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## **The Coalition Report**

### **Wednesday, August 9, 2023**

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#### **Coalition Actions**

Through the National Parks Second Century Action Committee, the Coalition joined in a [letter](#) to the House Appropriations Committee opposing its proposed funding cuts of approximately \$436 million for the National Park Service as contained in the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bill.

The Coalition joined with 46 organizations in a [letter](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency requesting prompt action on the Regional Haze Round 2 State Implementation Plans that have been submitted.

We issued a [press release](#) in support of the designation of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley National Monument.

The Coalition provided detailed [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management on its proposed rule on rights-of-way, leasing, and operations for renewable energy on its lands.

We submitted detailed [comments](#) on the Bandelier National Monument proposed air tour management plan and draft environmental assessment.

The Coalition, along with eight other organizations, submitted a [letter](#) to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and NPS Director Chuck Sams on the use of e-bikes in units of the National Park System. The letter urges NPS to respond to public comments on the programmatic environmental assessment and issue a revised and improved final PEA. The letter also requests Secretarial Order 3376, which permits e-bike where regular bikes are allowed, be

rescinded.

### 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.*

*Editor note: In the 7/26/23 Coalition Report, we published the incorrect term for 250th anniversary (and the associated grants being administered by the Historic Preservation Fund for the U.S.' 250th anniversary). The correct term is "semiquincentennial." Thanks to Bill Fink for bringing this to our attention.*

- *New national monument* - On August 8, President Joe Biden designated Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni - Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument. The monument consists of three distinct areas north and south of Grand Canyon National Park, totaling 917,618 acres. It will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$44 million for climate resilience* - On August 8, the Department of the Interior announced \$44 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding for 43 climate resilience projects in national park units across 39 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *NPS agreement with NRPA* - The National Park Service has signed a new agreement with the National Recreation and Park Association to encourage and promote conservation, health and wellness, and equitable and accessible recreational opportunities. Source: [Los Alamos Daily Post](#)
- *"At risk" national parks* - The Environment America Research and Policy Center published a report on the national parks they believe are most "at risk," including Grand Canyon National Park, Big Bend National Park, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, and Yellowstone National Park. Source: [Environment America](#)
- *Reduced carbon footprint in parks* - *National Geographic* published [an article](#) about the efforts of some national park units to lessen their carbon footprint, including Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the five parks associated with Lake Superior, many Alaska and Colorado parks, Everglades National Park, and Grand Canyon National Park. Source: *National Geographic*
- *Art in the parks* - *Art & Object* published [an article](#) about the intersection of art and national parks, including the influence of artists in inspiring the national park concept, today's artist-in-residence programs, and the efforts of Weir Farm National

Historical Park to honor American impressionism. Source: *Art & Object*

- "*Creepiest unsolved mysteries*" in national parks - On August 7, *Outside* published [an article](#) with this title, which highlights unsolved incidents in Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Everglades, Death Valley, Great Smoky Mountains, and Mount Rainier. Source: *Outside*

### **Around the Parks**

*Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.*

- *Acadia National Park* - Two Acadia staff have received national awards recently for their work. Rebecca Cole-Will, chief of resource management, received the National Appleman-Judd-Lewis Award for Cultural Resource Management for her work developing and implementing a co-stewardship plan with local Tribes. Keith Johnston, chief of facility management, received the National Facilities Manager of the Year Award for his efforts redesigning the entrance to Cadillac Mountain to allow for the management of a reservation system. Source: [Mount Desert Islander](#)
- *American Battlefield Protection Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On July 26, the NPS announced \$1,212,067 in Preservation Planning Grants for 10 recipients. On July 27, they announced \$2,218,056 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to protect 238 acres across seven battlefields in four states. Source: National Park Service Office of Communications ([7/26](#), [7/27](#))
- *Boston National Historical Park* - On July 31, the park began a restoration of the Bunker Hill Monument's pyramidion (the top of the obelisk). The monument may experience closures during the restoration. The project is expected to be complete by the end of the year. Source: [Boston National Historical Park](#)
- *Cane River Creole National Historical Park* - On August 14, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development began a project to repair Highway 119. A section of the highway has been closed since 2018 due to an embankment slide that destabilized the roadway. The Magnolia Plantation unit of the park will be closed throughout the project, which is expected to take "at least two months." Source: [Cane River Creole National Historical Park](#)
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - The Eastham (MA) select board and town administrator are submitting a letter to the NPS that argues the park is violating a 2022 agreement with the town that reserves free Nauset Light Beach parking for local residents. Park staff have said that they are following the agreement, but that the parking spaces reserved for residents are often full, and that remaining spaces are set aside for fee-paying visitors, regardless of residence. The select board is considering legal action if the situation is not resolved in their favor. Source: [The Provincetown Independent](#)

- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - *The New York Times* published [an article](#) about the history and controversy surrounding the leasing of historic dune shacks at Truro and Provincetown. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - On July 23, two visitors found a Megalodon fossil tooth on the beach at South Core Banks, "not far from the Cape Lookout Lighthouse." Megalodon teeth are rarely found on the North Carolina barrier islands due to frequently shifting coastal currents. The tooth was turned into the NPS. Source: [Miami Herald](#), [Cape Lookout National Seashore Facebook page](#)
- *Colonial National Historical Park* - On August 14, construction will start on a rehabilitation project on the Colonial Parkway. The \$123 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and implemented by the Wagman/JMT Design Build Team. The first phase of construction will include closure of the parkway from Ballard Street in Yorktown to Fusiliers Road, the Route 17 access ramps, and the parkway from Route 199 (south of the Williamsburg Tunnel) to and including the tunnel. The project will be completed in phases over the next three years. Source: [Colonial National Historical Park](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - On July 27, the park held a ribbon cutting for a new pedestrian bridge that connects the Towpath Trail and the Cuyahoga River, adjacent to the Boston Mill Visitor Center. Funding was provided by the Summit County (OH) Engineer's Office and the federal government. Source: [Ideastream Public Media](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - The Yale School of Management published [an article](#) about one of its graduate students, Katya Wendt, who is interning in the park under the NPS' Business Management Group. She and another intern are "doing cost-benefit analyses, building tools for data manipulation, and creating frameworks for making building utilization decisions." Source: Yale School of Management
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - *Alaska Public Media* published [an article](#) about the expansion of spruce beetles into the park, killing many spruce trees. The beetles are native to the Alaska, but have previously never populated in large numbers in the Denali area. The NPS is monitoring the situation and has thus far stated that they will let the natural progression occur. Scientists suspect the increase in beetles is related to warming summer temperatures. Source: *Alaska Public Media*
- *Dinosaur National Monument* - The park received \$200,000 in Great American Outdoors Act funding to restore the historic Wade and Curtis Cabin, located near the boat ramp at the head of Gates of Lodore. After interior and exterior repairs are complete, exhibits will be installed. The cabin is expected to open as "an interpretive facility," starting in 2025. The work is being performed by a Maintenance Action Team from the Historic Preservation Training Center. Source:

### [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park* - Hannah Murray, a second grader at Moncks Corner Elementary School, received the Southeast Region Hartzog Impact Award for Youth and Young Adults for her efforts volunteering at Fort Moultrie. Source: [ABC News 4](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - Glacier National Park Conservancy has received a \$493,200 Montana Historic Preservation Grant for preservation of the Wheeler Cabin, located at the head of Lake McDonald. The grant will allow for restoration and improvements to the property, which the NPS acquired from the Wheeler family in 2015. The work is expected to be completed in 2024. Source: [Hungry Horse News](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - *The Colorado Sun* published [an article](#) that explains, in layman's terms, the importance of Lake Powell and the future challenges to meeting its goals due to climate change and dropping water levels. Source: *The Colorado Sun*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - A new study published in *Water Resources Research* shows the extent to which climate change has affected the Colorado River. According to the study, the basin has lost 32.5 million acre-feet since 2000 and the river's flow has decreased 10.3% due to higher temperatures (and 20% overall since 2000). Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - *The New York Times* published [an article](#) about the park's preventive search and rescue program, which has successfully lessened search and rescue incidents, even as visitation has increased. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* - *The Alamosa News* published [an interview](#) with new superintendent Andrea Compton. Source: *Alamosa News*
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On July 31, the park began a rehabilitation project on the Little River Trail. Work is expected to continue through September 7 and some trail and campsite closures are expected. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On July 26, the park announced that the former Boulder Harbor boat ramp will be converted to the Boulder Harbor Walking Trail. The ramp has been closed since June 2021 due to low water levels. Water levels have risen recently, creating dangers to vehicles, and the area is now open only for walking. Source: [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#)
- *Moore's Creek National Battlefield* - The park recently completed a project to restore

the Bridge Monument and the Grady Monument. The work was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and completed by a Maintenance Action Team from the Historic Preservation Training Center. Source: [Moores Creek National Battlefield](#)

- *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On August 7, the NPS announced \$3.4 million in grants to 16 Tribes and 28 museums to assist in the consultation, documentation, and repatriation of ancestral remains and cultural items. It is the largest amount of grant funding awarded since the program began in 1994. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Olympic National Park - The Seattle Times* published [an article](#) about the threat of coastal erosion on the Kalaloch Lodge and important archaeological sites. Source: *The Seattle Times*
- *Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument* - On August 1, the park completed a repair project on the Bates Well Road. The road had been closed since April. Pozo Nuevo Road from the intersection with North Puerto Blanco road, extending north to the intersection with Bates Well Road, is now closed as crews work to repair that road bed. Source: [Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument](#)
- *Pea Ridge National Military Park* - On August 5, the park held a celebration to commemorate a number of accomplishments, including the donation of the historic Williams Hollow Farm by The Conservation Fund, completion of the Highway 62 realignment project, and designation of the Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail. Source: [Pea Ridge National Military Park](#), [Arkansas Online](#)
- *Pinnacles National Park* - *Benito Link* published [an article](#) about the limited amount of parking in the park and the challenges it creates, given growing visitation. Source: *Benito Link*
- *Rainbow Bridge National Monument* - For the first time since 2021, boat tours to Rainbow Bridge have resumed. They have been suspended since 2021 due to low water levels. The only other way to visit the park is via a very strenuous 30-mile round-trip hike. Source: [KUER](#)
- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - On July 29, the park opened the day use area and a new motorized boat launch at Osceola Landing. The NPS recently completed a project to increase pedestrian and boating safety, improve traffic flow, and upgrade visitor facilities. The upgrades were completed by Nordic Group, Inc. Source: [Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway](#)
- *San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park* - On July 26, the NPS signed a lease with the Mare Island Co. to use 1,300 feet of seawall to house four of its historic ships for the next three to four years while Hyde Street Pier is replaced. The

ships that are expected to be moved are the *Balclutha*, *C.A. Thayer*, *Hercules*, and *Epplerton Hall*. The ships will be moved late this year and early next year. The park is hoping to provide some public access to ships at Mare Island. Source: [Times-Herald](#)

- *San Juan Island National Historical Park* - *The Seattle Times* published [an article](#) about the increase of tourism related to photographing the red fox at American Camp and the resulting conflicts between visitors and local residents. Source: *The Seattle Times*
- *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument* - *8 News Now* published [an article](#) about the proposed Greenlink West transmission line, which would cross the national monument. Protectors of Tule Springs has voiced opposition to the project, arguing that the Bureau of Land Management's claims that the line will not affect the monument are disingenuous and not accurately portraying the infrastructure planned for the region. Source: *8 News Now*
- *Valley Forge National Historical Park* - The park's Visual Outdoor Inspiring Landscape Assistant volunteer team was selected as the 2022 Region 1 George and Helen Hartzog Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service in the team category. The group has planted native plants and taken care of young trees throughout the park, and they have installed interpretive signage about pollinators and native plants. Source: [Valley Forge National Historical Park](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - On July 28, the NPS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact for its Caneel Bay Redevelopment and Management Environmental Assessment. Caneel Bay's retained use estate agreement will expire on September 30, and the redevelopment plan outlines the future plan for commercial overnight accommodations, public beach access, conservation, interpretation, and partnership opportunities. Source: [Virgin Islands National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - Employees in the park voted 66-15 to form a union, Federal Local 465 of the National Federation of Federal Employees. Source: [Casper Star Tribune](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - From August 14-18, the park, in coordination with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Custer Gallatin National Forest, will resume the Soda Butte Creek native fish restoration project near the northeast entrance for the first time since 2016. Nonnative brook trout, which are a threat to native Yellowstone cutthroat trout and the greater Lamar River watershed, were recently discovered again in the drainage. The creek will be closed to the public while scientists apply a piscicide. Cutthroat trout will be removed via electroshocking and transported to upper tributaries ahead of time, then reintroduced after the piscicide treatment. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

- *Yosemite National Park* - A 93-year-old became the oldest individual to summit Half Dome. Source: [ABC 3340 News](#)

## **Personnel Changes**

- *Dry Tortugas National Park* - James Crutchfield was selected as the park manager. James has 12 years of NPS experience, most recently as the Historic Preservation Training Center monument section manager. He starts his new position on August 13. Source: [Dry Tortugas National Park](#)
- *Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site, Gloria Dei Church National Historic Site, Independence National Historical Park, Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial* - Lauren Gurniewicz was selected as chief of interpretation and education. Lauren has worked for the NPS for 23 years, most recently as the parks' deputy chief of interpretation and education. She starts her new role on August 13. Source: [Edgar Allen Poe National Historic Site](#)
- *Fire and Aviation Management* - Mike Schell was selected as the training program manager for the NPS Branch of Structural Fire. Mike has over 30 years of firefighting experience. He most recently served as the operations program manager for the NPS' structural fire protection and suppression program. Source: [NPS Fire and Aviation Management](#)
- *Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens* - Sheena Foster was selected as the organization's executive director. Sheena also worked for the NPS at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park 21 years ago. Source: [Friends of Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Rainbow Bridge National Monument* - Jake Ohlson was selected as the deputy superintendent. Jake has 20 years of NPS experience, most recently as the chief of maintenance at Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - Jane Rodgers was selected as the superintendent. Jane has 23 years of NPS experience, most recently as Joshua Tree's chief of science and resource stewardship and the park's acting superintendent. She will begin her new role on August 13. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)

## **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**

- Richard Michael Blaney, 79, passed away on July 18. Michael worked at Acadia



National Park from 1962 until his retirement in 2009. His final role for the park was the land resource specialist. Source: [Mount Desert Islander](#), David Manski

- Bernard "Bern" C. Collins, 84, passed away on August 5. Bern worked for the NPS in Washington, D.C., with a focus on the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system. Source: [Sanders Funeral and Cremation Service](#)
- Elsie M. Ferran Hays, 92, passed away on July 1. Elsie was a long time employee of the former Southwest Regional Office, retiring in 1992. Source: [Legacy/Santa Fe New Mexican](#), David Donohue
- Robert "Bob" Olli, 71, passed away on August 1. Bob worked at Isle Royale National Park for two different career stints. Source: [The Daily Mining Gazette](#)

### **In the News**

- Adam Bucki was featured in [an essay](#) in the *Anchorage Daily News* about a mission to retrieve a research cache left on the Fireweed Rock Glacier in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve that had been abandoned 20 years prior. Adam previously worked at Denali National Park and Preserve for a time. Source: *Anchorage Daily News*

### **Open for Comment**

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

- *Appalachian National Scenic Trail* - Public comment is [open through August 31](#) on a visitor use management plan for the Virginia Triple Crown segment of the Appalachian Trail. Source: [Appalachian National Scenic Trail](#)
- *Bandelier National Monument* – Public comment is [open through August 11](#) on an Air Tour Management Plan for the park. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - Public comment is [open through August 31](#) on a proposal to standardize campground reservations and fees, and move full moon hike registration online. Source: [Bryce Canyon National Park](#)
- *Buck Island National Monument* – Public comment is open through August 26 on a proposal to increase anchoring and mooring fees in order to move the system online. Comments may be made by email, mail, or phone. Source: [Buck Island National Monument](#)
- *César E. Chávez National Monument* - Public comment is [open through August 23](#) on an accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Source: [César E. Chávez National Monument](#)

- *George Rogers Clark National Historical Park* – Public comment is [open through August 18](#) on an accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Source: [George Rogers Clark National Historical Park](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - Public comment is [open through September 4](#) on a plan to change backpacking permit fees. Source: [Snow Brains](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - Public comment is [open through September 26](#) on a draft Wilderness Stewardship Plan. Source: [Isle Royale National Park](#)
- *Japanese American Confinement Grant Program* (an NPS-administered program) – Public comment is [open through September 15](#) on the guidelines and criteria for the newly-established Norman Y. Mineta Japanese American Confinement Education Grant Program. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - Public comment is [open through August 25](#) on a Land and River Trails Management Plan. A [storymap](#) and [informational video](#) for the project are available. Source: [Mammoth Cave National Park](#)
- *Mesa Verde National Park, Yucca House National Monument* – Public comment is [open through August 11](#) on a proposed fire management plan for the two parks. Source: [Mesa Verde National Park](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* – Public comment is [open through August 9](#) on a proposed framework for addressing future road and bridge paving and rehabilitation projects on the parkway. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)
- *National Capital Parks – East* – Public comment is [open through August 16](#) on a draft damage assessment plan for the restoration of the Anacostia River. The plan is on behalf of the the Anacostia River Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Trustees, which include the Department of Commerce, represented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the Department of the Interior, represented by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the Government of the District of Columbia, represented by the Department of Energy and Environment. The plan will account for injuries to natural resources resulting from the release of hazardous substances into the river. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* – Public comment is [open through August 19](#) on proposed application fees for Special Use Permits for construction and other activities in the park. Source: [Rock Creek Park](#)
- *San Juan National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through September 5](#) on a free-ranging cat management plan. Source: [San Juan National Historic Site](#)

- *Southeast Regional Office* - Public comment is [open through August 31](#) on the consideration of the Great River Road, located on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Louisiana, to be a National Historic Landmark District. Source: [The Eunice News](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - Public comment has been extended to stay [open through August 25](#) on a proposal by the Custer Gallatin National Forest and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to remove nonnative rainbow trout and hybridized cutthroat trout from the Buffalo Creek drainage and reintroduce Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Source: [Buckrail](#), [Yellowstone National Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* – A second round of public comments is [open through September 6](#) on a Visitor Access Management Plan. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Zion National Park* - Public comment is [open through August 31](#) on proposed changes to campground fees and the fees and reservation system associated with wilderness recreation permits. Source: [Zion National Park](#)

### **Other Department of the Interior News**

- *\$195 million for water protection* - On August 7, the Department of the Interior announced \$195 million in funding available for projects related to water resilience, watershed management, and aquatic ecosystem protection. The funding comes from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's WaterSMART program, Inflation Reduction Act, and annual appropriations. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$152 million for reliable drinking water* - On July 27, the Department of the Interior announced \$152 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding awarded for six projects in three states for water storage and conveyance projects. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Proposed protections for Texas mussels* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed placing the Salina mucket and Mexican fawnsfoot mussels, both native to the Rio Grande River in western and southern Texas, on the endangered species list. Public comments on the proposal are open through September 25. Source: [Texas Public Radio](#)

### **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.*

## **New Public Laws**

**July 25** – The president signed into law S. 111, to require each agency, in providing notice of a rulemaking, to include a link to a 100-word plain language summary of the proposed rule (Public Law 118–9).

## **Senate Actions**

**July 27** – The Senate passed, by a vote of 86 yeas to 11 nays, H.R. 2670, to authorize appropriations for Fiscal Year 2024 for military activities and construction by the Department of Defense, for defense activities of the Department of Energy, and to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year. The bill now goes to a conference committee between the Senate and the House to resolve the differences in the two versions of the bill. The final text of H.R. 2670, as passed by the Senate, was unavailable as of the time for this Report. Language concerning the National Park Service is typically found in this bill. Any provisions affecting the National Park Service will be noted in a subsequent report.

**July 27** – The Committee on Appropriations ordered favorably reported an original bill (which was later given the number S. 2605 when the bill was introduced in the Senate) entitled "Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act," among other appropriation bills reported at the same markup.

A total of \$3.456 billion is appropriated in the bill for the National Park Service in FY 2024, which is \$18.3 million below the FY 2023 enacted level and \$307.5 million below the president's budget request. The funding reductions in the Senate bill are not as extensive as those in the House-reported bill (see House action on H.R. 4821 on July 19, below), but will result in reductions in parks and programs from FY 2023 due to \$120 million in fixed costs (annual federal pay raise, increased cost of utilities and rent, etc.) needing to be absorbed within the appropriation.

Included in the Senate bill are the following funding levels for the National Park Service in FY 2024:

Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) – The bill provides \$2.923 billion, which is \$11.5 million more than the FY 2023 appropriation. Within the total appropriation for this account, the Senate provided the following:

- \$9.3 million for new parks and parks with new responsibilities.
- An additional \$500,000 for the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers program above the FY 2023 level of \$5 million.
- \$11.6 million for Everglades restoration.
- \$10 million for the National Park Foundation to be used for matching grants for projects to benefit the National Park System.

National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) – The bill provides \$93.4 million, which is \$921,000 more than the FY 2023 appropriation. Within this amount, the bill provides the

following:

- \$13 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.
- \$3.3 million for the Chesapeake Gateways and Trails program.
- \$3.4 million for Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Grants.
- \$4.65 million for Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants.
- \$3 million for American Indian and Native Hawaiian Art and Culture Grants.
- \$30.8 million for the National Heritage Area Program.

Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) – The bill provides \$195.1 million, which is \$9.3 million less than the FY 2023 appropriation. Within this amount is the following:

- \$62.1 million for grants to State Historic Preservation Offices.
- \$23 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.
- \$24 million for African American Civil Rights grants.
- \$26.5 million for Save America’s Treasures grants.
- \$12.5 million for the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants for rural villages and downtown areas.
- \$11 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities grants.
- \$5 million for History of equal rights grants.
- \$1.25 million for underrepresented communities’ grants.
- \$19.7 million for congressionally directed spending for historic preservation projects.
- \$10 million for the Semiquincentennial Grants to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the country’s founding.

Construction – The bill provides \$232.8 million, which is \$6.9 million less than the FY 2023 appropriation.

Centennial Challenge – The bill provides \$15 million for the Centennial Challenge matching grant program, which is the same as the FY 2023 appropriation. Along with these funding levels, the bill includes the following authorizations and limitations:

- Sec. 116, to authorize the transfer of 4.4 acres from the NPS for purposes of the Long Bridge project providing access over the Potomac River in the District of Columbia and Virginia.
- Sec. 125, to increase the amount of funding available for the purposes of the development of Ebey’s Landing National Historic Reserve.
- Sec. 421, to authorize the recreation fee authority for an additional year through October 1, 2025.
- Sec. 428, to provide certain limitations on oil and gas development near Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

In addition to the discretionary appropriations noted above, the bill includes a list of projects that will receive the \$1.3 billion in annual mandatory appropriations for deferred maintenance projects funded by the Legacy Restoration Fund of the Great American Outdoors Act.

The bill also appropriates \$456.8 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the NPS to be allocated as follows:

- \$61.8 million for federal land acquisition in parks.
- \$14.5 million for acquisition administration.
- \$9 million for recreation access.
- \$5 million for emergencies, hardships, relocations, and deficiencies.
- \$8.4 million for inholdings, donations, and exchanges.
- \$200 million for state conservation formula assistance grants.
- \$125 million for Outdoor Recreation Legacy competitive grants.
- \$13.3 million for state conservation grants administration.
- \$20 million for American Battlefield Protection Program grants.

**July 28 – September 5** – The Senate will convene between these dates for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, during its annual summer recess.

### **House Actions**

**July 14 (update since last Report)** – The House passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, H.R. 2670, by a vote of 219 yeas to 210 nays. Included in this bill were the following of interest to the National Park Service:

- Div. B, Title XXVII, Subtitle C, Sec. 2834, to authorize the conveyance to the state of AR by the secretary of the army, of approximately 21 acres of land within Hot Springs National Park for lands that comprise facilities previously occupied by the Army and Navy General Hospital. The governor of Arkansas must submit a request for the conveyance within five years of the date of the enactment of the act.
- Div. B, Title XXVII, Subtitle F, Sec. 2864, to designate the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Georgia. The act specifies that the museum shall not be included as a unit of the National Park System.

**July 19 (update)** – The Committee on Appropriations held a markup on H.R. 4821, the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies for FY 2024. The bill was ordered reported, as amended.

A total of \$3.039 billion is appropriated in the bill for the National Park Service in FY 2024, which is \$436.25 million (13%) below the FY 2023 enacted level and \$725.5 million below the president's budget request. Because of pressure from members of the House who were unhappy that federal spending was not reduced even further than the amount that was part of the agreement to get the debt ceiling increased earlier this summer in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), total federal spending in all House appropriations bills was cut more than required by the IRA, resulting in these extensive funding reductions for FY 2024. The Senate version of the same bill (see Senate action on S. 2605 on July 27, above) does not make similar dramatic reductions in funding, which likely portends some difficult discussions between the Senate and House members prior to final funding levels

being enacted.

Included in the House bill are the following funding levels for the National Park Service in FY 2024:

Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) – The bill provides \$2.654 billion, which is \$269 million less than the FY 2023 appropriation. This amount would require that \$120 million in fixed costs (annual federal pay raise, increased cost of utilities and rent, etc.) would have to be absorbed within the final appropriation provided. Within the total appropriation for this account, the House provided the following:

- \$5.3 million for the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers program.
- \$18.8 million for the National Trails System.
- \$9.1 million for the National Networks.
- \$15 million for the National Park Foundation to be used for matching grants for projects to benefit the National Park System.
- \$11.6 million for Everglades Restoration.

National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) – The bill provides \$80 million, which is \$12.5 million less than the FY 2023 appropriation. Within this amount, is the following:

- \$13 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.
- \$3 million for the Chesapeake Gateways and Trails program.
- \$3.4 million for Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Grants.
- \$4.65 million for Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants.
- \$2.75 million for American Indian and Native Hawaiian Art and Culture Grants.
- \$30.3 million for the National Heritage Area Program.

Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) – The bill provides \$175.4 million, which is \$29.1 million less than the FY 23 appropriation. Within this amount is the following:

- \$62.1 million for grants to State Historic Preservation Offices.
- \$23 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.
- \$30.2 million for competitive grants.
- \$26.5 million for Save America’s Treasures Grants.
- \$12 million for the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants for rural villages and downtown areas.
- \$11 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- \$10 million for the Semiquincentennial Grants to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the country’s founding.

Construction – The bill provides \$114.6 million, which is \$125.3 million less the FY 2-23 appropriation.

Centennial Challenge – The bill provides \$15 million for the Centennial Challenge matching grant program, which is the same as the FY 23 appropriation. Along with these funding levels, the bill includes the following authorizations and funding prohibitions:

- Sec. 421, to authorize the recreation fee authority for an additional year through October 1, 2025.
- Sec. 450, to prohibit funds from being used to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement or to implement, administer, or enforce the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan.
- Sec. 478, to prohibit funds for the National Park Service's vehicle reservation system at Glacier National Park.
- Sec. 479, to prohibit the Department of the Interior from establishing a bison working group.
- Sec. 481, to prevent the Administration from banning lead ammunition and fishing tackle on federal lands or waters for hunting or fishing activities unless certain conditions are met.
- Sec. 491, to require the Secretary of the Interior to reissue the final rule regarding the delisting of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears under the Endangered Species Act.
- Sec. 492, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement on oil and gas development within the Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida.

In addition to the discretionary appropriations noted above, the bill includes a list of projects that will receive the \$1.3 billion in annual mandatory appropriations for deferred maintenance projects funded by the Legacy Restoration Fund of the Great American Outdoors Act.

The bill also appropriates \$429.1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to the NPS to be allocated as follows:

- \$62.9 million for federal land acquisition in parks.
- \$14.5 million for acquisition administration.
- \$12 million for recreation access.
- \$5 million for emergencies, hardships, relocations, and deficiencies.
- \$11 million for inholdings, donations, and exchanges.
- \$167.2 million for state conservation formula assistance grants.
- \$125 million for Outdoor Recreation Legacy competitive grants.
- \$13.3 million for state conservation grants administration.
- \$20 million for American Battlefield Protection Program grants.

**July 20 (update)** – The House passed H.R. 3935, to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize and improve the Federal Aviation Administration and other civil aviation programs, by a vote of 351 yeas to 69 nays. Included in this bill were the following of interest to the National Park Service:

- Sec. 261, which would require the Administrator of the FAA and the Director of the National Park Service to consult with the National Parks Overflights Advisory Group and consider all advice, information, and recommendations they provide when establishing an air tour management plan for a national park or tribal lands.



- Sec. 853, which expresses the sense of Congress that the Federal Aviation Administration should welcome the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, such as drones, to bolster and augment traditional manual inspection, survey, and maintenance operations, including operations that relate to harmful algal blooms, transportation infrastructure, national parks, and telecommunications infrastructure, among other things.

**July 26** – The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on the following bills, among others:

- H.R. 1318, to authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the women’s suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.
- H.R. 2717, to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work on the National Mall to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients.
- H.R. 3499, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide direct hire authority to appoint individuals to federal wildland firefighting and firefighting support positions in the U.S. Forest Service or the Department of the Interior.
- H.R. 4141, to provide that certain communications projects are not subject to requirements to prepare certain environmental or historical preservation reviews, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4141, H.R. 2717, and H.R. 3499 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 1318, was ordered reported, without amendment.

**July 27** – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries held a hearing on several bills, including H.R. 2982, the "New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act," in which the National Park Service is among various federal agencies that is required to be consulted. Testimony was heard from Representatives Wittman, Radewagen, Curtis, Boebert, Rutherford, Tonko, Rose, and Huffman; Kelly Kryc, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce; Stephen Guertin, Deputy Director for Program Management and Policy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

**July 27** – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "Examining Barriers to Access: Ongoing Visitor Experience Issues at America's National Parks." Testimony was heard from Charles F. Sams III, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

**July 28 – September 11** – The House will convene between these dates for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted, during its annual summer recess, which is officially designated under House rules as a “district work period.”

## **Incidents**

*Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.*

### **Appalachian National Scenic Trail**

#### **Backpacker fatality**

A 67-year-old backpacker on the northern portion of the Appalachian Trail was reported overdue by family on July 24. They had last been heard from on July 9 at the Inn at the Long Trail in Killington, Vermont. The Vermont State Police started a search, which was complicated by the length of time that had passed and conflicting reports about whether or not the individual had been seen more recently. On July 29, police recovered a body that was believed to be the individual, located along Stony Brook in Stockbridge, Vermont. The individual is believed to have perished while crossing Stony Brook during a flashflood event on July 10. The victim's body was found 1.5 miles downstream from the location where the trail crosses the creek. An autopsy to determine the cause of death is underway. Source: [Rutland Herald](#), [VT Digger](#)

### **Arches National Park**

#### **Hiker fatality**

A 66-year-old was reported overdue while traveling in the park. Their car was found in the Sand Dune Arch Trail parking lot. NPS staff began a search in the area and found the individual deceased in an off-trail location near the trailhead. An investigation by the NPS and Grand County Sheriff's Office is ongoing. Source: [Arches National Park](#)

### **Chaco Culture National Historical Park**

#### **Rockfall**

On July 21 and 28, several rockfall events took place at Gallo Campground. After the July 28 events, the park closed five campsites. Geologists believe there is potential for further rockfall, and the campsites are closed indefinitely as the park considers options. No one was injured in the rockfall events. Source: [Farmington Daily Times](#)

### **Death Valley National Park**

#### **Vehicle fatality**

On July 31, a 26-year-old was driving eastbound on CA-190 between Emigrant Junction and Stovepipe Wells when the vehicle crossed the opposite road shoulder, hit an embankment, and flipped several times. The driver appeared to not be wearing a seatbelt and was ejected from the vehicle. The individual was declared deceased at the scene. Responding agencies included the NPS, Inyo County Coroner's Office, and California Highway Patrol. The crash is under investigation by the California Highway Patrol, and alcohol and drug use are not suspected. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

### **Death Valley National Park**

### **Stuck car, bystander rescue, heat illness**

On July 4, two individuals got lost while navigating by GPS. They took a wrong turn onto West Side Road, eventually driving back and forth along the road for about three hours. Around midnight, they became concerned about running out of gas and decided to drive directly across the salt flat of Badwater Basin to Badwater Road, which is illegal. The vehicle got stuck in mud about 0.9 miles in. They walked a mile to Badwater Road, then 12 miles north along the road, splitting up from one another at 3am. One of the individuals walked another six miles north and was picked up by other park visitors around 8am. The individual was driven to Furnace Creek, where they called for help. The park visitors who had picked up the first individual drove back to pick up the second individual, who was experiencing symptoms of heat illness. The low temperature that night was 90°F. That individual was driven to Shoshone, California, then transported by ambulance to Desert View Hospital in Pahrump, Nevada. On July 27, Two Star Towing was able to use a skid steer to remove the vehicle. The two individuals were issued a mandatory court appearance for illegal off-road driving and the damage to park resources. Charges and fines are pending. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

### **Gateway National Recreation Area**

#### **Ocean fatalities**

On July 28, a 19-year-old was swimming in the waves off Jacob Riis Park and failed to resurface. Others witnessed the incident and began an "exhaustive search." During the search, the victim washed up on shore unconscious. The individual was rushed to Coney Island Hospital, and passed away there later that evening. Source: [NY Daily News](#)

On July 29, an individual became unresponsive in the water at Gunnison Beach in Sandy Hook. Other visitors pulled the individual from the water and performed CPR, but resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. Source: [NJ.com](#)

### **George Washington Memorial Parkway**

#### **Storm Debris**

On July 29, a major storm with 80 mph winds hit the Washington, D.C., area, leaving hundreds of fallen trees and other debris along the parkway. Sections of the road closed for several days. NPS staff estimated they repaired or removed 325 trees and more than 500 tons of wood and debris. The parkway was able to fully reopen on August 2. Cleanup along the road shoulders continued for several more days. Source: [The Washington Post](#)

### **Glacier National Park**

#### **Vehicle accident**

On August 3, a motor vehicle with two occupants went off the Going-to-the-Sun Road, just below the West Tunnel, between Avalanche and The Loop. Bystanders saw the accident happen and were able to flag down a ranger at The Loop. The driver was able to

self-extricate, while the passenger was stuck inside the vehicle. NPS staff helped get the driver up to the road. The Hungry Horse Fire Department was able to extricate the passenger from the vehicle and utilize rope rescue techniques to ascend to the road. Both individuals were transported to the hospital by Three Rivers Ambulance. The recovery of the two patients necessitated the closure of the Going-to-the-Sun Road between Avalanche Campground and The Loop for five hours. The road reopened that evening, then closed again for several hours the following day for vehicle removal. Source:

[Flathead Beacon](#), [NBC Montana](#)

## **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve**

### **Paraglider crash**

On July 22, a 36-year-old got caught in a storm and crashed while paragliding above Carbonite Mountain. The pilot notified the park of the crash and a need for assistance. A multiagency response was enacted and the individual was transported via helicopter to medical care in Pueblo, Colorado. The individual sustained non-life-threatening injuries. Agencies involved included the NPS, Alamosa County (CO) Sheriff's Department, Alamosa Volunteer Search and Rescue, Mosca-Hopper Volunteer Fire Department, Alamosa EMS, Reach Air, and Flight for Life. Source: [Alamosa News](#)

## **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

### **Bear incident**

On August 5, the NPS closed Rich Mountain Road after a visitor inside of a vehicle was scratched by a bear. The bear is thought to have previously obtained human food by approaching vehicles, though the visitor who was scratched "did not contribute to the bear's habituation." The visitor's scratches were "minor." Source: [WHCS](#)

## **Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

### **Vandalism**

On July 24, the park investigated a report of vandalism on the Laurel Falls Trail. They found a large section of rocks with spray-painted words and symbols. The park is working to remove the graffiti and is looking for any information the public may provide regarding the incident. Source: [The Charlotte Observer](#)

## **Haleakalā National Park**

### **Road closure**

On August 8, the park closed the Summit District due to blocked road access, resulting from nearby wildfires and high winds. The Hosmer Grove Campground, wilderness cabins, and wilderness tent camping were also closed on August 8. The park will reopen when conditions improve. Source: [Haleakalā National Park](#)

## **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park**

## **Fire risk closures**

On August 6, the park closed vehicle access on Mauna Loa Road past the gate at Kīpukapuauulu and Hilina Pali Road beyond Kulanaokuaiki Campground due to severe fire weather conditions in the forecast. Pedestrians and bicyclists may still access the closed sections. Campfires and open flame cooking fires are also prohibited in the park. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

## **Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

### **3 drownings**

On July 29, a 42-year-old was reported to have gone missing at Crawdad Cove. On July 30, NPS staff were able to recover the individual's body. The Clark County coroner's office confirmed that the individual died due to drowning. Source: [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#)

Over the weekend of August 5 and 6, two individuals drowned in the lake. Monsoon winds caused hazardous conditions for boats and swimmers. These were the eighteenth and nineteenth fatalities in the park this year, many of which have been drownings. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

## **Lake Meredith National Recreation Area**

### **Drowning**

On August 6, a 34-year-old drowned while swimming in the Spring Canyon swimming area. The individual was with a group of friends, who were all on the shore. At some point, the group realized they no longer saw the swimmer in the water, but their shoes were still on the shore. The group called 9-1-1. Personnel from the NPS, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Department of Public Safety, Hutchinson County Sheriff's Department, Hutchinson County Emergency Services Unit, Fritch Fire, and Borger Fire responded to the incident. Spring Canyon was closed and all visitors were asked to leave the area. Boat sonar was used to narrow the search area, and NPS divers located the individual's body. It is the second water-related fatality at Lake Meredith this year. Source: [Lake Meredith National Recreation Area](#)

## **Little River Canyon National Preserve**

### **Drowning**

On July 24, a group of teenagers were jumping off rocks into the river. One of the individuals got "caught in a current running behind the rock" and the others "weren't able to get to [them] in time." The individual is said to have drowned. Staff from the NPS, Fort Payne Fire Rescue, Fischer Rescue Squad, Adamsburg Volunteer Fire Department, DeKalb Ambulance Service, and the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office responded to the incident. Source: [The Telegraph](#), [Times Journal](#)

## **Natchez Trace Parkway**

## **Hit-and-run**

On July 29, a vehicle struck a motorcyclist at the Thomastown intersection of the parkway, causing "catastrophic injuries." The driver fled the scene, headed west on Highway 429 toward Thomastown. Debris found at the scene, including a front bumper and grill, suggests the car might be a 2011 or 2012 black Dodge Charger. The NPS is looking for any information the public might have to support the investigation. Source:

[Natchez Trace Parkway](#)

## **Olympic National Park**

### **Cougar attack**

On July 29, an 8-year-old was attacked by a mountain lion while camping with family at Lake Angeles in the Heart O' the Hills area near Hurricane Ridge. The child's parent yelled and screamed at the animal until it abandoned its attack. NPS staff responded to assess and stabilize the patient. The 8-year-old survived with minor injuries and was taken to the local hospital for further evaluation. Park staff are attempting to track and locate the mountain lion, and they have said that they will euthanize it and have a necropsy performed to lend clues to the attack. The Lake Angeles area, Heather Park area, and several trails in the vicinity were initially closed. The Switchback and Sunrise Ridge Trails have reopened, while the Lake Angeles/Heather Park Loop remains closed. Source:

[Outsider](#), [Olympic National Park](#)

## **Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore**

### **Boat fire**

On July 29, a 30-foot boat caught fire off the shore of Pictured Rocks. A U.S. Coast Guard crew was on a routine patrol in the area and they saw smoke rising off the vessel. They responded and transferred all five passengers to their vessel. There were no injuries. The vessel contained up to 250 gallons of diesel and the NPS and Coast Guard are monitoring the area for pollution. The vessel's owner is working on a salvage plan. Source: [Detroit](#)

[Free Press](#)

## **Pipestone National Monument**

### **E. coli**

The U.S. Geological Survey and the NPS recently released a water quality study undertaken in 2018 and 2019 in the park. It found levels of fecal coliform and E. coli that exceeded recommended levels in all creek samples, as well as elevated levels of other pathogens. Waterways in the park are affected by upstream agriculture and stormwater runoff. The park recently installed signage recommending individuals do not enter waterways, and they are working with local groups to reduce contamination throughout the region. Source: [Pipestone National Monument](#)

## **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area**

## **Bee swarm**

On July 31, the park closed the Solstice Canyon trail due to a large bee swarm that had stung multiple visitors. The NPS worked with a bee specialist to disperse the hives, and the trail reopened on August 5. Source: [ABC7](#), [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)

## **Sequoia National Park**

### **Drowning**

On August 4, an individual drowned in the Kaweah River near the Potwisha Campground. Staff from the NPS, Tulare County Sheriff's Office Swift Water Rescue Team, and Tulare County Fire responded. Additional details about the specifics of the incident have not been released. Source: [ABC30](#), [KMPH](#)

## **Theodore Roosevelt National Park**

### **Graffiti**

Multiple incidents of graffiti have been reported on the geologic feature known as "the cannonballs." North Dakota Tourism published a Facebook post to report the incident and remind visitors to "Leave No Trace." Source: [KFYR](#)

## **U.S. Park Police**

### **Hit-and-run**

On July 12, law enforcement attempted to pull over a vehicle at the intersection of 17th Street NW and Constitution Avenue because it had an expired tag. The driver, a 33-year-old, indicated they would pull over, then fled the scene. They ran a red light and hit three people in the crosswalk. One of the pedestrians, a 75-year-old, was killed in the incident. The two other pedestrians, one of whom is 13 years old, were treated for minor injuries. On July 27, the U.S. Park Police arrested the driver, who was charged with second degree murder. The car involved in the crash had received several previous tickets for speeding in Washington, D.C. Source: [United States Park Police](#), [NBC Washington](#)

## **Wind Cave National Park**

### **Broken elevator**

On August 8, the park suspended all cave tours due to a broken elevator. Replacement parts are on order, and tours "could resume in early September." In addition to this temporary repair, the park also has funding in place to do a total replacement of the elevator system in 2024. Source: [Wind Cave National Park](#)

## **Zion National Park**

### **Cyanobacteria**

The park has issued an official "health watch" for the North Fork of the Virgin River and La Verkin Creek, and an official "warning" for North Creek due to cyanobacteria levels in the waterways. Visitors are advised not to drink stream water anywhere in the park. Source:

[KVVU](#)

## **Wildfires**

- *Mojave National Preserve* - On July 28, the York Fire started in Caruthers Canyon in the New York Mountain Range. As of August 7, the fire was 93,078 acres and 93% contained, with 290 personnel assigned. The cause of the fire is under investigation; it started on a private land inholding inside of the park. Many roads and campgrounds in the park are closed until further notice. Source: [Inciweb](#), [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#), [Mojave National Preserve](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - On July 26, a storm brought lightning strikes through the park. Two fires were detected in the Pyramid Creek Drainage along State Route 20, the Pyramid Peak Fire and Pyramid Creek Fire (known collectively as the Pyramid Area Fires). The Bouch, Colonial, and Snowfield cross-country zones were closed on July 28 for visitor safety. As of July 29, the fires were considered contained, and the closed areas reopened. Source: North Cascades National Park ([7/28](#), [7/29](#))
- *Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - On July 29, the Sourdough Fire was detected. It was started by a lightning strike near Diablo, Washington. As of August 8, the fire was 1,440 acres and 0% contained, with 349 personnel assigned. The Sourdough Trail is closed to the junction with Big Beaver Trail. Sourdough and Pierce Mountain camps are also closed. On August 4, State Route 20 (the North Cascades Highway) between Newhalem and Rainy Day Pass was closed. There is no estimated reopening date yet. Source: North Cascades National Park (7/29 - [first report](#), [second report](#), [7/30](#), [7/31](#)), [Inciweb](#), [Idaho Statesman](#)
- *Wind Cave National Park*: On July 25, a wildfire was reported in the central section of the park. Crews were immediately dispatched, including the NPS, U.S. Forest Service, Hot Springs Volunteer Fire Department, South Dakota Wildland Fire, and two Single Engine Airtankers from Hot Springs Airport. The fire was contained at 1.5 acres. Source: [Wind Cave National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On July 28, a visitor observed the Hitching Post Fire about 0.5 miles east of the Lamar River Trail and 5.5 miles south of the park's Northeast Entrance Road. The fire is believed to have been ignited by lightning on July 25. Crews are working to confine it. As of August 8, the fire is still considered active. It has burned 0.5 acres. Source: Yellowstone National Park ([7/28 news release](#), [current fire conditions](#))
- *Yosemite National Park* - As of August 5, the Pika Fire was 841 acres and 80%



contained, with 25 personnel assigned. The fire started June 29 due to lightning.

Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#), [Inciweb](#)

- *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* -
  - On July 24, the Biederman Fire #192 was discovered north of Biederman Bluff on the Yukon River, five miles northwest of the Kandik-Yukon Rivers confluence. The fire is being monitored by Alaska Fire Service aircraft. As of July 25, it was 64.5 acres and 50% active. Source: [Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve](#)
  - On July 27, the Ruby Creek Fire #282 was discovered by reconnaissance aircraft, located in the Upper Charley River, south of Three Fingers airstrip. As of July 28, it was 15 acres. It is being monitored by Alaska Fire Service aircraft. Source: [Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve](#)
  
- *Zion National Park* - On July 29, a law enforcement officer on patrol observed a fire at the Watchman Campground. Firefighters were able to contain the fire at 0.25 acres. Agencies supporting the incident included the NPS, Hurricane Valley Fire, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State of Utah, and the Springdale Police Department. Nine campsites were impacted and will remain closed until further notice. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Source: [Zion National Park](#)

### **Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents**

- *Saratoga National Historical Park* - On July 28, the park reopened its eastern entrance at Route 4. It had been closed due road damage after a flash flood on July 16 (see [7/26/23 Coalition Report](#)). The road has been stabilized and permanent repairs will take place at a later date. The Wilkinson Trail has also reopened for hiking. Some of the park's other trails remain closed for repair. Source: [Saratoga National Historical Park](#)

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