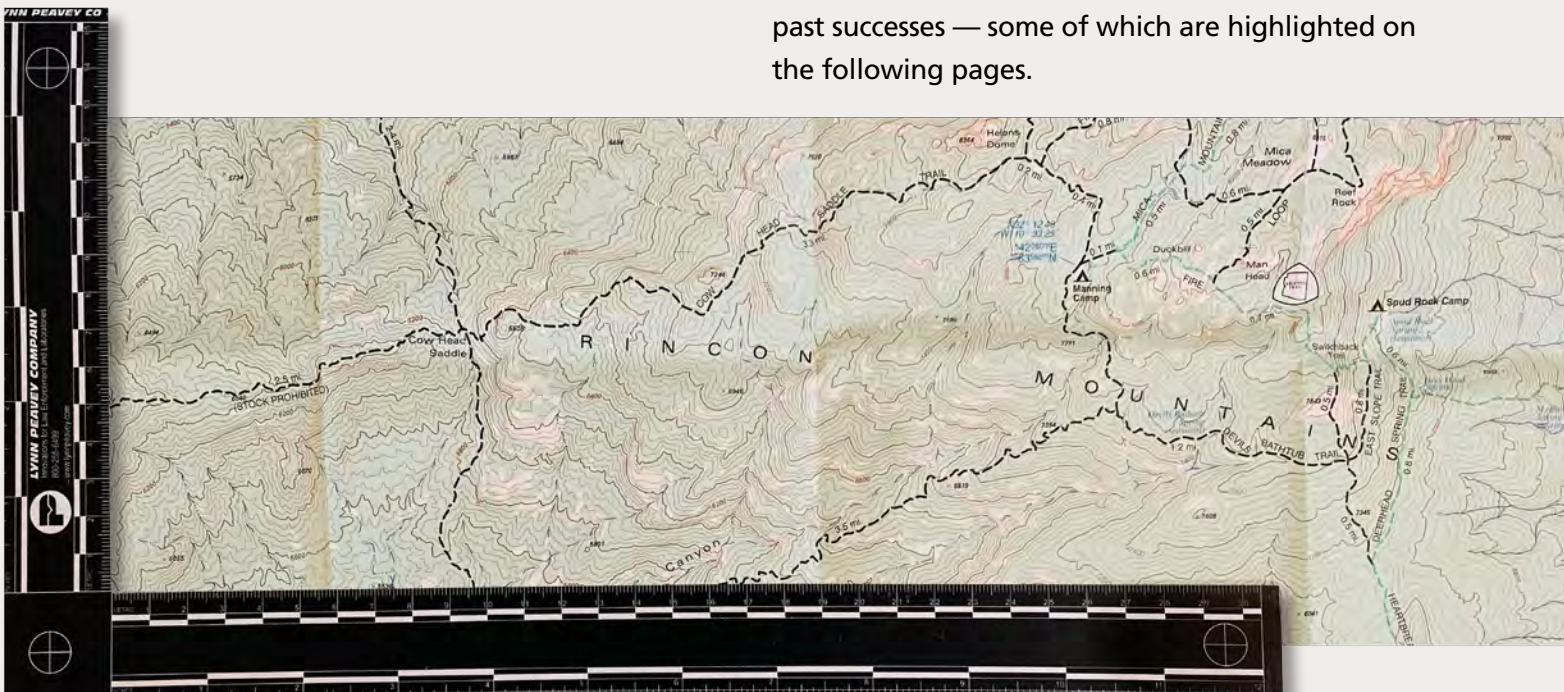
Special agents of the SWFO provided training in a variety of settings for diverse audiences, supported

several major cases in other field offices, and filled requests for national assistance throughout the year. These deployments provided critical assistance and added investigative capacity in Yellowstone National Park, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Yosemite National Park, and others.

As the Investigative Services Branch prepared for ASAC Jeff Sullivan's retirement towards the end of 2020, several special agents stationed at Lake Mead National Recreation Area transitioned from the Pacific to the Southwest Field Office. We were very glad to add these investigators to the SWFO team, and we look forward to collaborating with US Park Rangers and other personnel of this active and complex park.

A special agent was recognized by Coconino County (AZ) with their Heart of Gold Victim Witness Award. The award honored his ongoing efforts to seek justice for victims while ensuring fairness and humanity in his investigative work. See page 13 for more info.

With the challenges of the future, SWFO will prioritize enhancing our interoperability and teamwork. We will also focus on mentoring rangers and building upon past successes — some of which are highlighted on the following pages.



# SOUTHWEST Field Office

## SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK

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### *WEAPON VIOLATIONS*

In September 2020, a man was ordered to serve 18 months in prison followed by 36 months of supervised release for charges that stemmed from an incident the previous year. US Park Rangers contacted Michael A. Romero for traffic violations within the park on September 7, 2019. During their investigation, rangers discovered that Romero, age 34, was in possession of a stolen firearm. Romero had previously been convicted of a felony which, by law, prohibits him from possessing firearms or ammunition. At a subsequent court hearing, Romero pleaded guilty to two felony charges of violating Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2) - Felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition.

## GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

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### *VIOLATION OF ORDER OF PROTECTION*

On August 15, 2020, US Park Rangers responded to a report of domestic violence at a residential area on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. Rangers located and apprehended Edwin Dahozy, age 54, as he attempted to hitchhike out of the park. ISB Special Agents investigated the incident with US Park Rangers. Dahozy was sentenced to serve 37 days incarceration followed by a year of supervised probation, and was ordered to complete domestic violence counseling. He was also banned from Grand Canyon National Park for the duration of his sentence.

## GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

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### *ASSAULT ON FEDERAL OFFICER, THEFT*

On June 20, 2020, US Park Rangers responded to the Canyon Village Market on the South Rim for a report of an individual believed to have stolen several items from within the store. When contacted by the rangers, the individual later identified as Robert Eric Lucero, age 39, became combative and bit one of the rangers. ISB Special Agents aided the investigation, which culminated with Lucero pleading guilty to assaulting a federal officer and theft. He was sentenced to serve 90 days imprisonment followed by 3 years of supervised probation.



*Fire burn scarring from the 2019 Cottonwood Creek Fire.  
NPS photo by J Tung.*

# SOUTHWEST Field Office

## GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

### *HUMAN-CAUSED WILDFIRE*

Following an investigation by ISB Special Agents and US Park Rangers, Thomas Grabarek, age 71, pleaded guilty on September 8, 2020 to misdemeanor violations for starting a wildland fire within Grand Canyon National Park.

In October 27, 2019, while backpacking near Cottonwood Creek, Grabarek started a fire by lighting toilet paper in an attempt to incinerate it. High winds that day allowed the fire to quickly spread uphill, consuming approximately 64 acres along the Tonto Trail near Horseshoe Mesa.

In his plea agreement, Grabarek agreed to pay restitution totaling \$53,520 to help rehabilitate the burned area. Grabarek also agreed to perform community service by making a public service announcement (PSA) and assisting

National Park Service staff in the creation of educational signs to be posted in the park's Backcountry Information Center regarding the dangers of burning toilet paper in the backcountry.

See the PSA video at [go.usa.gov/x6ZQM](https://go.usa.gov/x6ZQM)



## CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT

### *COLD CASE INVESTIGATION*

2020 marked the 40th anniversary of the disappearance of US Park Ranger Paul Fugate. On January 13, 1980, Fugate was on duty at the Chiricahua National Monument Visitor Center. At about 2 p.m. that day, he left the building to hike a park trail and was never seen again. Fugate was wearing his NPS uniform, including the official NPS Arrowhead patch on his upper shirtsleeve and a gold-colored ranger badge pinned over his heart. ISB Special Agents, US Park Rangers at Chiricahua National Monument, and investigators with Cochise County Sheriff's Office (AZ) continue to investigate this case. Although search teams combed the surrounding area extensively multiple times, they found no sign of the missing ranger. Investigators suspected foul play early on, and a formal missing-person case remains open. During the first few years after Fugate's disappearance, the reward fund grew to \$20,000. With this renewed focus, the NPS increased the fund to offer up to \$60,000 for information leading to Fugate's whereabouts and/or the arrest and conviction of whoever is responsible for his disappearance.

If you have information that can help, please contact us. You don't have to tell us who you are, but please tell us what you know:

[go.nps.gov/SubmitATip](https://go.nps.gov/SubmitATip)

# ATLANTIC

## FIELD OFFICE



PUERTO RICO % US VIRGIN ISLANDS

Map insets not to scale.

**Legend:**

- ▲ ISB Resident Office: staffed by Special Agent(s)
- ★ ISB Supervisory Office: staffed by an ASAC and Special Agent(s)
- 🏠 Headquarters



# ATLANTIC Field Office

The Atlantic Field Office serves the mission NPS Investigative Services Branch (ISB) in four Unified Interior Regions — North Atlantic-Appalachian, South Atlantic-Gulf, Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands, and part of Mississippi Basin. Within that area are 23 states (46%), 167 NPS units (40%), and half of the US population. The field office is currently staffed with one Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) and five ISB Special Agents.

2020 brought a slower than average year for the field office due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic that had parks closed for the first half of 2020. Special agents in the field office continued to support the investigative priorities of ISB by providing investigators to assist other field offices short on staff.

During the summer, while the ASAC served as Acting Special Agent in Charge of Program Support, a special agent in turn served as Acting ASAC.

Special agents of the Atlantic Field Office led many complex and labor-intensive investigations throughout the year, including several death investigations, numerous sexual assaults, kidnapping, theft, and cultural resources investigations.

Throughout the entire Atlantic Field Office coverage area, we will remain dedicated to the mission of the National Park Service and ISB. We will continue to focus on building rapport with our customer base and providing our customers with the best investigative resources the agency has to offer.

See the following pages for overviews of new and significant investigations from 2020.



# ATLANTIC Field Office

## **BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY**

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### ***KIDNAPPING***

In January 2020, a man was picked up by other persons in Asheville NC, taken to the Blue Ridge Parkway, and assaulted. The suspects then took the victim back to Asheville to force him to withdraw money from an ATM before assaulting him again. The victim was able to flee from the suspects and report the events to police.

ISB Special Agents initiated an investigation of the kidnapping and assault in partnership with the Asheville Police Department. The investigation is ongoing.

## **GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

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### ***ATTEMPTED SEXUAL ASSAULT***

In February 2019, a woman reported that a male acquaintance attempted to sexually assault her. The man took her phone away from her and threw it over a hillside to keep her from calling 911. She was able to fight off her attacker by clawing at his eyes.

The man was later interviewed and fresh scratch marks on his face were readily apparent. He was indicted on one count of attempted sexual assault and remanded into the custody of the US Marshals Service pending trial.

The defendant pleaded guilty in September 2020; sentencing was scheduled for February 2021.

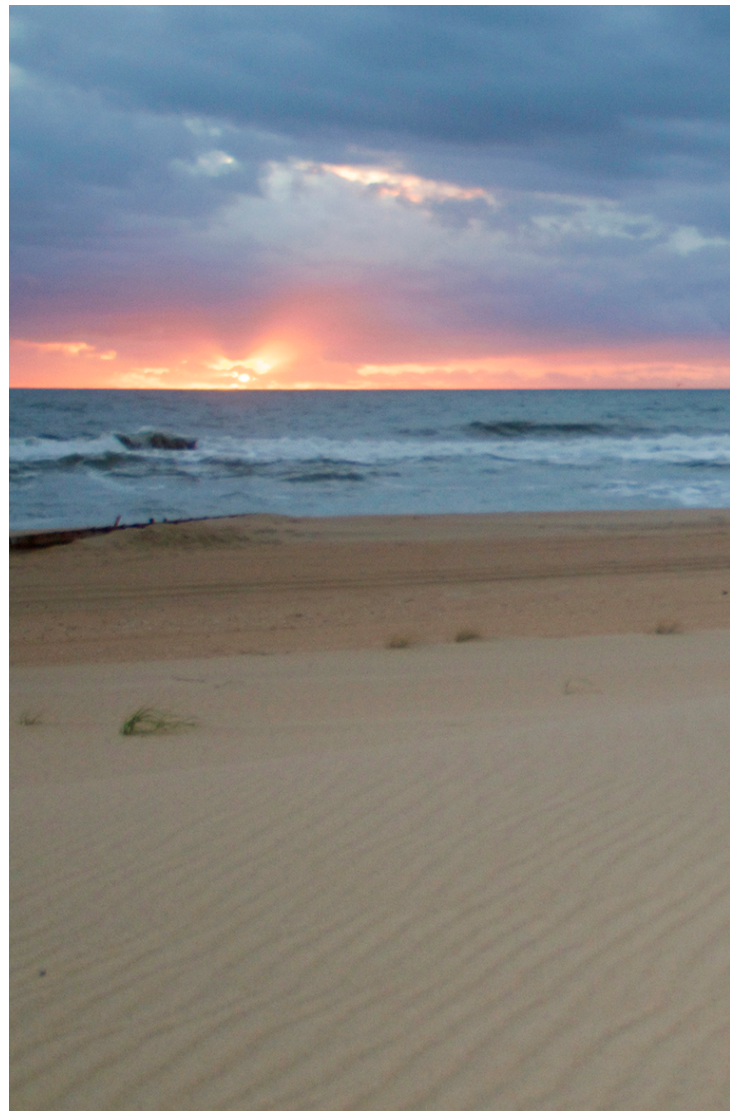
## **CAPE HATTERAS NATIONAL SEASHORE**

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### ***AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR***

In December 2019, ISB initiated an investigation alongside rangers from Cape Hatteras National Seashore after it was reported by the parents of a 13-year-old child that they had been sexually abused by an adult. In June 2020, the suspect in the case was indicted and arrested.

The defendant is awaiting trial set for sometime in 2021.



*Sunrise in Cape Hatteras National Seashore. NPS photo.*

# ATLANTIC Field Office

## BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

### MURDER, AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ABUSE

A sentencing hearing in February 2020 brought a multi-agency homicide investigation to a close. Derek Shawn Pendergraft, age 22, was sentenced to serve life in prison for the July 24, 2018 murder of Sara Ellis near the Pisgah Inn on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

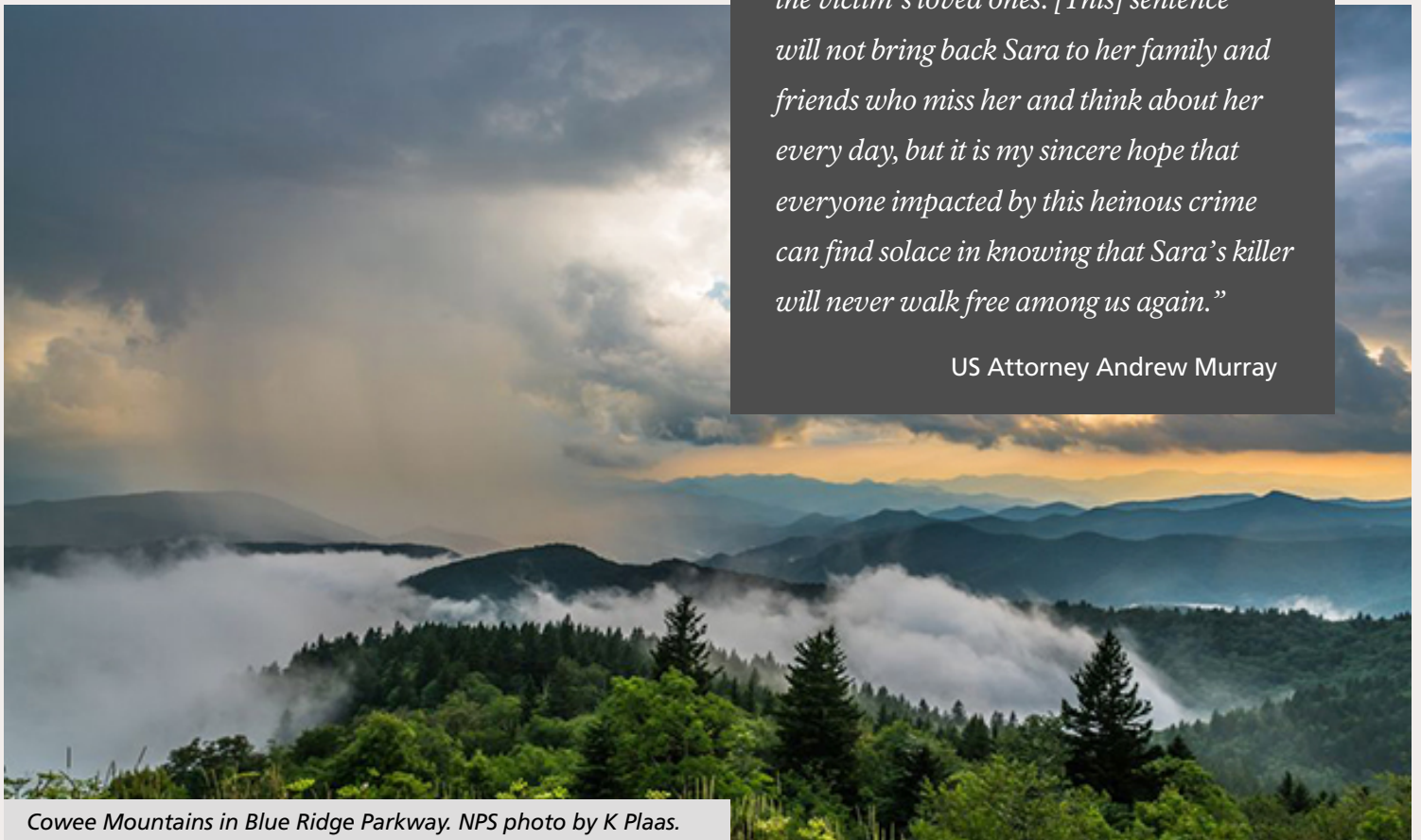
Responding to the reported incident that day, ISB Special Agents initiated an investigation with the assistance of the FBI and state agencies. Pendergraft, who worked at the inn, reported his co-worker Sara Ellis was missing. Pendergraft stated that he and Ellis both got off work shortly after 4:00 p.m. and decided to go for a hike on an unnamed trail near the employee housing area of the Pisgah Inn. Pendergraft stated that shortly after starting their hike it began to rain, and Ellis decided to return to the housing area while he continued to hike.

Pendergraft stated that on his way back, upon reaching the point where he last saw Ellis, he saw her umbrella and hat lying on the ground. Pendergraft informed the management staff at the Pisgah Inn that Ellis was missing. Rangers and first responders searched the area and located Ellis, deceased, lying off an embankment near a trail. The next day, Pendergraft admitted to investigators that he was responsible for her death.

In December 2018, Pendergraft was indicted on charges of first-degree murder and aggravated sexual abuse. He pleaded guilty in August 2019 and was sentenced in February 2020. The case was prosecuted by the US Attorney's Office for the Western District of North Carolina.

*“When a life is cut short at the hands of another individual, no prison sentence is ever long enough to make things right for the victim’s loved ones. [This] sentence will not bring back Sara to her family and friends who miss her and think about her every day, but it is my sincere hope that everyone impacted by this heinous crime can find solace in knowing that Sara’s killer will never walk free among us again.”*

US Attorney Andrew Murray



Cowee Mountains in Blue Ridge Parkway. NPS photo by K Plaas.

# ATLANTIC Field Office

## GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

### AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ABUSE

In 2015 a homeless man reported being sexually assaulted on the Foothills Parkway of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The circumstances of this assault were very similar to those of another sexual assault of a homeless man that occurred in 2012 near Newfound Gap in the park. ISB Special Agents and US Park Rangers investigated the cases simultaneously.

Though the case went cold due to a lack of leads, ISB Special Agents met with detectives from Blount County Sheriff's Office in 2018 to release surveillance images of two suspects. After the sheriff's office released the images to the public, investigators received names for both suspects, who also called the sheriff's office and admitted the images were them. Both suspects were interviewed and gave consent for DNA samples.

After further investigation in 2019, both suspects were indicted and arrested on two counts each of Aggravated Sexual Abuse and Aiding and Abetting. They pleaded guilty in December 2019 to the charges in federal court. During a subsequent proffer interview, one of the defendants admitted that he and his partner targeted and assaulted as many as 30 homeless and intoxicated men.

In December 2020, both defendants were sentenced in US District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee. Dusty William Oliver, age 41, was sentenced to serve 25 years in prison. Richard Graham, age 49, was sentenced to serve 19 years in prison. They must each register as a sex offender and serve 15 years of supervised release upon completion their prison terms. Both have appealed their sentences.



If you or someone you know may have been a victim of sexual assault crimes during this general time period, or if you have additional information that could help investigators, please contact the NPS Investigative Services Branch:

[go.nps.gov/SubmitATip](https://www.nps.gov/SubmitATip)

*Wintertime in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. NPS photo by VIP Bielenberg.*



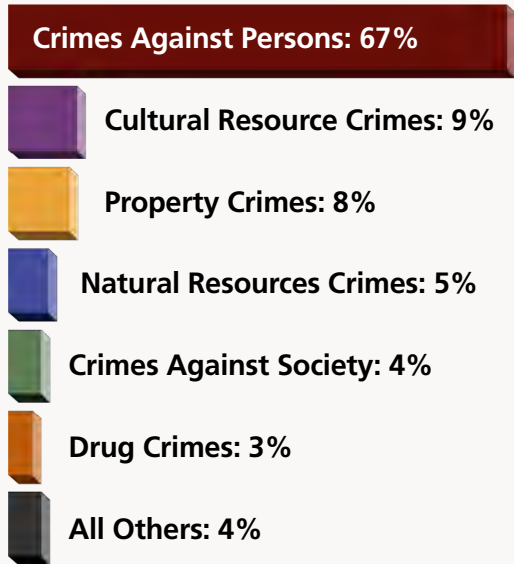
*“I want to express my thanks to ISB investigators, park rangers, and the Blount County Sheriff’s Office for their perseverance and hard work that led to the conviction and sentencing of these two men responsible for heinous crimes within the park. To ensure that we’ve heard the voices of all victims, investigators continue to welcome any information about additional assaults that may be associated with Graham and Oliver.”*

Superintendent Cassius Cash,  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park

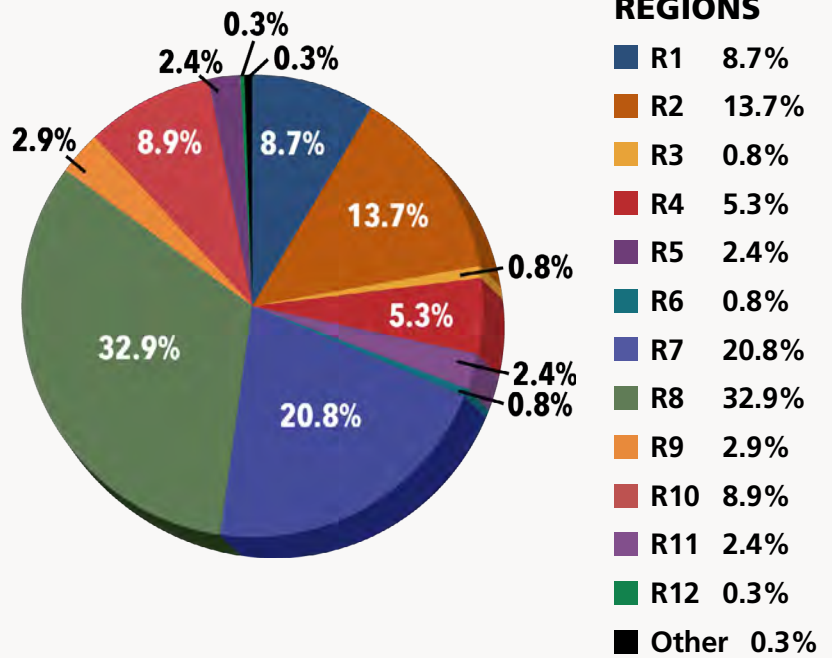
# 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

## STATISTICS

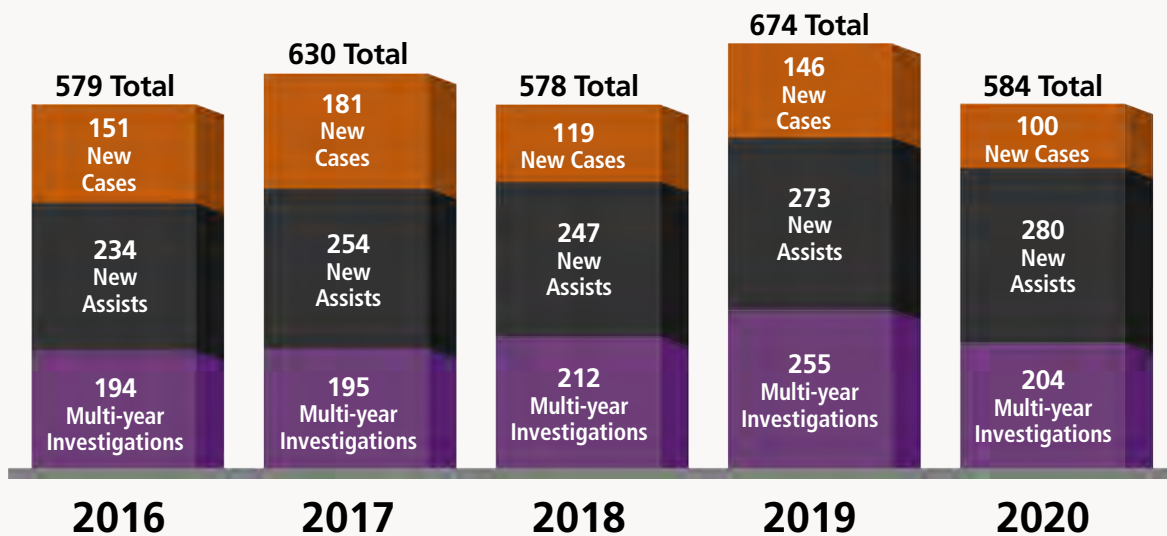
### Types of New Cases in 2020



### New ISB Cases & Assists by Unified Interior (DOI) Region in 2020



### Five Year Comparison: Total Cases by Type



# Any Park — Any Time


## OUTREACH & OPEN PORTALS


### Submit a tip


#### Did you know?

ISB's Tip reporting portals are always on, and offer versatile, easy ways for people to report crimes or suspicious activity in any National Park Service site:

 CALL or TEXT 888-653-0009

 ONLINE [go.nps.gov/SubmitATip](https://go.nps.gov/SubmitATip)

 EMAIL [nps\\_isb@nps.gov](mailto:nps_isb@nps.gov)

 EMERGENCY dial 9-1-1

We received roughly 3,000 tips in 2020 concerning incidents across the National Park System, including some for public lands administered by partner agencies. Whether or not ISB is involved in an investigation, parks and regions can put these tools to work anytime. How? Contact us!

### Duty agent hotline

#### For NPS Law Enforcement



### Duty Agent *Hotline*

US Park Rangers and Dispatchers may use this hotline to quickly reach an ISB Duty Agent. Brief the Duty Agent with the nature of your investigation/incident and they will assist you immediately by phone or initiate deployment of the nearest ISB resources.

The Duty Agent Hotline is restricted to agency use only by NPS Law Enforcement and Dispatch personnel. Unauthorized use or dissemination is prohibited.

### Digital suite

#### Working for Good

Help us continue to harness social media and the web to do good work. Join our audience across the globe on one or all of our online platforms — people from more than 50 nations using more than 45 languages reached our posts 3.8 million times in 2020. This outreach helps us protect parks throughout the National Park System and the resources, wildlife, visitors, employees, and residents therein. It also aids investigations and helps us bring

justice for victims of crimes. We are thankful for our online visitors, contributors, and followers.



[www.nps.gov/ISB](https://www.nps.gov/ISB)



[@InvestigativeServicesNPS](https://www.facebook.com/InvestigativeServicesNPS)



[@SpecialAgent\\_NPS](https://www.instagram.com/SpecialAgent_NPS)



[@SpecialAgentNPS](https://twitter.com/SpecialAgentNPS)

# YOU CAN HELP PROTECT OUR NATIONAL TREASURES



## HOW CAN I HELP?

If you see something suspicious in any national park service location, or if you have information that could aid an investigation, stay safe and tell us about it.

Talk to any NPS employee for help in reporting suspicious activity, or give the Special Agents of the NPS Investigative Services Branch a call.

## CONTACT US:

CALL or TEXT the ISB  
Tip Line 888-653-0009

ONLINE at [nps.gov/ISB](https://nps.gov/ISB)  
and click "Submit a Tip"

EMAIL [nps\\_isb@nps.gov](mailto:nps_isb@nps.gov)

MESSAGE on Facebook  
[@InvestigativeServicesNPS](https://www.facebook.com/InvestigativeServicesNPS)  
or Twitter and Instagram  
[@SpecialAgentNPS](https://www.instagram.com/SpecialAgentNPS)

WAS  
HERE  
2019

# SUBMIT A TIP

ISB: THE INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE