

**Program: National Parks of the United States**

**Speakers:** Mary Lou and Bill Stanley

**Introduced by:** Mary Lou and Bill

**Attendance:** 114

**Guests:** Janet Kuebler, William McGinnis, Jim Price, Les Snyder, Ramesh Shah, Beth Edwards

**Scribe:** Glenn Bingle

**Editor:** Ed Nitka

The membership was treated to a breathtaking travel log of 186 slides of the majestic beauty of the 51 national parks that Bill and Mary Lou Stanley have visited in their many travels.

The United States has 61 protected areas registered as national parks. The first was Yellowstone created in 1872 followed 8 years later by Sequoia and Yosemite. 14 of the national parks are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites; 21 are UNESCO Biosphere Reserves; and 8 are both. In addition to the National Parks, the National Park service maintains 261 other sites. 28 states have national parks including one in American Samoa and the US Virgin Islands. California and Alaska have nine each, which is the most; Utah has five and Colorado four.

The largest national park is Wrangell-St. Elias in Alaska at 13 million acres and the smallest is Gateway Arch National Park at 200 acres in Missouri. There were 330 million visits to the national parks in 2017 attesting to what great enjoyment visitors find in their breathtaking beauty and fun in

hiking, rapids riding, mountain climbing, and camping. Sciencetech members, in aggregate, have visited all but 3.

The national parks are divided into units depending on entrance location; and of the 322 units, 115 units charge a fee to enter. Controversy has surrounded a recent proposal to raise the entrance fee to \$70 from \$30. So far it has only been proposed.

The travel log included such diverse climate and geographies such as largest tropical wilderness in the Everglades with 36 protected species to 26 glaciers and 130 lakes in Glacier National Park; from mountains, fjords, and a temperate rainforest in Glacier Bay to barren lava beds of Kilauea at 13000 feet in Hawaii Volcanoes NP; from the world's largest cave system in Mammoth Cave NP, Kentucky; to the wettest rain lands with 12 feet of rainfall at Hoh in Olympic NP; from the spectacular geothermal mud pots, hot springs and waterfalls of Yellowstone to the giant redwoods and sequoia trees of Kings Canyon to the coral reefs of American Samoa and Biscayne. Over 20 volcanoes are contained in various national parks.

The animal biodiversity in the national parks is stunning. Homes to over 250 protected species are contained in the complex park geography. The talk pictured American bison, big horn sheep, Pronghorn buck, elk, mule deer, and lynx.

The travel log concluded with a breathtaking hike up to the top of Angels Landing in Zion. When asked what is their favorite park, there was not total agreement among husband and wife, but both agreed it is better stated: what are your most favorite ten? There is a quiz for those members who want to try the National Park Internet Trivia Quiz at <https://projects.seattletimes.com/2016/quizzes/parks-quiz-2016/>



Mary Lou and Bill Stanley