

Opinion: McClintock on the wrong side

By Athan Manuel

Over the past several weeks, America's public lands, including our national parks and monuments, became a symbol of the pain caused by the government shutdown. And rightly so.

Visitors were turned away, once-in-a-lifetime trips were canceled and local California economies lost an estimated \$8.5 million each day of the shutdown. The public outrage over the closure of our parks, monuments and other public lands made clear the importance of these special places.

U.S. House Republicans, including Congressman [Tom] McClintock found themselves on the wrong side of public opinion. Instead of acknowledging their role in the shutdown, and that they were in fact the reason why our public lands closed, Republicans are callously looking to shift the blame to federal land agency employees for simply doing their job.

In a joint hearing of the House Natural Resources and Oversight and Government Reform Committees recently, Republicans spent hours attacking Park Service Director Jonathan Jarvis. The tone was reminiscent of Congressman [Randy] Neugebauer's confrontation with the park ranger at the World War II memorial. More of the same type of bullying is expected this week at another House hearing, tellingly titled "Threats, Intimidations and Bullying by Federal Land Managing Agencies".

Behind the scathing diatribes lies the truth, the closure of our parks and monuments is just the latest example of Republicans' lack of concern for our public lands.

– Appropriations legislation that came through the House this

year slashed parks and public lands funding by \$315 million – 13 percent.

– The last Congress was the first since World War II not to protect a single new acre of public land, and the current Congress is on track to be the second.

– Even during the shutdown, congressional Republicans pushed forward legislation to sell off 3.3 million acres of public land to the highest bidder.

Congressman McClintock should be ashamed of his role in this farce. It is House Republicans who are the real bullies here. And it is the American people who are suffering as our nation's natural treasures are neglected. Please use your editorial voice to call on Congressman McClintock to stop using our public lands as political chips and to stand with the American people in support of our special places.

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