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**The Coalition Report**  
**Wednesday, July 5, 2023**

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***Editor note: Due to staff leave, the next Coalition Report will be published in three weeks, on July 26. Thank you for your understanding.***

**Coalition Actions**

The Coalition signed a joint [letter](#) with several other conservation groups to the Bureau of Land Management on its Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for the Wyoming 4th quarter oil and gas lease sale. The letter expresses appreciation for the inclusion of Alternative 3; however, it requests the deferral of many parcels until the BLM concludes multiple reforms to its energy leasing programs.

We issued a [press release](#) in support of U.S. Representative Judy Chu's (D-CA) and Senator Alex Padilla's (D-CA) request of President Joe Biden to add more than 109,000 acres to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

The Coalition submitted [written testimony](#) for the record to the House Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands, opposing H.R. 3025, a bill to provide for no net increase in the total acreage of federal land in the Virgin Islands National Park.

We joined in signing a [letter](#) to Congress, opposing H.R. 615 and its companion, S. 1185, the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2023.

The Coalition joined with six organizations in submitting [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management, Montana-Dakotas, on the third quarter oil and gas lease sale Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact.

The Coalition renewed its partnership agreement with the Park Institute of America, a Durham, North Carolina-based nonprofit that communicates park value and researches ways to build a more robust and diverse conservation workforce. As part of this effort, the Institute issues a brief weekly newsletter featuring readers' favorite parks and spotlighting academic research that shows why protected areas are so important to us all. [See the Institute's newsletter series](#) and subscribe.

### **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.*

- *Profile on Deb Haaland* - The Associated Press published [a profile](#) on Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, including the challenges of balancing the interests of all Americans and the ways her upbringing affect her role. Source: *Associated Press*
- *NPF funding for accessibility and inclusion* - On June 23, the company Kohl's announced a \$100,000 donation to the National Park Foundation's Outdoor Exploration program, which seeks to increase accessibility and inclusion in national parks. Source: [Kohl's](#)
- *Wildfire prevention "not enough"* - The Associated Press published [an article](#) that argues that recent fire prevention efforts are good, but still well behind where they need to be to prevent catastrophic wildfires in the western United States. It argues that there is a large backlog of thinning work and current resources still are not adequate to prevent and manage wildfires. Source: *Associated Press*
- *Household fire retardant spray* - The *Los Angeles Times* published [an article](#) about a fire retardant spray that can be used on private property, roadsides, and institutional landscapes. The product is colorless and intended to remain on vegetation until the first rainfall. Critics are concerned that the chemicals in the spray can affect ecosystems. Source: *Los Angeles Times*
- *\$16 million for Hawaiian birds* - At the Hawai'i Conservation Conference in Honolulu, Hawai'i, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced \$16 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding for a new Hawaiian Forest Bird Conservation Keystone Initiative. The initiative will expand captive care programs, eradicate mosquitoes that spread avian malaria, relocate populations, conduct research and monitoring, and engage actively with the Native Hawaiian community. Source: [Big Island Now](#)
- *Op-eds for and against fixed anchors in wilderness* - *Park Record* recently published two op-eds, [one by Julia Geisler](#), the executive director of Salt

Lake Climbers Alliance, and [another by Dana Johnson](#) from Writers on the Range, arguing for and against the Protect America's Rock Climbing Act. (*Editor note: The Coalition signed [a letter](#) opposing the bill.*) Source: *Park Record*

- *Angry Birds teams up with NPF* - The video game "Angry Birds Friends" has teamed up with the National Park Foundation to provide National Park-themed content through its weeklong "Official Wings of Freedom Event," starting on July 3. The event will include brand-new levels inspired by parks, such as Everglades National Park and Badlands National Park. Source: [Hardcore Gamers](#)

## **Around the Parks**

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

- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - The NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have received \$17.7 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Department of Transportation's Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program to move and develop the public beach to a wider area just north of the current public beach. The plan has been in the works since 1993. The current beach and parking area have been repeatedly damaged by storms and the new beach's width will help protect it. Source: [Eastern Shore Post](#)
- *Bandelier National Monument* - Ford Motor Company and the Bronco Wild Fund donated a Bronco Badlands SUV to the park to use as a "firefighting command vehicle." The vehicle is intended to provide "reliable and redundant connectivity" to better manage fires in real time. Source: [Ford Media Center](#)
- *Big Cypress National Preserve, Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, Everglades National Park* - Fran Mainella, the sixteenth director of the National Park Service, has been appointed the first woman chair of the board for The Alliance for Florida's National Parks. Source: [The Alliance for Florida's National Parks](#)
- *Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park* - The park installed five new signs at Slatersville, interpreting the former mining site and its historical significance. Source: [NRI Now](#)
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - On June 28, the park and its park partner, Eastern National, hosted a public ceremony to unveil the recently restored Highland Light in Truro. The lighthouse was restored by Henry General Contractors, Inc. Source: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - The Yale School of the Environment published [an article](#) about the threat of rising sea levels on the park, as well as the difficulty and expense of mitigation. Source: *Yale Environment 360*
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On June 20, an early morning NPS patrol on

Ocracoke Island revealed a leatherback sea turtle nest with 93 eggs in it. It is the first time in 11 years that a leatherback has laid eggs on the beach and it is only the sixth leatherback nest on Cape Hatteras since the beginning of record keeping in the park. Because the nest was located at the high tide line, NPS biologists and an intern relocated the nest to a safer spot on the beach. Source: [13 News Now](#), [Cape Hatteras National Seashore Instagram account](#)

- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - The park is partnering with Dare County (NC) this summer to add lifeguard services to Rodanthe Beach Access on Hatteras Island. Lifeguarding will run seven days a week from 9am to 5pm, from July 1 to August 11. Four other beaches in the park also are staffed with lifeguards. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - A new coastal warning display tower (also known as a weather tower) recently was installed at the historic U.S. Weather Bureau Station building in Hatteras, with support from Outer Banks Forever and the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau. The first weather tower at Hatteras was installed in 1901. The last one at the site collapsed in the 1980s. The building has been undergoing restoration for several years, and the weather station marks the completion of this project. The building operates as a welcome center by the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau through a partnership agreement with the park. A small ceremony to celebrate the site will take place on July 10. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Cane River Creole National Historical Park* - The park recently completed a rehabilitation project on the North Enslaved Cabin/Tenant House in the Oakland Plantation Unit. The project was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and completed by a Maintenance Action Team from the Historic Preservation Training Center. The project included both exterior and interior work. Source: [Cane River Creole National Historical Park](#)
- *Christiansted National Historic Site* - The park has begun a project to repair the roof of the historic Stable Building at Fort Christiansvaern. This is the second phase of the project and includes replacing temporary repair measures with permanent fixtures that preserve its historic character. The project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and completed by the Historic Preservation Training Center. It is expected to be complete in August. Source: [Christiansted National Historic Site](#)
- *Crater Lake National Park* - On June 26, three new tour boats were delivered by helicopter to the lake. Crater Lake Hospitality, a branch of Aramark Destinations, runs the boat tour concession and owns the boats. The new boats are 41-foot long, made of aluminum alloy, and are designed to use less fuel and make less noise than previous models. Source: [Statesman Journal](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - On June 29, the park celebrated the

addition of two forested areas in the park, Mt. Minsi and the Hornsbeck Creek drainage, to the Old-Growth Forest Network in Pennsylvania. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)

- *Fort Smith National Historic Site* - The park is currently working on a project to preserve the interior of the historic Commissary Building. The project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and carried out by a Maintenance Action Team from the Historic Preservation Training Center. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Frederick Douglass National Historic Site* - On July 4, the historic home of Frederick Douglass opened to the public for the first time since 2020. It originally closed due to the pandemic and has since undergone major renovations, including a new HVAC system. The park hosted a small ceremony to celebrate the reopening. Source: [Travel and Leisure](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - *Hungry Horse News* published [an article](#) about the park's success leasing vacation rental and apartments from local home owners as a solution to housing issues. The park has been able to hire and house 18 additional staff through the program. Source: *Hungry Horse News*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On June 22, a federal judge heard arguments between the National Parks Conservation Association and the NPS regarding a 2018 park rule that created a 180-acre "play area" at Lone Rock beach for off-road vehicles and allows their use on unpaved roads in the park. The NPCA argues that the rule was based on faulty environmental analysis, while the park argues that their reasoning is sound. The judge scheduled further hearings in December to hear arguments from additional interested parties and a ruling is not expected until early 2024. In the meantime, the rule stands. Source: [Courthouse News Service](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - A new species of mosasaur, the oldest known specimen of its type in North America, was found in March 2012 near the park's border with Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Its identification was recently published in *Cretaceous Research*. Scientists used micro-CT scans and computer reconstruction models to show how mosasaurs improved blood supply to the brain over the course of its evolution, similarly to the evolution of whales. Source: [KSL](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On June 23, the park announced the selection of North Rim Hospitality, LLC, a subsidiary of Aramark, to provide lodging, food and beverage, retail, and other services at the North Rim. The concession contract will run for 15 years, starting on January 1, 2024. North Rim Hospitality is the current concessioner. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The NPS published a Finding of No Significant Impact for a plan to improve infrastructure, safety, and traffic flow at the Gatlinburg Spur. Source: [WATE](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park completed renovations on the Walker Sisters Cabin, and it has reopened to the public. The cabin had been closed since late 2021 due to safety concerns and restoration needs. The project was funded by the Friends of the Smokies. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - *Honolulu Civil Beat* published [an op-ed](#) by Rick Warshauer that calls the draft air tour management plans for the two parks "a sham." The op-ed argues that the disturbances made by air tours are not appropriate for the park's values of conservation, scenic vistas, solitude, and cultural preservation. Rick is a conservation biologist on the Big Island. Source: *Honolulu Civil Beat*
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - On June 28, the Department of the Interior celebrated the creation of a new facility at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo that will house the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory and Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center. The HVO was previously located in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, but was irreparably damaged during the 2018 Kīlauea eruption. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Independence National Historical Park* - *The Philadelphia Inquirer* published [an article](#) about whether or not the Liberty Bell was rung on July 4 or 8, 1776. (July 8 was the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence.) Many historians have held that the bell tower at Independence Hall was in bad condition and possibly under repair. One historian and author, Thomas Kaufmann, believes that it did ring, and the article interviews him on his position. Source: *The Philadelphia Inquirer*
- *Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail* - On June 22, the City of Steubenville and representatives from Historic Fort Steuben received signs to designate three sites as part of the trail and auto tour route. Source: [The Weirton Daily Times](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation has begun inviting designers to the committee that will determine the design of the future memorial on the National Mall. The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts gave final approval for the foundation to begin design plans in May. The final design team will be announced in early 2024 and the memorial is expected to be open to the public in 2028. It will be located on a third of an acre between Independence Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and 3rd Street SW. The memorial is expected to cost up to \$50 million, entirely provided by the foundation. The NPS will help maintain the monument, and some funding for that work is already secured. Source: [The](#)

[Baltimore Sun](#)

- *North Cascades National Park* - *The Washington Post* published [an interactive article](#) about how the increase in popularity of LED lights has also increased light pollution due to the bulbs' blue light. An NPS study in Chelan County, Washington, is cited in the article, as well as recommendations from the staff on how to lessen one's light pollution impact. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park* - Macon-Bibb County (GA) and the Macon Housing Authority have donated several land parcels to the park, totaling 3.62 acres. The added land brings the park to 1,860 total acres. The parcels are situated within the Ocmulgee Old Fields, also known as the Macon Reserve, a site of cultural significance to Muskogean people. Source: [WMAZ](#)
- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - The park announced that is offering two managed deer hunts in October at Big Spring for specific populations: one for youth and one for military veterans with mobility impairments. The veteran hunt is being conducted in partnership with the Foundation for Exceptional Warriors, the Missouri Department of Conservation, Jolly Cone, Quilts of Valor, Outdoorsmen with a Mission, OA Rentals, and Ozark Riverways Foundation. Both hunts will select participants through a random lottery. Source: [Ozark National Scenic Riverways](#)
- *Pearl Harbor National Memorial* - On June 29, the park signed a "sister park" agreement with Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan. The agreement will allow the two parks to promote exchanges and share knowledge and resources. It will also allow for reconciliation and healing. Source: [WFLA](#)
- *Prince William Forest Park* - *DCist* published [an article](#) about the spread of beech leaf disease through the Washington, DC, area. It was first detected in the area in 2021 at Prince William Forest, and has since been found in two other local parks. Source: *DCist*
- *Rock Creek Park* - *Fox 5 DC* published [an article](#) about efforts to get a trail in the park renamed after Georgia Ellard, the first woman and first Black person to be superintendent of the park. The trail was previously named after Melvin Hazen, a former President of the Washington, DC, Board of Commissioners who promoted racial segregation and demolition of the majority Black community in Reno City. The name was removed in February 2022, and the trail is currently called "Reservation 630." Source: *Fox 5 DC*, [U.S. Representative Elanor Holmes Norton](#)
- *Springfield Armory National Historic Site* - On July 3, the park announced that all four historic clocks and the bell on the Main Arsenal building are now in working order. The project was funded by the Friends of Springfield Armory National Historic Site and completed by About Time Restoration, LLC. Source: [Springfield Armory](#)

### National Historic Site

- *Voyageurs National Park* - The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources submitted an official letter to the park, objecting to its proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan. The letter states the the plan was developed without input from the DNR, lacks sufficient authority, and unfairly restricts public access. Source: [The Timberjay](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - Park wildlife biologist Dr. Steve Windels received the 2023 Distinguished Moose Biologist Award at the 55th North American Moose Conference and Workshop in May. Steve has worked as a wildlife biologist at the park since 2003. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On June 29, the park announced the selection of Delaware North/DNC Parks and Resorts at Yellowstone, LLC, as the concessioner for retail and food and beverage service in the park for a 15-year contract starting on January 1, 2024. Delaware North has been the concessioner since 2003. Source: [Buckrail](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Independent Record* published [an article](#) about the efforts by the Buffalo Field Campaign and several Tribes to acquire co-stewardship rights to bison management in the park. Source: *Independent Record*
- *Yosemite National Park* - Following a two-year pilot program, the park has made permanent a permit process for rock climbing overnight on "big walls." Permits continue to be free and unlimited. Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

### Personnel Changes

- *Maggie L Walker National Historic Site, Richmond National Battlefield Park* - Scott Teodorski was selected to be superintendent. Scott has over two decades of NPS experience, most recently as the first permanent superintendent at Reconstruction Era National Historical Park. He will begin his new role at the end of July. Source: [Richmond National Battlefield Park](#)
- *Petersburg National Battlefield* - Alexa Viets was selected to be superintendent. Alexa has 30 years of NPS experience, most recently as the chief of resource management and interpretation at Blue Ridge Parkway, as well as acting superintendent at Richmond National Battlefield and Maggie L Walker National Historic Site. She will begin her new role in mid-August. Source: [Petersburg National Battlefield](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Gary Ingram was selected to be superintendent. Gary has many years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Cumberland Island National Seashore and Fort Frederica National Monument. He



will start his new role on July 30. Source: [The Brunswick News](#)

## **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.*

*Editor note: In the June 21, 2023 Coalition Report, we published the incorrect title for James "Jim" Watt (now deceased). Jim was the Secretary of the Interior from 1981 to 1983. Apologies for the mistake, and thank you to Joan Anzelmo for bringing it to our attention.*

## **Deceased**

- Edwin Lee Appling, Sr., 70, passed away on May 25. Edwin retired from Yosemite National Park, where "he received many awards and accolades during his service within the park." Source: [Mariposa Gazette](#)
- George John Benisek, 91, passed away on June 18. George worked for several summers in the park at the fish hatchery. Source: [Boca Beacon](#)
- Charles L. Blockson, 89, passed away on June 14. Charles was a civil rights activist, author, and collector who donated countless books and items to institutions, such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Charles served for a time as the chair of the NPS Underground Railroad Advisory Committee. Source: [Temple Now](#)
- Lee Ola DeSandres, 98, passed away on June 21. Lee worked for the Yosemite Park and Curry Company for many years, as did her husband, Lou, and they lived in Yosemite and El Portal from 1956 to 1977. Source: [Mariposa Gazette](#)
- Russel "Russ" Owen (Coakley) Donoghue, 84, passed away on June 16. Russ served as a "part time park ranger" at Arches National Park from 1962-1972. Source: [Larkin Mortuary](#)
- Bruce B. Goetting, 85, passed away on May 19. In his retirement, he and his wife Sara both worked for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy at the Moraine Park Visitor Center in Rocky Mountain National Park. Source: [Estes Park News](#)
- Joann Jasper, 82, passed away on June 28. For a time, Joann worked as a registered nurse at Glacier National Park. Source: [WKDZ](#)
- Bernie "Bern" Clay Osbourn, 80, passed away on July 1. His first job was at Big Bend National Park "as a tourist guide for the horse concessions." He also worked with "the fire service" in Montana for a time. Source: [Legacy/Harrell Funeral Home](#)

### [of Llano](#)

- Charles "Chuck" K. Tobin, 90, passed away on June 14. Chuck was born in Sequoia National Park and spent his youth "in many western national parks." He later went to work for the National Park Service, including stints at Lassen Volcanic National Park, Death Valley National Park, and Yellowstone National Park, as a maintenance foreman, EMT, and safety officer. He and his brother were both third generation NPS staff, and his daughter-in-law and two grandchildren also have worked for the NPS. Source: [The Livingston Enterprise](#)

### **Retired**

- Jim Heaney, the superintendent of George Washington Carver National Monument, will retire from the NPS on July 28. He has been the superintendent at the site for 15 years and has worked at many other NPS sites, "including ones in Massachusetts, Mississippi, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Alabama." Source: [KSN16](#)
- Bob Krumenaker, the superintendent at Big Bend National Park, will retire from the NPS in July. He has worked or volunteered with the NPS for 46 years, including stints at Canyonlands National Park, Isle Royale National Park, Big Thicket National Preserve, Shenandoah National Park, Valley Forge National Historical Park, and Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. *Texas Monthly* ran [an interview](#) with him about his departure and his thoughts about the NPS and Big Bend. Source: *Texas Monthly*
- Daniel Martinez, the historian at Pearl Harbor National Memorial, is retiring after 44 years working for the National Park Service. In his retirement, he will work part-time at the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum, providing educational opportunities for local students. Source: [Hawai'i Public Radio](#)

### **In the News**

- Duane "Poncho" Aire was featured in an article about the nonprofit program, Honor Flight, that offers military veterans trips to Washington, DC, to visit memorials. Duane was previously a superintendent at Pecos National Historical Park. Source: [Santa Fe New Mexican](#), Jerry Rogers
- Andrea Lankford wrote [an article](#) published in *The Washington Post* called "How to avoid fatal mistakes at national parks, according to a ranger." Andrea is a former law enforcement ranger for the NPS, including stints at Grand Canyon National Park and Yosemite National Park. She is also the author of two books, *Ranger Confidential: Living, Working, and Dying in the National Parks* and *Trail of the Lost: The Relentless Search to Bring Home the Missing Hikers of the Pacific Crest Trail*, which will be released in August. Source: *The Washington Post*
- Ray Rast was invited to serve on an Experts Advisory Committee for the

President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Ray is an associate professor of history at Gonzaga University. Previously, he worked at Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial (a unit of Minidoka National Historic Site), served as the lead historian on the study that led to the creation of César E. Chávez National Monument, and was appointed in 2011 to the NPS' "American Latino Heritage Initiative." Source: [Gonzaga University](#)

- Mike Wichman, a retired civil engineer and project manager for the National Park Service, recently joined the board of the John C. Fremont Hospital Foundation in Mariposa County, California. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)

### **Open for Comment**

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

- *National Park System* - Public comment is [open until July 21](#) on a programmatic environmental assessment about the impacts of electric bicycle (e-bike) use in national parks. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Capitol Reef National Park* - The NPS and Federal Highway Administration have [opened public comment until July 6](#) on a plan to rehabilitate the Scenic Drive and several parking lots in the park. Source: [Capitol Reef National Park](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - Public comment is [open until July 12](#) on a draft Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan for improving accessibility in the park. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - Public comment is [open until July 11](#) on a draft Circulation Environmental Assessment, which specifically analyzes the impact of select trail and parking actions in the local community and park. Source: [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#)
- *Fort Pulaski National Monument* - Public comment is [open until July 12](#) on a development concept plan for facilities and infrastructure at the park. Source: [Fort Pulaski National Monument](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - Public comment is [open until July 30](#) on a proposal to improve roads, parking, and the water system in the Swiftcurrent area. The area would be closed from Fall 2024 through Spring 2026 for the improvements. [A storymap](#) for the project is available. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Public comment is [open until July 5](#) on proposed improvements to the North Rim and Roaring Springs Utility Systems. Source: [St. George News](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

has opened public comment through August 1 on the proposal to modify an Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit to the park for the Havasupai Garden Potable Water Pump Station. Comments may be submitted by email or postal mail. Source: [Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#)

- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open until August 4](#) on a draft Sustainable Low Water Access Plan. Source: [KTNV](#)
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - Public comment is [open until July 28](#) on a proposed increase of fees for cave tours, camping, and electric vehicle charging, starting in 2024. Source: [WCLU](#)
- *Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open until July 13](#) on a plan to replace the "temporary" administrative and maintenance facilities for the park, which have been used for 60 years. Source: [Big Island Now](#)
- *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve* - Public comment is [open until July 24](#) on a Development Concept Plan and Environmental Assessment for Kingsley Plantation. Source: [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#)

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

- *Petition against cyanide bombs* - Over 70 conservation groups signed an "administrative rulemaking petition" to the Department of the Interior asking it to ban the use of M-44 devices, commonly known as "cyanide" bombs, on Bureau of Land Management lands. The devices are used to target predators, such as coyotes and wolves, and can be hazardous to hikers, dogs, and other wildlife. They are not used on lands managed by the NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Bureau of Reclamation. The petition comes alongside two bills introduced in Congress earlier in June. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#)
- *Endangered species translocation* - On June 30, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalized revisions to Section 10(j) regulations under the Endangered Species Act that will allow the agency to better respond to climate change by translocating species outside their historical ranges as habitats change. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Record solar energy auction* - The Bureau of Land Management held an auction for utility-scale solar energy development on four parcels across 23,675 acres in the Amargosa Desert of Nevada that resulted in a record \$105.15 million in bids. 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**

**June 21** – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing to examine the following bills:

- S. 284, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to include on the engravings on the Taras Shevchenko Memorial in the District of Columbia the name of Vincent Illuzzi, Sr., who carved the statue.
- S. 351, to designate six creeks in the state of North Carolina in honor of the lives lost in a plane crash in Carteret County, on February 13, 2022. The creeks are located within or near Cape Lookout National Seashore.
- S. 384, to establish the Springfield 1908 Race Riot National Monument in the state of Illinois.
- S. 432, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the Nulhegan River and Paul Stream in the state of Vermont for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- S. 507, to establish the Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., National Historic Site in the state of Georgia.
- S. 527, to establish the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center in New York City, New York.
- S. 562, to establish the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley and Roberts Temple National Historic Site in the state of Illinois.
- S. 594, to require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to prioritize the completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.
- S. 608, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the Deerfield River in Vermont and Massachusetts for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- S. 886, 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.
- S. 924, to amend the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Development Act to extend the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission.
- S. 961, to redesignate the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, Massachusetts, as the "Salem Maritime National Historical Park."
- S. 1059, to adjust the boundary of Big Bend National Park in the state of Texas.
- S. 1097, to establish the Cesar E. Chavez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park in the states of California and Arizona.
- S. 1277, to modify the boundary of the Mammoth Cave National Park in the state of Kentucky.
- S. 2018, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in national parks in which there are the greatest needs for broadband internet access and cellular service.

Testimony was received from Michael A. Caldwell, Associate Director of Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands for the National Park Service.

**June 26-30** – The Senate was in pro forma session throughout this week during the annual July 4 holiday recess.

### **House Actions**

**June 21** – The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on several bills, including H.R. 1380, the "Protecting America's Rock Climbing Act." H.R. 1380 was ordered reported, as amended. *[Editor note: The Coalition has opposed the bill. See [our statement](#).]*

**June 22** – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on several bills, including H.R. 3025, to provide for no net increase in the total acreage of federal land in the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John, United States Virgin Islands. Testimony was heard from Representatives Stacey Plaskett (D-NY), John Curtis (R-UT), and Lauren Boebert (R-CO); Nada Wolff Culver, Principal Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management; Rose Pugliese, Assistant Minority Leader, Colorado House of Representatives; Michelle McConkie, Director, Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration; and a public witness. *[Editor note: The Coalition submitted [written testimony](#) against the bill.]*

**June 26-30** – The House was in pro forma session throughout this week during the annual July 4 holiday recess.

### **Incidents**

*Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.*

#### **Big Bend National Park**

##### **Two fatalities**

On June 23, a 31-year-old with two stepchildren, aged 14 and 21, were hiking the Marufo Vega Trail. Temperatures were 119 degrees Fahrenheit. The 14-year-old became sick and lost consciousness. The parent hiked back to the vehicle while the older sibling tried to carry the teenager to the trailhead. A team of NPS rangers and U.S. Border Patrol agents arrived at the scene and found the teenager deceased. They began a search for the 31-year-old and found that their vehicle had crashed over an embankment at Boquillas Overlook. The individual was pronounced dead at the scene of the crash. The 21-year-old was later reunited with family. Source: [Houston Public Media](#)

#### **Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area**

##### **Flash flooding**

On June 23, a significant storm caused Crooked Creek to flash flood over its banks and onto Highway 37, stranding visitors and emergency personnel on the north side of the creek. No one was injured in the incident. Once water receded, staff began removing debris and evacuating visitors from the Barry's Landing Campground. The road was significantly impacted by debris and remained closed for two days before opening on June 25. Multiple utility poles were removed, and it may be "a week or two" before power can be restored to the area, including the Horseshoe Bend marina and campground.

Source: [KTVQ](#)

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

#### **Bear attacks dog**

From mid-May to early June, "aggressive" bear encounters were reported along the Bull Mountain Trail. In one incident, an unleashed dog provoked the bear into attacking a leashed dog. The dog sustained serious injuries and was later euthanized by a veterinarian. At least two other bluff charges on hikers were reported. The park closed a half-mile section of the trail at mile marker 381. Source: [Charlotte Observer](#)

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

#### **Removal of plane wreckage**

On June 27, NPS contractors removed the wreckage of a Cessna 414A plane that crashed near Waterrock Knob in November 1983. The crash site is on land that was donated to the parkway in 2016. Since the site became public, the plane and its resultant visitation have created safety, ecological, and cultural concerns. The wreckage was removed by helicopter. Source: [The Transylvania Times](#)

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

#### **Motorcycle crash**

On July 1, a 35-year-old was driving a motorcycle near milepost 74, when they ran off the road on a sharp curve. The individual was ejected off the motorcycle and hit their head on a large rock. The individual passed away at the scene from crash injuries. The individual was wearing a helmet at the time of the accident. Source: [WFXR](#)

### **Canyonlands National Park**

#### **Deceased individual**

On June 28, a 61-year-old was found unresponsive at Willow Flat Campground. NPS staff responded and pronounced the individual deceased at the scene. An investigation into the cause of death is being conducted by the NPS and San Juan County Sheriff's Office.

Source: [WTHR](#)

### **Cape Cod National Seashore**

#### **Protests against shack leases**

The week of June 19, NPS officials gave tours to individuals about the open Request for Proposals to lease eight dune shacks in the Peaked Hill Bars Historic District. A group of protesters stood along Route 6, holding signs and chanting as prospective bidders and NPS staff drove by. The group believes the NPS is not following its own Historic District Preservation and Use Plan from 2012, nor honoring historic use of the shacks. The Provincetown Select Board asked the NPS to withdraw or redefine its RFP, and the NPS officially declined the request.

Meanwhile, many media sources have published the story of a 94-year-old who has lived part-time in one of the shacks for many years and has been asked to vacate due to an arrangement that expired six years ago. U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Ed Markey (D-MA), and Representative Bill Keating (D-MA) wrote a letter on June 23 that expressed concerns over the eviction effort and asked for the individual to be granted a limited-time Special Use Permit. The NPS evicted the individual on June 27, and friends and supporters of the inhabitant occupied the shack in protest. The protesters left voluntarily with no arrests and the NPS has since secured possession of the shack. The NPS stated, "The park continues to explore all legal options for allowing some use of the shack by its longtime users and hopes to meet with the [family] in the near future."

Source: [The Provincetown Independent](#), [The Hill](#)

## **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area**

### **E.coli contamination**

On June 30, the park closed the river from Chattahoochee Nature Center to Johnson Ferry due to water quality test results that found E.coli levels at almost 300 times the recommended limits for recreation. These conditions are considered "consistent with an ongoing sewage spill" above Willeo Creek Park due to a malfunction at the Fulton County (GA) Big Creek wastewater treatment plant. The BacteriAlert program, a collaboration between the park, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and the U.S. Geological Survey, conducted the testing. On July 1, the closure was extended to Whitewater Creek. On July 3, the closure was extended to all sections of the park that are downstream of the Nature Center, for a total of 11 miles now closed. The cleanup effort is expected to take "days or even weeks." Source: [Appen Media](#), Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area ([6/30](#), [7/3](#)), [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#)

## **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area**

### **Wildfire caused by firework**

On June 28, a brush fire was started by a "fountain-style" firework at Vickery Creek. Staff from the NPS, Roswell fire and police, and a helicopter from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources responded to the burn and were able to contain it at roughly one-third of an acre. Source: [Atlanta News First](#)

## **Cumberland Gap National Historical Park**



## **Hiker rescue**

On June 28, a 22-year-old hiker in a remote area of the park, just north of the Tennessee border in Virginia, experienced head trauma. NPS staff responded to the incident and called for further resources. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency was notified and worked with the Tennessee National Guard to dispatch a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter. The helicopter utilized a hoist to extract the patient and flew them to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville. Source: [U.S. Army](#)

## **Everglades National Park**

### **Shark attack**

On June 23, a person was washing their hands off the side of a boat while out fishing in Florida Bay when a shark leapt out of the water and bit the individual's hand. The individual was pulled off the boat into the water and other people on the boat pulled them back in. NPS staff treated the individual's wounds and Miami Dade Fire Rescue transferred the individual to a local hospital. The attack was caught on film by another individual on the boat. The footage indicates the species was likely a bull shark. Source: [ABC News](#)

## **Everglades National Park**

### **Partner groups in legal battle**

The Everglades Foundation has filed a civil complaint against a former employee, a scientist, for stealing "trade secrets" and destroying files when they left the organization in February 2022. It claims a possible motive of personal enrichment or for the benefit of Friends of the Everglades, where the individual is now a paid contractor. The items in question include internal memos and reports, white papers, and confidential presentations. The scientist worked for the foundation for 17 years and has done research in the Everglades for 42 years. In May, a circuit judge found the individual guilty of indirect criminal contempt. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled and the individual plans to appeal the ruling. Source: [Inside Climate News](#)

## **Glacier National Park**

### **Bear activity**

Many Glacier Campground has experienced a recent uptick in bear activity, including one possible incident of obtaining human food. Rangers are investigating the incident. The park enacted a ban on soft-sided camping (tents, hammocks, soft-sided campers) until further notice and the Many Glacier backcountry wilderness campground has been temporarily closed. Source: [Flathead Beacon](#)

## **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**

### **Horse rescue**

Due to rising lake levels, a wild horse and its foal were trapped in an area with little food. Though typically a horse would be able to make the quarter-mile swim to other areas with food resources, it is suspected that the mother stayed with its newborn until they were both too weak to make the trip. Starting on June 7, NPS staff began monitoring and feeding the horses, which were able to drink water from the lake. Due to the popularity of the beach for camping and boating, the horses posed a safety concern for visitors. A team of NPS staff, members of the Navajo Nation, and horse specialists from nearby Best Friends Animal Society were able to sedate and move the animals into a horse trailer on an NPS boat. The two were brought to Best Friends in Kanab, Utah, and are being rehabilitated. Once the foal is weaned off its mother's milk, the two will be evaluated for adoption. If they are unable to be adopted out, they will be kept at the Best Friends facility. Source: [The Salt Lake Tribune](#)

## **Grand Canyon National Park**

### **Hiker fatality**

On July 2, a 57-year-old was on an eight-mile-hike near Tuweep when they became unconscious. That night, an NPS ranger found the individual and they were pronounced deceased. Temperatures that day were over 100 degrees, and up to 114 in some parts of the canyon. The death is under investigation by the Mohave County Medical Examiner.

Source: [WAAY](#)

## **Guadalupe Mountains National Park**

### **Fire danger closures**

On June 28, due to extreme fire danger, the park closed all trails in the Wilderness, the McKittrick Canyon Road and Visitor Center, the Dog Canyon area, and the Frijole Ranch area. Source: [Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)

## **Joshua Tree National Park**

### **Fire danger closure**

The park closed public access to the Covington Flats area from June 30 through July 5 due to extreme fire danger. The Covington Flats area "contains most of the important Joshua tree populations within the park." Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)

## **Kenai Fjords National Park**

### **Airplane accident**

On June 26, near the southwest beach of Aialik Glacier, a single engine aircraft had a rough landing that disabled the aircraft. No injuries were reported. The park is working with the owner of the plane to remove it from the beach. Source: [Kenai Fjords National Park](#)

## **Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

## **6 deaths over Fathers Day weekend, 1 other that week**

Over June 17-18, Fathers Day weekend, the park experienced many incidents, including six fatalities. Three people were killed in a multi-vehicle accident, two people drowned, and one person died of an apparent suicide (see the [6/21/23 Coalition Report](#)). Furthermore, the park rescued 23 people and responded to multiple criminal incidents, including assault, theft, and drug use. Source: [Arizona Public Radio](#)

On June 22, two people rented a pontoon boat from Las Vegas Boat Harbor in Boulder City. That afternoon, one of them jumped off the boat and did not resurface. It is suspected that the individual drowned. The search for the individual is ongoing. Source: [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#)

## **Lake Meredith National Recreation Area**

### **Body found**

In the morning on June 21, the body of an 18-year-old was found in shallow water at Spring Canyon. The individual's body was sent to Lubbock for an autopsy, but preliminary results did not determine the cause of death. The incident is under investigation by the NPS and Cactus Police Department. Source: [ABC 7 News](#)

## **North Cascades National Park**

### **Bear activity**

On May 28 and 31, a black bear got into food left out by visitors at the Cascade Pass parking lot. The park has now banned the consumption of food at the lot and the adjacent Johannesburg camp is closed to overnight use. Park staff are working to haze bears away from the site to deter them from further seeking food at the site. Source: [GoSkagit.com](#)

## **Olympic National Park**

### **Sexual abuse of minor**

On June 28, a 34-year-old was indicted by a federal grand jury for two counts of sexual abuse of a minor. The individual is accused of meeting a 15-year-old through a social media app, sexually molesting them during a first encounter, and raping the individual during a second encounter. The alleged assaults took place in the park. The case is being investigated by the Investigative Services Branch of the NPS and the Port Angeles Police Department. Source: [United States Attorney's Office: Western District of Washington](#)

## **Reconstruction Era National Historical Park**

### **Lawsuit about historic preservation easement**

*The Post and Courier* published [an article](#) about the historic Robert Smalls House, which is owned privately, with an easement to the Historic Beaufort Foundation to accommodate public viewing while the home remains a full-time residence. The National

Park Service interprets the site through tours as a key story of Reconstruction. The foundation has sued the owners, saying that current tour use violates their easement and is detrimental to the historic resources and the local community. The private owners have considered transferring the home to the National Trust, which would later transfer it to the NPS. The foundation is opposed to those actions. Source: *The Post and Courier*

## **Rocky Mountain National Park**

### **Hiker fatality**

On July 2, a 25-year-old hiker fell and was pulled underwater at West Creek Falls. The individual died in the accident and their body was recovered that evening. The following day, the victim's body was flown by Northern Colorado Interagency Helitack to the Upper Beaver Meadows area. They were then transferred to the Larimer County (CO) Coroner/Medical Examiner's Office, which will determine the cause of death. NPS staff were supported in the incident by the Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Estes Park Health, Estes Park Police Department, and Estes Valley Crisis Advocates. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)

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

- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - The 28-foot boat that ran aground on the beach near Hatteras Village (see [6/21/23 Coalition Report](#)) was removed from the beach on June 25. The boat's owner hired a contractor to use a crane and lift it over the dune and onto a trailer. The northbound lane of Highway 12 was closed during the retrieval and then reopened. Source: [WITN](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - The 37-year-old individual who disappeared after falling into the water while kayaking on Lake Crescent on June 9 (see [6/21/23 Coalition Report](#)) was found deceased on June 21. Christian Aid Ministries supported the NPS with the use of a remote operated underwater vehicle and the individual's body was found at a depth of 394 feet. Source: [The News Tribune](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On June 27, the park reopened the Hurricane Ridge area. It had been closed after a fire destroyed the Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge on May 7 (see [5/10/23 Coalition Report](#)). Parking will be limited to 175 cars at a time and 315 daily vehicles due to limited restroom capacity, provided through portable toilets. The fire investigation is ongoing. The day lodge area is fenced and closed to the public for safety. Once the investigation is complete, a clean-up process will begin. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On July 1, the park opened Generals Highway after a closure of over three months. The road was closed due to severe winter storm damage. Road construction is still underway and traffic lights will be used in places for one-lane vehicle travel. Source: [The Sentinel](#)

- *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* - On June 21, an individual pleaded not guilty at their first court appearance, in connection with the diversion of water from the Platte River within the park (See [9/7/22 Coalition Report](#)). The individual faces federal charges of vandalism and tampering. Source: [Manistee News Advocate](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel and Cabins reopened on July 1. The hotel has been closed since the June 2022 record floods, which damaged the area's wastewater system. A new system has been built and is now operational. The Mammoth Campground is still being repaired. Source: [Yellowstone National 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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