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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

Coalition Actions

On May 10 at 2pm EDT, the Coalition is hosting a webinar with Walt Dabney about the history and importance of public lands. Walt worked for the NPS for over 30 years, including as superintendent of the Southeast Utah group of parks. The event is free and you can register [here](#). The event is part of the Coalition's Take Action Webinar Series.

The Coalition submitted [testimony](#) to the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, in support of the President's Fiscal Year 2024 budget request.

We signed a joint comment [letter](#) to the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management on its draft Environmental Assessment and draft Finding of No Significant Impact Statement for its third quarter oil and gas lease sale. The letter expresses appreciation for Alternative 3; however, in detailed comments, the letter recommends deferring sales until identified structural deficiencies in the program have been addressed. Additionally, the Coalition joined in submitting [scoping comments](#) on their fourth quarter oil and gas lease sale.

The Coalition issued a [press release](#) in support of Tribal efforts to establish a Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument.

We submitted [comments](#) to the Idaho Bureau of Land Management on its draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Lava Ridge Wind Project. The letter offers a detailed explanation of ten listed concerns. Among them are a failure to fulfill its responsibility under the National Historic Preservation Act for including Minidoka on the

National Register of Historic Places, failure to conduct a baseline Visual Resource Management classification, and failure to consider BLM's proposed Idaho Renewable Energy Strategy.

The Coalition joined with three additional organizations in [protesting](#) specified parcels noticed in the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management May 2023 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale.

Through the National Parks Second Century Action Committee, the Coalition signed [comments](#) to the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands supporting a five-year extension of the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund.

The Coalition again joined with three organizations in submitting [comments](#) to the Utah Bureau of Land Management on its proposed third quarter oil and gas competitive lease sale Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact. While the comments express appreciation for the inclusion of Alternative B, they reiterate the request for DOI to address identified structural deficiencies in the program.

Members of the Executive Council and staff have begun annual meetings with Congressional staff, focusing on the Appropriations Committees. Meetings will continue during the next two weeks.

National/Regional NPS Updates

A summary of news pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the National Park System and its programs, or intersecting with the parks on a more regional basis.

- *National Park Week* - This week, April 22-30, is National Park Week. Many parks are hosting celebratory events, and The White House made an [official proclamation](#) about the week's significance. Source: [National Park Service](#), The White House
- *NPS opposes climbing anchors in wilderness* - In a hearing of the U.S. House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands, Mike Reynolds, the NPS' deputy director for Congressional and external relations, expressed opposition to the Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act, which would allow for climbing anchors in designated wilderness. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *George W. Bush Childhood Home resource study* - On April 5, the NPS submitted the George W. Bush Childhood Home Special Resource Study to Congress. The study acknowledges the national significance, suitability, and feasibility of the location. However, they found that it also has significant support from a non-profit, George W. Bush Childhood Home, Inc., so it does not meet the need for direct NPS management. It recommends that the Texas Historical Commission support its management as a state historic site and that status as an NPS affiliated area may be appropriate in the future to support with recognition or technical assistance.

Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Green Parks Plan* - On April 21, the NPS released the third edition of the Green Parks Plan that establishes environmental sustainability goals and objectives, including a vision to attain net-zero status. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Firefighter mental health summit* - The Departments of the Interior and Agriculture hosted a three-day summit in Boise, Idaho, to kick off the development of a joint wildland firefighter behavioral health program. The summit examined programs at other agencies and defined a vision, framework, and implementation plan for the program. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Remote work to be minimized* - An Office of Management and Budget memo has asked federal agencies to scale back on remote work, while also balancing “the need to compete for talent with private sector employers who continue to offer similar workplace flexibilities.” Remote work has come under fire by some politicians as being responsible for poor customer service, while others have argued that chronic underfunding and understaffing has created that problem. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *"Debt ceiling battle could be crippling for National Park Service"* - *National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) about the ramifications of Congressional efforts to trade spending cuts for raising the national debt ceiling. They likened proposed cuts to those made by Congress in 2013, which resulted in unfilled positions and reduced visitor services across the National Park System. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *"NPS one of the worse places to work"* - *Backpacker* published [an article](#) based on a recent survey by the Partnership for Public Service that ranked the NPS 371 out of 432 government agencies for job engagement and satisfaction. Employees were dissatisfied the most by salary, work-life balance, and a lack of commitment to diversity. The article notes that the agency's workforce numbers have declined 25% since 2010, though visitation has surged in the same period of time. Source: *Backpacker*
- *Booz Allen making millions above original estimate* - *The Wall Street Journal* published [an article](#) about *Recreation.gov* and its contractor, Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. The five-year contract is up for renewal this year. In their bid, they estimated they would make \$87 million over five years, and they have made over \$140 million over the previous four years. There is some criticism that the payment structure is not in the public's best interest, while the federal government has argued that the payment structure puts the risk on the contractor. Source: *The Wall Street Journal*
- *Chief historian telling more inclusive NPS story* - *The 19th** published [an](#)

[interview](#) with Turkiya Lowe, the chief historian for the National Park Service, and her efforts to better tell stories of marginalized communities across the parks. Turkiya is the first woman and first Black person to hold the position, which she began in 2017. Source: *The 19th**

- *Cashless parks* - Many parks are transitioning to cashless payments for entrance and other fees in the coming months, some permanently and others on a pilot basis. The following is a short list of parks that have announced this since the last *Coalition Report*: Death Valley National Park, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (three-month pilot), Lassen Volcanic National Park, Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park, Prince William Forest Park (three-month pilot). Source: Many
- "A la carte parks" - *National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) about the increasing number of fees associated with national park visits, such as for permit applications, backcountry reservations, and other types of lottery-based reservations. It raises the question of whether or not these fees are starting to commercialize the parks in a way that is unethical. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Google Maps adaptation for national parks* - Google Maps has improved its user experience to better help national park visitors locate park entrances, identify key points of interest, highlighting entire trails rather than just a pin along the trail, and allowing users to download offline maps for easier navigation with no signal. Source: [PCMag](#)
- *Jimmy Chin receives award* - On April 14, the National Park Trust awarded filmmaker Jimmy Chin the 2023 American Park Experience Award for his efforts at reaching out to underserved audiences and advocating for public lands. Source: [National Park Trust](#)
- *New books* – Two new books have been published: *The National Parks Cookbook: The Best Recipes From (and Inspired by) America's National Parks* by Linda Ly and *This Contested Land: The Storied Past and Uncertain Future of America's National Monuments* by McKenzie Long. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#), [KUOW](#)

[Around the Parks](#)

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Acadia National Park, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Saratoga National Historical Park, Weir Farm National Historical Park* - The *Times Union* published [an article](#) about the challenges of managing deer populations, invasive species, and climate change within various national park units across New England and the mid-Atlantic. The article focuses on a recent study by the NPS and Schoodic Institute. Various NPS staff are quoted in the article. Source: *Times Union*
- *Alaska Region* - A new study by University of Colorado-Boulder, the U.S. Geological

Survey, and the NPS was published in *Environmental Research Letters*, showing how river flow data can serve as a measurable benchmark for understanding climate change in Arctic regions. Source: [University of Colorado - Boulder Today](#)

- *Antietam National Battlefield* - This month, the park will remove 47 trees from the cemetery due to the risks to visitors and historic resources. Many of the trees are over 100-years-old and have been identified in the Antietam National Cemetery Cultural Landscape Report as a risk. Portions of the trees will be saved and milled for historic preservation projects around the park. The NPS recently planted 14,500 new trees throughout the park. Source: [Antietam National Battlefield](#)
- *Antietam National Battlefield, Catoctin Mountain Park, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Monocacy National Battlefield, Rock Creek Park* - These seven parks donated over 12,000 pounds of venison to local nonprofits that serve meals to people in need. The donation comes from the parks' collective efforts to reduce overabundant white-tailed deer. The deer are professionally processed and samples are taken to detect chronic wasting disease. All results have been found to be negative and there is "a high level of confidence" it is not currently present in these deer populations. Source: [WUSA9](#)
- *Arches National Park* - *Corner Post* published [a long-form article](#) called "Hyper-visitation, the Fate of the National Parks, and Tourism Toxicification in a Small Town," about the challenges of visitation management in the park and surrounding areas. Source: *Corner Post*
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - The Maryland Coastal Bays will receive \$1.8 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to restore 1,800 feet of shoreline and shoreline buffer that will help protect the park and its visitor center, as well as other local buildings. Source: [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - The park has reopened the Life of the Marsh Trail and the Life of the Forest Trail after a significant construction project to improve accessibility and the visitor experience. The park is still working on improvements on the Life of the Dunes Trail, which will remain open through the work. These projects were funded by park entrance and pass fees. Source: [Assateague Island National Seashore](#)
- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - The park announced that they have selected Creek Partners, LLC, as the new concessioner for Bandy Creek Camp Store and Stables. The store will be open by April 7, with the stables open by April 28. Source: [Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area](#)
- *Big Thicket National Preserve* - The *Beaumont Enterprise* ran [an interview](#) with Whitney Howeth, the chief of resource management. Source: *Beaumont Enterprise*

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The parkway announced their 2022 Volunteer of the Year award recipients, including campground hosts Joyce and Rick Martin, interpretive volunteer Caroline Lemmond, volunteer leaders Ken and Julie Carpenter, cultural demonstration volunteer Mary Kathryn-Wert, and the volunteer group Christ School. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The park will start pavement preservation work on overlooks, parking areas, and picnic areas from now until the fall between Mileposts 294 to 384 and 394 to 443. Intermittent short-term closures are planned. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Chaco Culture National Historical Park* - *Sapiens* published [an article](#) about archaeologists' study of where and how ancestral Pueblo people might have gathered the many large-sized timber beams present at Chaco. Large, straight trees are not known to grow in the immediate area. Source: *Sapiens*
- *Channel Islands National Park* - The NPS has approved a newly revised Fire Management Plan for the park, including no longer authorizing the use of landscape-scale prescribed burns due to its role in allowing invasive species encroachment. Pile burning is the preferred prescribed burn method under the new plan. Source: [VC Reporter](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - A new book by David Pierce, *Tocks Island: Dammed If You Do*, chronicles the 13-year legal battle over the proposed and Congressionally-approved Tocks Island Dam, which was ultimately canceled and became Delaware Gap NRA. David worked for the park for two summer seasons. Source: [Pocono Record](#)
- *Fire Island National Seashore* - The NPS has awarded a concession contract to Sayville Ferry Service, Inc., to operate passenger ferry service between the south shore of Long Island and Sailors Haven Marina at the park. Saysville is the existing concessioner and has provided ferry service to Fire Island since 1894. Source: [Fire Island National Seashore](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On April 24, the Bureau of Reclamation started a three-day "high-flow experiment," conducting large releases from Glen Canyon Dam. The effort is meant to move accumulated sediment downstream to help rebuild beaches and habitat, mimicking pre-dam river surges. Officials were clear that releasing the water from Lake Powell will cause water to arrive earlier at Lake Mead, but will not affect its availability to users. The BOR has conducted these high-flow experiments in the past, but not since 2018. Source: [AZ Central](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area*

- On April 11, the Bureau of Reclamation released a draft plan for the Colorado River, including proposals to modify a 2007 shortage-sharing agreement that would make further cuts to allotments, starting this summer. They made it clear that the proposals are “placeholders” and that the states and Tribes should continue to seek their own consensus in the meantime. [Public comment](#) on the plan is open for 45 days. Source: [AZ Central](#)
- *The New York Times* published [an op-ed](#) by former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt that argues for the Department of the Interior to take a more active role in Colorado River negotiations among the western states in order to avoid “deadpool” levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell and the subsequent consequences. Source: *The New York Times*
- *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) about farmers in California’s Imperial Valley, which consume the “single largest share” of the Colorado River, have some of the oldest legal rights to the water, and provide \$4 billion in food, jobs, and industry. Source: *The Washington Post*

- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - The NPS has authorized the placement of 360,000 cubic yards of sand along 5,000 feet of shoreline at Jacob Riis Park. Sections of the beach were closed in 2022 due to beach erosion, which exposed deteriorated wood groins, rockwork, and other structures, and created unsafe conditions. Sand placement is scheduled to begin in mid-April and be completed by the end of June. Short-term closures of the beach will occur during sand placement, which will start on the western edge and move east. This project is part of the larger East Rockaway Inlet to Rockaway Inlet, and Jamaica Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management plan, which is co-managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York State, and New York City. Source: [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)

- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - *The Monmouth Journal* published [a profile](#) about Amber Hagan, who is the special events coordinator at Sandy Hook. Source: *The Monmouth Journal*

- *George Washington Parkway* - On April 10, the parkway closed the Turkey Run Loop Road and parking lots to repair and repave road surfaces. The closures will remain in place through October. Turkey Run Park and its trails remain open by foot access. The project is funded by park entrance fees. Source: [George Washington Parkway](#)

- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - The park installed two new bronze relief tactile tables: one at the plaza at the Virginia Memorial and one at the National Cemetery Parking Lot. They will soon install a third at the Eternal Light Peace Memorial. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)

- *Glacier National Park* - U.S. Representative (and former Interior Secretary) Ryan Zinke (R-MT) issued a letter to the NPS asking for a full investigation of the Booz

- Allen contract for *Recreation.gov* and a halt to the Glacier reservation system, pending an investigation by his office. Source: [The Western News](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The *Williams-Grand Canyon News* ran [a profile](#) of Rocky Burrows, an emergency services paramedic at the park. Source: *Williams-Grand Canyon News*
 - *Great Basin National Park* - The NPS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Fire Management Plan Environmental Assessment. Source: [Great Basin National Park](#)
 - *Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* - The park's chief of interpretation and visitor services, Katherine Faz, penned [an article](#) published in the *Alamosa News* about the efforts of the Philanthropic Educational Organization, an all-women group, to establish Great Sand Dunes as a National Monument. Source: *Alamosa News*
 - *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park announced that their new vehicle parking pass program has thus far generated more revenue than they anticipated, particularly the annual parking tags. The program has been in effect for one month. Source: [WVLT](#)
 - *Hawaii Volcanoes National Park* - On April 5, the park released its second season of "Ike Hana No'eau" ("Experience the Skillful Work"), a video series produced and filmed in the park to connect Native Hawaiians, park visitors, local residents, educators, and students to Native Hawaiian culture. Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and the Hawai'i Pacific Parks Association supported and funded the project. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
 - *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - *The Daily Iowan* published [an article](#) about comedian Ben Miller, who is currently on tour performing "Stand-Up Science." In the article, Ben is said to be the first stand-up comedian selected by the National Park Arts Foundation for an artist residency at Hawai'i Volcanoes.
 - *Historic Preservation Training Center (an NPS-administered program)* - The city of Frederick, Maryland, is expected to soon approve amendments to an agreement with the NPS that would allow the HPTC to move five office trailers into Westside Regional Park for staff office space. The arrangement is temporary as the NPS works to build a permanent facility in the park. The five trailers are currently being used at Antietam and are expected to be moved by July. The NPS also will continue to utilize the Jenkins Cannery Warehouse in downtown Frederick until the permanent facility is established, which is expected by 2028. Congress authorized the NPS to purchase land in the park in its Fiscal Year 2024 budget. Source: [The Frederick News-Post](#)

- *Independence National Historical Park* - WXXI published [an article](#) about a 2007 law that mandated all new and remodeled federal buildings be 100% free of fossil fuels by 2030. It never went into effect due to lack of finalized regulations at the Department of Energy. Independence National Historical Park's recent building upgrade to gas-fired boilers, which has come under fire from some environmental groups for its climate change impacts, is given as a case-study about the ways in which the law and subsequent regulations may play out in the future. Source: WXXI
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - On April 22, the park reopened the Paul H. Douglas Center. It had been closed for several months for extensive renovations. Source: [Indiana Dunes National Park](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - The *Los Angeles Times* published [an article](#) about the makeshift memorial to rock music celebrity Gram Parsons near Cap Rock, and the challenges to honoring his ongoing legacy while protecting park resources. Gram died of a suspected drug overdose in a nearby hotel at age 26 in 1973, and friends burned his body at Cap Rock, believing it was in alignment with Gram's wishes. Source: *Los Angeles Times*
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The park's efforts to construct a dirt launch ramp at Echo Bay, adjacent to an existing cement ramp that is now too far above the receding lake line, have been delayed due to saturated soils. The soils can trap vehicles. The area is currently open to paddle craft only, and there is no estimated date for completing the ramp for motorized craft. Source: [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#)
- *Minidoka National Historic Site* - The *Seattle Times* published [an op-ed](#) by Erin Shigaki, co-chair of the Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee, and Kyle Kinoshita, co-president of the Seattle Japanese American Citizens League, arguing against the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project that is adjacent to Minidoka and would be partially within the historic footprint of the camp (the Coalition has actively [opposed the project](#), as well). Public comment on the project ended on April 20. Source: *The Seattle Times*
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - *National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) about the park's dark skies internship program, which has led to several interns becoming permanent staff. It also discusses the power of night sky programming for visitors. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS has opened Requests for Proposals for a long-term lease of the East Potomac Tennis Center. Proposals are due July 5. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)
- *National Register of Historic Places* (NPS-administered program) - *National Public Radio's* "All Things Considered" published [a piece](#) about the efforts to create an

Emmett Till National Historic District and the challenges therein. The piece cites the 2022 "Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resources Study" by the NPS. Source: Source: *National Public Radio*

- *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation* (NPS-administered program) - On April 5, the NAGPRA Review Committee provided its Fiscal Year 2022 Report to Congress, including five recommendations that would increase compliance and success. The committee is an independent Federal Advisory Committee, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and independent from both the NPS and Department of the Interior. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - NPS Director Chuck Sams visited the park April 3-4, joining the celebration of the acquisition of Irish Mountain and highlighting a Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investment that will replace and install gates on the Fayette Mine and a portal near Cunard. Source: [The Fayette Tribune](#)
- *Obed Wild and Scenic River* - The river has received a grant from the National Park Foundation's ParkVentures Program to support an adaptive outdoor rock climbing program for amputees. The program is expected to complement the river's "Climb-with-a-Ranger" program and will launch in October 2023. Source: [Obed Wild and Scenic River](#)
- *Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument* - On April 20, Laurence and Diane Maul were given the President's Volunteer Service Lifetime Achievement Award. They each have contributed over 4,200 volunteer hours at the park, focused on cleaning trash and discarded items from migrant border crossings. Source: [Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument](#)
- *Pipe Spring National Monument* - The park received a \$75,000 grant from the National Park Foundation's Inclusive Storytelling program, which it will use to continue research and interpretation around the lasting impacts of Indian Boarding Schools. Interpretive ranger and Kaibab Paiute Tribal Elder Benn Pikyavit leads the research. Source: [Navajo-Hopi Observer](#)
- *Redwood National and State Parks* - The park has changed its reservation and permit system, including increasing the number of reservations for many areas, offering more day-before bookings, and providing computers at park visitor centers to help visitors make online reservations. Source: [Redwood National and State Parks](#)
- *Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - The NPS has selected WF Goodfellow Adventures, Inc., to operate lodging, boat rentals, and other visitor services at Ross Lake Resort. The business is the current concessioner. Their new 10-year contract will begin on January 1, 2024. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#)

- *Saratoga National Historical Park* - The U.S. Army Center for Military History has donated a 270-year-old British cannon to the park. The cannon was captured by the Continental Army from the Battles and Siege of Saratoga in October 1777. It is one of only three of the original 18 six-pounder cannons captured at Saratoga. Many of the cannons were continued to be used by the Continental Army throughout the war. This particular cannon, #102, changed hands several times, including an alleged illegal sale, but was returned to the Army in 2013. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Vicksburg National Military Park* – The Mississippi state legislature approved \$10 million for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to start to build an interpretive center focused on the Siege of Vicksburg, a Civil War battle. The Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign has been working on the project for about 10 years. It is likely to be constructed, owned, and operated by the State of Mississippi and co-managed with the NPS and Friends of Vicksburg. Source: [The Vicksburg Post](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - The park's maintenance team received the Midwest Region 2022 Maintenance Facility Team of the Year Award for their efforts managing a record setting flood. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A recent report by an interagency bison management team found that 1,067 bison were killed just outside the park boundary this winter, which is double the previous record. A non-profit organization, Gallatin Wildlife Association, has asked the Department of the Interior for a new management framework for the area directly adjacent to the park. The record is suspected to be due to the winter's heavy snow, moving many bison out of the park. Source: [NBC Montana](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - The April 1 snow surveys of Tuolumne Meadows recorded the heaviest snowpack since record keeping began in 1930. Source: [The Union Democrat](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Acadia National Park* - Darren Belskis was selected as the new chief ranger. Darren has 17 years of NPS experience, most recently as Acadia's deputy chief ranger. Source: [Acadia National Park](#)
- *Amache National Historic Site* - Chris Mather was selected as the first permanent site manager of this new NPS site. He has 13 years of NPS experience, most recently as the cultural resources program manager at Fort Laramie National Historic Site. Chris will begin his new role on May 21. Source: [The Prowers Journal](#)
- *Amache National Historic Site, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, Capulin*

Volcano National Monument, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site - Eric Leonard was selected as the new superintendent of the "High Plains Group" of parks. Eric has many years of NPS experience, including most recently as superintendent of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. He will begin his new role on June 4. Source: [Kiowa County Press](#)

- *Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters* - Brian Hinrichs was selected as the new executive director. Brian has 15 years of non-profit management experience, most recently as the executive director of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra. Brian will start the new role in mid-May. Source: [Bangor Daily News](#)
- *Intermountain Region* – Kate Hammond was selected as the new regional director. Kate has 30 years of NPS experience, most recently as the deputy regional director since 2016. She began her new role on April 10. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Wildland Fire Program* - Denise Klein was selected as the new budget analyst. Denise has over 20 years of NPS experience, most recently as the Midwest Region's wildland fire budget analyst. She began her new position on April 24. Source: [National Park Service Wildland Fire Program](#)

Park People

Here we honor deceased park employees, as well as important news about Coalition Members and other former park employees or volunteers. People are listed alphabetically by last name.

Deceased

- John R. Daily, 95, passed away on April 11. John worked for several decades as the director-secretary of Summit Metro Parks (OH), and he helped acquire lands in the Cuyahoga Valley in the 1960s that later became part of the national park. Source: [Akron Beacon Journal](#)
- Robert "Bob" C. Haraden, 100, passed away on April 2. He worked for the NPS from 1955 until his retirement in 1986, including as superintendent of Natchez Trace Parkway, Big Bend National Park, and Glacier National Park. He also did stints in Rocky Mountain National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and Yellowstone National Park. He received an Interior Department Meritorious Service Award and the National Parks Conservation Association's Stephen T. Mather Award. In his retirement, he volunteered at Yellowstone and served on the Board of Trustees for the National Parks Conservation Association, the Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, and the Christian Ministry in the National Parks. Source: Tom Haraden, [Dahl Funeral Chapel](#), [Hungry Horse News](#)
- Samuel "Sam" H. Kunkle, 87, passed away on April 4. Sam served as the chief scientist for the Southwest Region for a time. Source: Lesli Kunkle Ellis, [Dignity](#)

Memorial

- Martin "Marty" Charter Ott, 75, passed away on April 23. Marty worked for the NPS for many years, including stints at Fire Island National Seashore, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Olympic National Park, Big Bend National Park, Wind Cave National Park, and Zion National Park. He was a recipient of the Carnegie Medal and the National Park Service Valor Award. Source: [Legacy/Salt Lake Tribune](#)
- Carroll Schell, 74, passed away on April 1. Carroll worked for the NPS for over 34 years, including stints at Yellowstone National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, the National Parks of New York Harbor, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Christiansted National Historic Site and Buck Island Reef National Monument, Big Cypress National Preserve, Acadia National Park, the National Capitol Region, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He received many awards for his work, including Employee of the Year at Great Smoky Mountains. He retired from the NPS in 2003. Source: [Schrader, Aragon, and Jacoby](#)
- Kathleen Ann White, 75, passed away on April 21. Kathleen volunteered doing interpretive tours of Independence Hall and other buildings on Independence Square for almost 15 years. Source: [Gunderson Funeral and Cremation Care](#)
- David Wright, 92, passed away on April 6. David worked for the NPS for 28 years, including as deputy regional director of the Southeast Region and director of the Harpers Ferry Design Center. Prior to working for the NPS, he worked as the managing editor of *Parks and Recreation* magazine and helped found the National Recreation and Park Association. He was also a charter member of the Senior Executive Service. Source: [Dignity Memorial](#)

In the News

- *Hawai'i Public Radio* published [parts of two interviews](#) from the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The interviews are from 2021 with retired NPS employees Eric Andersen and Patti Welton about the importance of protecting native Hawaiian habitat. Eric worked and volunteered in Haleakalā National Park from 1985 to 1999, and Patti was a botanist in Haleakalā for over 30 years. Source: *Hawai'i Public Radio*
- *WLBT* published [an article](#) about the retirement of Pamela Junior. Pamela most recently served as the director of the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and Mississippi History Museum and also worked as a ranger with the National Park Service. Source: *WLBT*

Open for Comment

Items will stay on this list until public comment has closed.

- *Acadia National Park* - Public comment is [open until May 23](#) on a proposal to restore wetlands and a brook at Great Meadow. Source: [Spectrum News](#)
- *Amache National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open until June 23](#) on a foundation document to guide the new national park unit. Source: [Amache National Historic Site](#)
- *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* - Public comment is [open until May 12](#) on a plan to create an accessible ramp at Meyers Beach and a new trail network at Little Sand Bay. Source: [Apostle Islands National Lakeshore](#)
- *Congaree National Park* - Public comment is [open until May 21](#) on four possible solutions to the increase in violations of park dog rules on the Boardwalk Loop Trail. Source: [Congaree National Park](#)
- *Everglades National Park* - The NPS and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, have [opened public comment through April 27](#) on a plan to replace failing seawall bulkheads, boat ramps, walkways, and aging amenities at Flamingo Marina. Source: [Everglades National Park](#)
- *Ice Age National Scenic Trail* - Public comment is [open until May 10](#) on an environmental assessment and planning process for the trail segment through Rocky County, Wisconsin. Source: [Fox 47](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - The California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division has [opened public comment through May 1](#) for 2023 restoration grant applications. Joshua Tree has prepared an application requesting funds to mitigate illegal off-road driving activities in the park, including monitoring, law enforcement patrols, educational products, and fencing. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is open until April 28 on a seasonal Brooks River Corridor permit system, which was first piloted in 2022 and will again be utilized in 2023. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument* - Public comment is [open until June 30](#) on a draft Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment that will guide park operations and planning. Source: [Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - The NPS and Federal Highway Administration have opened public comment through May 7 on a plan to replace the historic Fryingpan Creek Bridge due to structural deficiencies in the existing bridge. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)

- *Pipestone National Monument* - Public comment is [open until May 3](#) on a pedestrian access trail plan. Source: [Pipestone National Monument](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - Public comment is [open until May 3](#) on a Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, which pertains to the plowing of "ice roads" for non-snowmobile vehicles. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Scientists question USFWS director qualifications* - A group of 100 scientists sent a letter to President Joe Biden and U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland with concerns over the credentials of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams. They argue that she lacks the educational background required to run the agency. She has degrees in philosophy and law. Federal law says that only someone with "scientific education and experience" can be appointed director of the service. Source: [Flathead Beacon](#)
- *Prairie chicken listed on ESA* - The lesser prairie chicken is now federally listed under the Endangered Species Act, after decades of efforts by conservationists. Texas has filed a lawsuit to block the listing, and two other states are threatening to also sue. Source: [Sky-Hi News](#)
- *First-ever national forest inventory* - The federal government has completed the first nationwide forest inventory of old growth forests and mature forests and is planning to implement a new rule that will better protect those lands from the effects of climate change, including wildfires. The vast majority of those lands are managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Source: [PBS](#)
- *\$140 million for water conservation* - On April 21, the Department of the Interior announced \$140 million for 84 projects in 15 western states to conserve over 230,000 acre-feet. The funding comes from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and annual appropriations. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$125 million for restoration* - On April 21, the Department of the Interior announced \$125 million available over the next four years for 240 locally-led projects that build flood and fire resilience, restore ecosystems, and improve recreation sites. The funding comes from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$35 million for free flow* - On April 21, the Department of the Interior announced \$35 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for 39 projects in 22 states to address outdated dams, culverts, levees, and other barriers to free-flowing rivers and streams. This will support fish populations and protect communities from flooding. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director of legislative and congressional affairs for the National Park Service, and Chris Soller, former superintendent of Fire Island National Seashore and legislative specialist for the National Park Service.

Senate Actions

The Senate was either in pro forma session or recess from April 3 through April 14.

April 18 – The Senate agreed to Senate Resolution 161 which designates April 22 through April 30, 2023 as National Park Week.

House Actions

The House was either in pro forma session or recess from April 3 through April 14.

April 18 – The House Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing entitled "Examining the Implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act and the Growing National Park Service Deferred Maintenance Backlog." Testimony was heard from Charles Sams III, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

April 19 – The House Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled "Examining the President's FY 2024 Budget Request for the Department of the Interior." Testimony was heard from the following Department of the Interior officials: Deb Haaland, Secretary; Tommy Beaudreau, Deputy Secretary; and Denise Flanagan, Director of Budget.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Acadia National Park

Teenager dies in fall

On April 14, a 17-year-old was hiking near Otter Cliff with friends when the individual fell about 25 feet. NPS staff and Mount Desert Island Search and Rescue responded and attempted life-saving measures, but they were unsuccessful. The Maine Office of Chief Medical Examiner is investigating the incident. Source: [Miami Herald](#)

Big Cypress National Preserve

Wildfire

On April 5, the preserve became aware of a wildfire in the northern area, located about one mile north of I-75 around mile marker 68. South Florida Fire and Aviation resources responded. Trails, campgrounds, and roadways in the area were closed. As of April 10, the Cypress Camp Trail Wildfire was estimated at 9,749 acres with 81% containment and

was reported to be "winding down." The source of the fire remains under investigation.

Source: Big Cypress National Preserve ([4/5](#), [4/6](#), [4/10](#)), [WGCU](#)

Blue Ridge Parkway

Rockfall

On April 9, rock fall happened near French Broad Overlook, requiring a closure from Brevard Road/N.C. 191 to the N.C. 151 entrance. The road was able to be reopened the following day. Source: [Citizen Times](#)

Cabrillo National Monument

Navy turns off popular webcam

On April 11, a webcam of San Diego Bay, posted at the park, was turned off due to a request by the U.S. Navy due to "force protection concerns" about the 24-hour monitoring of naval fleet actions. The camera's feed had over 6 million views last year.

Source: [CBS8](#)

Cape Lookout National Seashore

Horse dies in transfer

On April 12, a 6-year-old wild stallion was being transferred from the Shackleford Banks herd to the Rachel Carson Reserve in order to increase genetic diversity there. The transfer was supported by a partnership with the Foundation for Shackleford Horses and the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management's Coastal Reserve program. The stallion had been sedated and died suddenly during the transport process. Workers tried to resuscitate the individual but were unsuccessful. The NPS is conducting tests to determine a possible cause of death. Source: [The News and Observer](#)

Catoctin Mountain Park

Increased security

The park closed Park Central Road between Thurmont Vista and Camp Greentop, as well as trails to Hog Rock Overlook and Blue Ridge Summit Vista from April 6-9. The park listed the closures as "increased security measures." Source: [Catoctin Mountain Park](#)

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

Bomb plot

Starting in September 2017, a (now) 63-year-old sent the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation and several newspapers mail in which they pretended to be a member of Antifa and threatened violence if the annual Cedar Creek reenactment event was not canceled. Near the end of the October 2017 event, a homemade pipe bomb was discovered on site. It did not detonate, but the rest of the event was canceled. Authorities responded to the scene, and it was rendered safe by Virginia State Police. Further

letters continued through December 2018, forcing the 2018 event to be canceled. The individual, a former Civil War reenactor who had been removed from a cosplay group in 2014, was arrested and confessed to the letters and bomb. On April 17, they pleaded guilty for possession of the unregistered explosive device and for stalking in a U.S. district court. Source: [Military Times](#)

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

Illegal hunting

In November 2022, two law enforcement rangers were patrolling Lookout Creek for illegal hunting activity after sunset. Two individuals were witnessed leaving the park in a small boat. When the officers made contact, they first stated they had been on the Tennessee River and later admitted to hunting a location inside the park off Lookout Creek. Their weapons and an illegally harvested white-tailed deer were seized and the venison was donated to a local nonprofit organization. This month, the two individuals pleaded guilty in U.S. federal court to the illegal hunting. Source: [Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park](#)

Cumberland Island National Seashore

Lawsuit for horses

On April 12, the Georgia Equine Rescue League, Georgia Horse Council, and individuals Carol Ruckdeschel and Will Harlan filed a lawsuit against the NPS and Equine Division of the Georgia Department of Agriculture to remove horses from Cumberland Island in order to both protect the horses and native flora and fauna. Source: [The Current](#)

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Champion cyclist dies in bike accident

On April 4, a 44-year-old was struck by a car while riding a bicycle in the Presidio. The individual was immediately taken to the hospital but was later pronounced deceased. The driver of the vehicle was also hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries. The deceased individual held ten national championships for cycling. The United States Park Police is investigating the incident. Source: [MENA FM](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Trail damage

The North Kaibab Trail has been closed to all foot traffic through June 2 so that trail crews can repair and rebuild portions of the trail and North Rim pipeline. Rockfall, snow loads, and moisture have caused damage throughout the winter, making the trail impassable and dangerous. Source: [Williams-Grand Canyon News](#)

Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park

Condor mortalities

On March 9, staff from The Peregrine Fund observed a bird exhibiting signs of illness. They monitored the individual until it passed away and then collected it for testing on March 20. The bird was sent to the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory for a necropsy, which worked with the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab and U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Service Laboratory to analyze samples. On March 30, the results were found positive for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. As of April 4, two other deceased individuals were also confirmed to have had HPAI. There are five additional deceased birds, which are pending necropsy and testing. Five other birds displaying signs of illness were captured by The Peregrine Fund and sent to Liberty Wildlife in Phoenix, Arizona, for quarantine and care. One of those five individuals passed away upon arrival. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Missing person

On April 13, the vehicle of a person who was reported missing from another state was found at Cosby Campground. It had been parked there for about a week. NPS personnel conducted a hasty search that evening and gathered a larger search team the following days. Over 100 personnel from multiple agencies and organizations responded. On April 16, the individual was found deceased near Low Gap Trail. Foul play and environmental factors are not suspected in the death. The Cocke County (TN) Medical Examiner's Office will determine the person's cause of death. Source: [WATE](#), [Knox News](#)

Gulf Islands National Seashore

Storm closure

Severe weather caused part of the park to close on April 13 due to overwash, standing water, and sand on the roadways. Those areas were able to be reopened the following day. Source: [Gulf Islands National Seashore](#)

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Hiker and dog rescued

On April 9, a 27-year-old hiker and their dog were hiking on the Loudon Heights Trail when the individual became disoriented and could not find the main trail. The hiker was able to contact emergency response, who were able to see the individual's headlamp and speak to them via cellphone, but could not reach their location due to the steep, densely-wooded terrain. Maryland State Police Aviation Command's helicopter was called and was able to lower a rescue technician to the individual. They then lifted the hiker and dog into the aircraft and flew them to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Advanced Training Facility. An ambulance crew evaluated the individual and helped arrange a pick-up. Source: [Fox News](#)

Homestead National Historical Park

Bomb threat

On April 11, a person called a business on Southwest 89th Road in Beatrice, Nebraska, with a bomb threat and report that a contract employee was coming to the site with a firearm. Gage County Sheriff's Office dispatched to the business. Local law enforcement recommended to the park, located three miles south of the original location, go into lockdown. The park put a note on the door that they were on lockdown and employees monitored cameras for suspicious activity. The contract employee was located working at another plant half a mile away and was found to be behaving normally with no concerns from management. The individual was interviewed and did not have a firearm. The lockdown was lifted within two hours. The Sheriff's Office is investigating the original call reporting the incident. Source: [Beatrice Daily Sun](#)

Independence National Historical Park

Graffiti

The statue of Robert Morris was recently graffitied with the words "human trafficker" [sic] in indelible ink. The park attempted to use nonabrasive chemicals to remove the graffiti, but it only lightened the words. They then contracted with a professional material conservator to apply laser treatment to remove the graffiti, but it also only lightened the words. They are considering other methods. Source: [The Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

Indiana Dunes National Park

Streaker under influence

On April 11, a person answered their front door and found a 40-year-old standing on the doorstep, naked. The individual then turned and ran toward Pinhook Bog, a location in the park. La Porte County (IN) Police officers responded to the area and found the individual still naked, with brown work boots on. They provided the individual with a trash bag to use as a body covering. During an interview with the officers, the individual stated they were looking for a cell phone they had just acquired and that they were under the influence of methamphetamine. The individual was arrested. A status hearing is scheduled for May 19. Source: [Hometown News Now](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Deceased hiker

On April 5, a 64-year-old was found unresponsive on "a remote hiking trail" in the park. NPS staff responded to the scene and determined the individual was deceased. A preliminary investigation indicated that they suffered a medical emergency while hiking and no signs of foul play were located. The Riverside County Sheriff's Deputies responded and the Coroner's Bureau took over the investigation. Source: [Riverside County Sheriff](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Vehicle thefts

On March 8, several thefts from cars were made at the Hemingway parking lot. Later that day, two suspects used stolen credit cards from vehicle owners in a store in Palm Desert, California. Security footage of the suspects leaving the establishment have been provided to the public and the park is looking for tips. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

Trail flood recovery

The Chilkoot Trail was damaged heavily in October 2022, particularly from Dyea to Sheep Camp. The trail is co-managed by the NPS and Parks Canada. The Canadian side of the trail was not damaged as much as the American side, and is expected to be open for hiking on June 1. The NPS has reported they will need to replace two major bridges on the lower Taiya River and the earliest opening date for the American side of the trail is August 1. The extent of the damage is not yet known and the opening date may be pushed back. Source: [West Coast Traveler](#)

Olympic National Park

Storm damage

On April 13, the park announced the immediate closure of North Shore Quinault Road just north of the Quinault River bridge. The road was damaged by a storm in November 2021 and “continued settling” of the road surface has now made it impassable to vehicles. Source: [Peninsula Daily News](#)

Olympic National Park

Missing person located

On April 14, a 73-year-old was reported as missing in the park. The individual had been last seen leaving the Kalaloch Lodge at 9pm. The individual was known to have short-term memory loss. The Washington State Patrol issued a “Silver Alert” to be on the look out for their rental car. On April 15, the individual was located inside the park. Source: [Fox 13](#)

President's Park (White House)

Toddler breaches security

On April 18, a toddler crawled between the gaps in the fence on the north side of the White House. The child's parents were on the other side of the fence on Pennsylvania Avenue and were unable to retrieve them. An alarm went off and Secret Service officers were able to reunite the child with their parents. Source: [ABC 10 News](#)

Rock Creek Park

Closure for metal canisters

On April 18, an NPS employee found two "metal canisters" in a large mound of soil in Fort Totten Park, which caused the park to be closed temporarily for the U.S. Army to respond and remove the canisters. The mound of soil looked like it had been "pushed into the park from the road." The Army will investigate the canisters and its contents at Marine Corps Base Quantico. The area around the discovery will remain partially closed out of an abundance of caution until more is learned about the canisters. Fort Totten was built during the Civil War and there is concern about the potential for unexploded ordnances.

Source: [Miami Herald](#)

Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway

Flooding

On April 14, the NPS closed Osceola Landing and other access points along the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers temporarily due to flooding. As of April 23, they are still closed and will reopen when conditions are safer. Source: [Pioneer Press](#)

Shenandoah National Park

Vandalism and littering

The park said that it has had an increase in vandalism and litter across the park, particularly pet waste. The park is one of the few to allow dogs on trail and said that they hope problems can be addressed so that dogs can continue to be allowed on trails.

Source: [WHSV](#)

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

CUA lawsuit

On April 6, Riverside Canoes filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan for asking them to get a commercial use authorization to continue operating their business on the Platte River. The business has been operating since the 1970s. The federal government looked toward condemning the property, and after over a decade of legal fights, they reached an agreement in 1992 that acknowledged the business could retain ownership and would continue their business in the same manner. In 2021, the park told the business it would need to arrange a commercial use authorization to continue operating. The Department of the Interior argues that the 1992 agreement does not give the business permission to solicit business in the park. Source:

[MLive](#)

U.S. Park Police

Lawsuit award

On July 11, 2015, a Black Secret Service agent was detained by a U.S. Park Police officer while sitting in a vehicle before dawn on the shoulder of the Baltimore-Washington

Parkway, waiting to lead a motorcade to protect the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The officer claimed it was a “welfare check,” and when the officer noticed a gun in its holster on the passenger seat, the officer drew their gun and yelled, “Don’t touch the gun.” The agent rolled down the window, stated they were a Secret Service agent, and showed identification. The officer took the agent’s firearm, yelled at the agent to “shut the f’ up,” and then returned to their patrol vehicle. The agent was detained until a second U.S. Park Police officer arrived on scene. The second officer questioned the agent why their firearm had been on the passenger seat. The motorcade passed the scene and the second officer “mockingly waved [their hand]...at the motorcade as it passed.” A U.S. Park Police sergeant arrived and talked to the agent’s supervisor on the phone and the agent was released.

Within minutes of being released, the agent was pulled over again by the second officer, who asked for the agent’s license and registration. The agent was still on the phone with their supervisor and the officer let the individual go without a citation.

Further complicating the situation, the first officer and the agent had had an incident in 2009 when the agent helped detain the officer (off-duty) during a fistfight with a cab driver outside a bar.

A court found that the two U.S. Park Police officers violated the agent’s Fourth Amendment rights by prolonging the initial stop without justification and for initiating a second, unjustified stop. The agent was awarded \$205,000 in compensatory damages and \$525,000 in punitive damages. This decision was appealed and the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the award. An attorney for the officers said that they will likely appeal this decision. The special agent is now retired from the Secret Service. Source: [Atlanta Black Star](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - The winter storm damage to the Harkers Island ferry dock (see [1/11/23 Coalition Report](#)) has been repaired enough to allow passengers to disembark onto the dock, rather than the beach. The dock is still under repair and is not yet accessible for those in wheelchairs. There is no estimated date for repairs to be finished. Source: [WITN](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* – On March 24, the park closed the overflow parking lot at Lock 29 in Peninsula to allow the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad operations to move temporarily there due to ongoing erosion issues along the tracks to the north (ongoing since October 2022, most recently reported in the [3/8/23 Coalition Report](#)). The lot will be closed through the end of the year. The railroad will begin rides from Akron to Peninsula starting on May 5. The park is working with Peninsula and local businesses on parking solutions. Source: [Akron Beacon Journal](#)
- *Tuzigoot National Monument* – The monument reopened to the public on April 9

after a closure on April 2 due to the Tuzigoot Fire (see [4/5/23 Coalition Report](#)). The fire is now 100% contained at 106 acres. As of April 24, the Tavaschi Marsh and all trails into the marsh remained closed for public safety. Source: [Tuzigoot National Monument](#)

- *U.S. Park Police* - The Justice Department has opened a federal civil rights investigation regarding the officer shooting of a 17-year-old on March 18 (see [3/22/23 Coalition Report](#)). The body cam footage was released publicly on April 4 (see [4/5/23 Coalition Report](#)). The video is the first body cam footage released by a federal law enforcement agency. The officer is on paid administrative leave. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- *U.S. Park Police* - On April 21, the family of 25-year-old Bijan Ghaisar agreed to settle a wrongful death lawsuit against the federal government for \$5 million. In 2017, Bijan was shot five times by two U.S. Park Police officers, who had chased his car on George Washington Memorial Parkway after his vehicle was rear-ended. Bijan died 10 days later. The lawsuit claimed that the officers used excessive force. Criminal charges against the officers were ultimately dropped. Source: [The New York Times](#)

Acknowledgments

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Theresa Manthripragada, Steve Pittleman, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann, Chris Soller
- Issue contributors: Lesli Kunkle Ellis, Tom Haraden, David Manski, Mike Murray, Bill Waters

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to report@protectnps.org.

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The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that "studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service."

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