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**The Coalition Report**  
**Wednesday, June 21, 2023**

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**Happy Summer Solstice!**

**Coalition Actions**

The Coalition submitted extensive [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management on its proposed rule on conservation and landscape health. Along with detailed, technical comments, the letter expresses support for the intent of the proposed rule and its goal to elevate conservation to the level of other land uses. To support the rule and encourage public engagement, the Coalition also published a humorous "[gifsplainer](#)" on our website.

We submitted detailed comments on four proposed air tour management plans and environmental assessments on [Haleakalā National Park](#), [Mount Rushmore National Memorial](#), [Badlands National Park](#), and [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#).

Coalition Members Maria Burks and Phil Francis were featured on a *National Parks Traveler* [podcast](#) to discuss their favorite parks to kick off the summer season.

The Coalition issued a [press release](#) applauding the Department of Interior for ordering a 20-year withdrawal of public lands surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park from new oil and gas leasing and mining claims.

We signed a [joint letter](#) to Congress expressing opposition to S. 1185, the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2023. The bill would prohibit the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior from regulating the use of lead ammunition and tackle on lands and waters under their jurisdiction.

The Coalition signed a [joint letter](#) to the President supporting the designation of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument.

The Coalition issued an [update](#) to its 2022 report documenting the impact of national monuments. It recognizes the monuments recently designated and identifies four lands in need of additional protections: the 1908 Springfield Race Riot Site, Black Wall Street, Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni, and Berryessa Snow Mountain.

Wondering how the Coalition decides to get involved with an issue? Read our [new blog post](#).

Wondering how the Coalition funds its work? Through generous supporters like you! [Consider making a contribution today](#).

### **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.*

- *Springfield Race Riot special resource study* - On June 13, the NPS delivered the 1908 Springfield Race Riot Special Resource Study to Congress. It found that the site meets all four criteria necessary to be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Park System. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *E-bikes in parks* - On June 21, the National Park Service opened a [public comment period](#) on a programmatic assessment of the impacts of electrical bicycle (e-bike) use in national parks. This follows court direction to complete an analysis consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Cybersecurity risks at DOI* - Congressional testimony by the Office of the Inspector General revealed that the Department of the Interior has a "disturbing" number of cybersecurity risks, including easily-hacked passwords and a lack of multifactor authentication. They made recommendations for fixing these issues. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *Regional haze plan lawsuit* - On June 15, the National Parks Conservation Association, Environmental Integrity Project, and Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency for failing to enforce the Regional Haze Rule required by the Clean Air Act. The EPA has a mandate to approve or reject state haze plans within 18 months. It has failed to do so for seven states. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *DOI wildfire goals for 2023* - On June 14, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack issued [a joint memo](#) articulating 2023 efforts to invest in the wildland fire workforce, increase hazardous fuels treatments, do more post-fire restoration, and fund more wildland fire science. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Op-ed on wildfire solutions* - *The Washington Post* published [an op-ed](#) by Jennifer K. Balch, a fire scientist and director of the Environmental Data Science Innovation and Inclusion Lab at University of Colorado at Boulder, about three solutions to the increases in wildfire intensity. The op-ed focuses on building fire-resistant homes, using more prescribed burning, and mitigating the number of human-caused fires. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Op-ed on "new civil service system"* - *The New Hampshire Bulletin* published [an op-ed](#) by Tyler Pare that makes a case for a modernized version of the Civilian Conservation Corps that would give Americans a better sense of community and civic duty. Source: *New Hampshire Bulletin*
- *NPS photo contest winners* - The National Park Foundation announced the winners of the 2022 Share the Experience photo contest. 8,000 photos were submitted. The winning image of an Eastern Collared Lizard at Wupatki National Monument will be featured on the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. The NPF and co-sponsor Booz Allen Hamilton have opened the 2023 contest, which is open through December 31. Source: [National Park Foundation](#)
- *"Black outdoorsy groups"* - *NBC News* published [an article](#) about the growing number of groups providing safe spaces for Black people to enjoy outdoor activities in the U.S. The article notes that only 6% of visitors to NPS units are Black. Source: *NBC News*

## **Around the Parks**

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

- *Acadia National Park* - On June 15, the park announced that they are offering a new 10-year concession business opportunity for narrated interpretive bus tours and transportation in the park to up to three operators. The contract will begin in 2024. Proposals are due by September 29. Source: [Acadia National Park](#)
- *American World War II Heritage Cities Program* (an NPS-administered program) - The NPS has opened up 2023 nominations for Heritage Cities in 36 states. They are due by September 1. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Appalachian National Scenic Trail* - On June 12, the Clarke County (VA) Board of Supervisors approved a pedestrian bridge design to help Appalachian Trail hikers cross VA-7. The concept was designed with input from the NPS, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club. The bridge is expected to cost

\$7 million, to be obtained by the Virginia Department of Transportation and Clarke County. Source: [The Winchester Star](#)

- *Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, Booker T Washington National Monument* - *U.S. News and World Report* published [a profile](#) on Superintendent Jim Bailey, particularly his passion for history. Source: *U.S. News and World Report*
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - The Assateague Island and Toms Cove Visitor Centers went cashless starting on June 16. Source: [WBOC](#)
- *Badlands National Park* - *NewsCenter1* published [an article](#) about the park's Fossil Preparation Lab, which is both an important part of the park's scientific findings, as well as a popular site for visitors. Source: *NewsCenter1*
- *Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial* (a unit of Minidoka National Historic Site) - *The Kitsap Sun* published [an article](#) about the effort to construct a visitor center at the park. The \$4 million project is close to having all the needed funding in hand, including a Japanese American Confinement Sites grant and a large contribution from the David & Carol Myers Foundation. The visitor center is likely to be started in early 2024 and to be completed by early 2025. Source: *Kitsap Sun*
- *Biscayne National Park* - The *BBC* published [an article](#) about Sir Lancelot Garfield Jones, who helped get Biscayne established as a national monument (later to be designated a national park). Lancelot was the son of a former slave and his family were the first Black people to own property in the Florida Keys. Source: *BBC*
- *Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park* - On June 16, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland visited the park with federal, state, and local leaders. She highlighted the park's work to strengthen the local economy, increase access to outdoor recreation, and honor the history of American industrialization. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The parkway has completed slope repairs between milepost 121.4 and 136, and that section is now open. Bridge projects at milepost 61.6 and 121.4 will begin in late June. Work is ongoing near milepost 127.9, including temporary closures. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On June 14, a Kemp's Ridley sea turtle was spotted nesting at the park, a rare occurrence. The turtle is "the most critically endangered sea turtle in the world." Source: [WTKR](#)
- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - *The News and Observer* published [an article](#) about wild horses that are able to swim among the Outer Banks islands. Source: *The News and Observer*

- *Charles Pinckney National Historic Site* - The park recently completed a rehabilitation of 34 windows at the Snee Farmhouse, with support from the Maintenance Action Team, Historic Preservation Training Center, and the Student Conservation Association. The \$109,000 project was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Charles Pinckney National Historic Site](#)
- *Fort Smith National Historic Site* - On June 14, the Friends of Recreational Trails and Park Partners of Fort Smith announced a \$250,000 commitment to the May Branch trail, a multi-use trail along the Arkansas Riverfront in downtown Fort Smith. In 2019, the park announced a \$750,000 Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program grant to acquire and construct 1.36 mile of the trail. The funding has been delayed by a legal issue on the easements, which is currently being handled by the State of Arkansas. Source: [Talk Business and Politics](#)
- *George Washington Birthplace National Monument* - The park, in collaboration with the Organization of American Historians, recently completed a study, "Upon This Land: Seven Generations of the Washington Family and the Residents of Popes Creek and Mattox Neck." It focuses on the history of agriculture, families, and labor (including enslaved labor) between 1650 and 1813. A virtual public talk on the study will take place today, June 21, at 6 pm (EDT). Source: [George Washington Birthplace National Monument](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - The *Daily Inter Lake* published [an article](#) about the park's efforts to solve housing issues by leasing vacation rentals and apartments from local homeowners for their seasonal employees. Currently, 18 employees are housed in these rentals. Source: *Daily Inter Lake*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On June 15, the Department of the Interior announced its formal process for developing future operating guidelines for the Colorado River and coordinated operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Current guidelines are set to expire at the end of 2026. The Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement is open for written public comments until August 15. This process is separate from the recent Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that revised interim guidelines from now through 2026. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The *Los Angeles Times* published [an article](#) about efforts by Colorado River Basin Tribes to be more involved in post-2026 decision making about river flow and use. There are 30 federally recognized Tribes who have a stake in the river. Source: *Los Angeles Times*
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Point Reyes National Seashore* - A science

communication intern for the Point Reyes National Seashore Association, Claire Baker, created [a storymap](#) about sudden oak death in the two parks. Source: [San Francisco Bay Area Network Inventory and Monitoring Network Bi-Monthly Update](#)

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On June 8, the NPS announced the selection of 16 businesses to be awarded concession contracts for guided river trip services in the park from January 1, 2024, until December 31, 2033. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - The park has started the third phase of the Snake River Gateways Project at "the future Moose Landing" area. The \$13 million project includes a two-vehicle boat ramp, restrooms, expanded parking, benches, and educational displays. The project is being funded by the NPS and Grand Teton National Park Foundation. The project is expected to be complete in Fall 2024. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The *Citizen Times* published [an article](#) about a 15-year salamander study in the park by students from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Tennessee State University. The study is monitoring salamander populations for chytrid fungus and ranavirus. The park has had fluxes of the two diseases over time. Source: *Citizen Times*
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - The park will soon embark on a \$25 million upgrade of the bathhouse, picnic area, retaining wall, viewing terraces, and other amenities at China Beach. The project is expected to be complete in 2025. \$10 million in funding comes from the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the remainder from NPS sources. Source: [Richmond Review/Sunset Beacon](#)
- *Home of Franklin D Roosevelt National Historic Site* - On June 5, the NPS announced that it has cancelled the Request for Proposals for the Hyde Park Drive-in Movie Theatre concession. During the proposal process, the NPS said it received "valuable feedback and suggestions from interested applicants." A new RFP will reduce restrictions and increase the competitiveness of the opportunity. The new RFP is expected to be released at the end of summer, and a prospective operator can utilize the winter season to make improvements before the 2024 summer season. Source: [Poughkeepsie Journal](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - The *NWI Times* published [an article](#) about the Marquette Greenway, a multi-use trail that will eventually run 58 miles from Chicago, Illinois, through Indiana (including Indiana Dunes) to New Buffalo, Michigan. 20 of the trail's 44 segments are complete, with an estimated completion date of 2028. Superintendent Paul Labovitz is quoted in the article, asking for expediency to get it done so that the NPS can also finish its section. Source: *NWI Times*, [Friends of Berrien County Trails](#)

- *Isle Royale National Park* - The U.S. Coast Guard 9th District has proposed a rule to authorize the restriction of most lifts to every half-hour between 7am and 7pm on weekdays at the Portage Lake Lift Bridge, starting in mid-July. It has previously lifted for all boats at any time, leading to frequent backlogs of vehicle traffic. Boats over 300 feet will continue to lift the bridge at any time due to their size and limited maneuverability. The NPS had provided public comment that the new operations will cause additional expenses for the park's Ranger III boat, which will impact passengers. Source: [The Daily Mining Gazette](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - *Smithsonian Magazine* published [an article](#) about the comeback of wolves at the park. A survey of wolves in 2018 showed only two wolves on the island. Scientists translocated several wolves from the mainland to the island, and they are now thriving with their own litters of pups, and the latest survey showed 31 wolves. Moose populations have declined from 2,060 individuals in 2019 to 967 this year, mostly due to starvation rather than wolf kills. The primary winter food source for the moose, balsam fir saplings, are infested with spruce budworms. Source: *Smithsonian Magazine*
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument* - On June 8, the park held a ribbon cutting event at the Evers family home to designate it and the nearby lot officially as a national monument. In attendance were Evers family members, numerous regional partners and local leaders, and staff and volunteers from the NPS site, the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute, and the Trust for Public Land. The commemoration included other events throughout the weekend and leading up to June 12, the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. Source: [Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument](#)
- *Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship* (an NPS program administered by the National Park Foundation), *Vicksburg National Military Park* - *The Daily Journal* published [an article](#) about the selection of Beth Kruse as one of 15 postdoctoral fellows in the 2023 cohort. Beth is a University of Mississippi history instructor who will live and work in Vicksburg, focusing her efforts on untold Black stories from the Civil War. Source: *Daily Journal*
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On June 7, the park announced the September 1 opening of an application period for Commercial Use Authorizations for a variety of recreational opportunities in the park. This round will include single trip guided climbing and photography and art workshops. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - In June, scientists from the park published a 2021 study that a glacier in the park, Stevens, has melted so much that it is no longer considered a glacier. A further 2022 study by a glaciologist from Nichols College demonstrates that Pyramid and Van Trump Glaciers have also melted away. Three other glaciers on Mount Rainier have previously disappeared due to global climate

- change. 26 named glaciers still exist on the mountain. Source: [KUOW](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East* - The NPS opened applications for a long-term lease of the Fort Washington Marina at Piscataway Park. The lease would include a public boat launch, restrooms, 194 wet slips, a boat haul-out pier, office space, laundry facilities, a restaurant facility, and boat repair shop. Proposals are due September 5. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
  - *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On June 14, the park held a ribbon cutting to officially open the United States Park Police Horse Stables and Wells Fargo Education Center. The project also created a universally accessible sidewalk path that connects the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial to the Lincoln Memorial and Reflecting Pool. The facility was built by the Trust for the National Mall, in partnership with the NPS and U.S. Park Police, and with support from Wells Fargo and Sheila Johnson. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)
  - *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (NPS-administered program) - The *Michigan Advance* published [an article](#) about NAGPRA, the current status of Indigenous remains held by institutions in the state of Michigan, and the act of healing the return of remains can provide. Source: *Michigan Advance*
  - *Point Reyes National Seashore* - The park has posted [a summary report](#) of public comments from their recent civic engagement for the Tomales Point Area Plan. There were over 4,000 comments, and the NPS has now identified a proposed action, which would include removal of the tule elk fence and temporary water system, among other actions. The proposed action will be presented for public review and comment later this summer. Source: [Point Reyes National Seashore](#)
  - *Reconstruction Era National Historic Network* (NPS-administered program) - On June 7, the NPS announced the addition of eight new sites in six states to the network. Source: [Reconstruction Era National Historic Network](#)
  - *Salem Maritime National Historic Site* - On June 1, the park opened a new temporary exhibit, "A Tower of Strength: Black Women of the Suffrage Movement." The exhibit will run through July 16. Source: [Salem Maritime National Historic Site](#)
  - *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - The *Los Angeles Times* published [an article](#) about efforts to plant giant sequoia seedlings in Sequoia National Forest and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, a project supported by the Save the Redwoods League. The article highlights the challenges to bringing the species back after extensive wildfires. Source: *Los Angeles Times*
  - *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On June 16, the parks announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for a plan this summer to remove thousands of tree hazards that were killed during the 2021 KNP Complex Wildfire. The project is



likely to continue through 2024. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - The parks have loaned a historic artifact, an iron water jacket "used in at least two silver smelters," to the Mineral Kings Preservation Society, which is now a focal point of a new outdoor mining exhibit at the Three Rivers Historical Museum. A celebration of the exhibit's opening was held on June 15, including a presentation by a preservationist from the NPS. The exhibit was funded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Society for Industrial Archaeology, and the Tulare County Historical Society. Source: [Our Valley Voice](#)
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* - The Sleeping Bear Inn is now booking group reservations for 2024. The historic inn has been closed since the mid-1970s. In March 2022, the NPS issued a 40-year lease to a non-profit, Balancing Environment And Rehabilitation (BEAR), to restore and reopen the inn. All profits from its operation will be reinvested into the Glen Haven Village Historic District. Individual registrations will open soon, as well. Source: [MLive](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - The park has released a summary of comments for their proposed Livestock Plan. It found that comments "overwhelmingly wanted the horses and cattle to remain" rather than the park's preferred alternative to gradually remove them. The final plan will be released later this summer. Source: [The Dickinson Press](#)
- *Timpanogos Cave National Monument* - After a record year of snow, the park has repaired damaged areas of trail and the "rock curtain" above the caves to prevent rockfall, and the caves are now open for the summer season. Source: [Gephardt Daily](#)
- *Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River* - On May 25, the NPS determined that Camp FIMFO, a \$40 million proposal to renovate the Kittatinny campground, was deemed to "fundamentally conflict with the Land and Water Use Guidelines" of the River Management Plan. The project had been approved previously by the Upper Delaware Council in a September 2022 vote. The UDC typically makes recommendations to the NPS; the NPS then makes its own determination. On June 13, the UDC's project advisory committee held a special meeting with the NPS to better understand their determination. Source: [River Reporter](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - On May 9, the Crane Lake Township board reviewed construction bids for a 7,000-square-foot park visitor center and campground at Crane Lake. They selected Max Gray Construction for the visitor center and Casper Construction for the campground. The site will also include a Department of Natural Resources boat landing, playground, upgraded access roads, and utilities. A visitor center at Crane Lake has been in the plans for the park since its establishment in 1975. The \$6 million project is being funded by the State of Minnesota and Iron

Range Resource and Rehabilitation Board. The 29-acre property for the project was purchased by Crane Lake Township with \$950,000 from the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The park will lease the facilities. Exhibits are being designed by the Voyageurs Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, and Native Skywatchers Design, LLC. The building will be ready to lease by Summer 2024.

Source: [The Timberjay](#)

- *Weir Farm National Historical Park* - Park volunteer Gisella Castagna earned the Girl Scout Gold Award for a project that included research and educational programming about the effects of mercury pollution on wildlife and ecosystems at the park, with support from NPS scientists and the nationwide Dragonfly Mercury Project. Source: [Weir Farm National Historical Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The University of Connecticut published [an article](#) about photography professor Janet Prichard's 2022 book, *More than Scenery: Yellowstone, An American Love Story*. The book recently received an IPPY silver medal by the Independent Publisher Book Awards. Source: *UConn Today*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Idaho Capital Sun* published [an article](#) by Michael Poland, the Scientist-in-Charge of the Yellowstone Volcano Observatory, about why scientists monitor geothermal activity at the park, particularly if there is little concern of a volcanic eruption. The article points out that monitoring can notify scientists of other geologic activity such as earthquakes and that lessons learned about volcanology can communicate a lot about other volcanic systems. Source: *Idaho Capital Sun*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Cowboy State Daily* published [an article](#) about the park's challenges to finding enough workers for both the NPS and concessions due to rising visitation, stagnant salaries, and a lack of housing. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*

### **Personnel Changes**

- *Fire and Aviation Management* - Cole Brusa has been selected as the information technology specialist - IT pathways intern for the division's branch of information technology and resource management. Source: [National Park Service Fire and Aviation Management](#)
- *First Ladies National Historic Site* - Megan Parde was selected as the new site manager of the park. Megan has 10 years of NPS experience, most recently as the interpretation program manager at Tonto National Monument. She will begin her new role in July. Source: [First Ladies National Historic Site](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Rainbow Bridge National Monument* - Heidie Grigg was selected as the new chief of external affairs. Heidie has 25 years

of NPS experience, most recently as the chief of commercial services at the park, as well as the acting chief of external affairs. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)

## **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**

- Betty Day Allen, 93, passed away on June 8. Betty "volunteered many summers on the East Coast as a docent with the National Park Service." Source: [Standard-Examiner](#)
- Troy Owen Banzhaf, 51, passed away on June 6. Troy was an interpretation supervisor at Pea Ridge National Military Park for many years. In his memory, *The Pea Ridge Times* published [an article](#) about his impact on the park. Source: [Pea Ridge Times](#)
- William Castro Jr., 87, passed away on May 31. For a time, William worked in maintenance at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park. Source: [Hawaii Tribune-Herald](#)
- John Charles Donaldson, 78, passed away on May 31. John worked for the NPS for 34 years, including time at Saguaro National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Death Valley National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and Badlands National Park. He retired as the first Site Director of Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve and retired in 2001. Source: [Legacy/Bakersfield Californian](#)
- James Arthur Durward, 88, passed away on May 7. James worked at Rocky Mountain National Park and Yellowstone National Park for a time. Source: [Estes Park News](#)
- Jo Billy "Bill" Fluharty, 83, passed away on May 19. Bill worked for the NPS for several decades and retired in 1995 as the chief ranger at Petersburg National Battlefield. Source: [TimesWV.com](#)
- Robert "Bobby" Max Gray, Sr., 90, passed away on June 14. Bobby "had a long and distinguished career, having retired from both the United States Coast Guard and the National Park Service." Source: [Island Free Press](#)
- Angela June Morrow, 47, passed away on February 19. Angela was born in Yosemite National Park and "pursued a career in childcare with the National Park

Service." Source: [Mariposa Gazette](#)

- George "Eb" E. Shortle, Jr, 82, passed away on April 18. Eb volunteered at Channel Islands National Park, "greeting visitors and leading hikes." Source: [Santa Barbara Independent](#)
- William "Bill" Frederick Speers III, 83, passed away on May 31. From 1989 to 2002, he "spent his summers working on the road crew at Crater Lake National Park." Source: [Legacy/Herald](#)
- James "Jim" Watt, 85, passed away on May 27. Jim was the Director of the Interior from 1981 to 1983 under President Ronald Reagan. Source: [WyoFile](#), [Wikipedia](#)
- Charles Wilkinson, 81, passed away on June 6. Charles was a lawyer, law professor, and author, and acted as special counsel to the Department of the Interior, specializing in water, Indigenous rights, and public lands. Source: [The Colorado Sun](#)

### **In the News**

- Butch Farabee and David Lovelock have published a new book, *Southern Arizona Search and Rescue History: 1901-2000*. The book is available for free online on [butchfarabee.com](#). Butch worked for the NPS for over 34 years at many different parks. He is also the author of several other books related to search and rescue in national parks. Source: [SARNews](#) by Search and Rescue Council (SARCI), [butchfarabee.com](#)
- On June 13, Holly S. Lohuis gave a presentation at the Camarillo Public Library called, "Whales and Dolphins and Their Climate Connection." Holly worked for a time at Channel Islands National Park. Source: [VC Reporter](#)

### **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](#)
- *Amache National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open until June 23](#) on a foundation document to guide the new national park unit. Source: [Amache National Historic Site](#)
- *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](#)
- *Guilford Courthouse National Military Park* - Public comment is [open until July 1](#) on a preliminary Development Concept Plan. Source: [Guilford Courthouse National Military Park](#)
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument* - Public comment is [open until June 30](#) on a draft Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment that will guide park operations and planning. Source: [Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - Public comment is [open until June 30](#) on a plan to construct a 2.5-mile Chisha Foka multi-use trail extension on the parkway. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)
- *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 will be [open from June 26 to 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**

- *Renewable Energy Rule* - On June 15, the Department of the Interior announced a proposed Renewable Energy Rule for the Bureau of Land Management. It would reduce fees for these types of projects by 80%, streamline review of applications in priority areas, and "deliver greater certainty for the private sector." Public comment on the proposed rule is open for 60 days. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New transmission line* - On June 20, the Department of the Interior celebrated the groundbreaking of the TransWest Express Transmission Project, a 730-mile

transmission line from south-central Wyoming through northwestern Colorado and central Utah to southern Nevada. The line will provide 3,000 megawatts of new transmission capacity. The electricity will be generated by the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project, which is partially located on Bureau of Land Management lands. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *\$578 in PILT* - On June 15, the Department of the Interior announced \$578.8 million in 2023 Payments in Lieu of Taxes funding to compensate state and local governments for tax-exempt federal lands. 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 13** - Senate agreed to [S. Res. 248](#), designating June 2023 as "Great Outdoors Month."

### **House Actions**

**June 13** – The Committee on Natural Resources marked up H.R. 1314, the Lodging Options Developed for Government Employees (LODGE) Act. This bill would expand the authority of the Department of the Interior to enter into agreements with housing entities to provide rental housing for employees.

The bill allows the DOI to enter agreements with other federal agencies, state or local governments, tribal governments, or other public or private organizations to develop, construct, rehabilitate, or manage housing for rent to field employees and members of the public 1) on public lands, including National Park System units; 2) off public lands in the vicinity of system units; or 3) on a combination of such lands.

The DOI may allow field employees and members of the public to occupy and lease project quarters.

Field employees and members of the public shall be prohibited from subleasing housing established pursuant to this bill.

To the maximum extent practicable, priority for occupancy in project quarters shall be given to field employees.

The DOI may allow partners in agreements to collect rents directly from housing occupants.

The DOI, upon the expiration of a term of ownership, may renew the housing partnership agreement for terms not to exceed 10 years or may take other specified actions.

The bill modifies the lease-to-build program to allow the DOI to lease federal land and interests in land to qualified persons for the construction of field employee quarters for any period not to exceed 60 years (under current law not to exceed 50 years).

## **Incidents**

*Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.*

### **Acadia National Park**

#### **Culvert collapse**

On June 20, the park closed the one-way 0.7-mile segment of Park Loop Road between Kebo Street and Sieur de Monts in Bar Harbor due to emergency culvert repairs. Road damage occurred last winter, but only recently culminated in a full blockage, flooding, and the partial collapse of two culverts on the northern edge of Great Meadow. The park is working to open the road as quickly as possible; no opening date has yet been announced. Source: [Acadia National Park](#)

### **Big Bend National Park**

#### **Illegal dumping**

On June 17, rangers received reports of trash along the Panther Path. They found a large dump, consisting of many bags of trash, food wrappers, and human waste. Staff from the NPS and Big Bend Natural History Association cleaned it up. Source: [Chron](#)

### **Cape Hatteras National Seashore**

#### **Preponderance of balloons**

The park's staff have collected 938 balloons from the beach this year, 370 in May alone. In all of 2022, the park collected just over 700 balloons. Source: [Island Free Press](#)

### **Cape Hatteras National Seashore**

#### **Boat grounds on beach**

On June 18, a 28-foot boat lost power about 150 meters past the breakers near the northeastern entrance to Hatteras Village. The captain dropped anchor, but strong winds washed the boat ashore and it grounded on the beach. Four people were onboard and none were reported to be injured in the incident. The NPS, U.S. Coast Guard, and the owner are working to remove the vessel from the beach. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#), [Independent Tribune](#)

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

### **Protesters block road**

On June 11, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland was expected to arrive to the park to celebrate the recent ban on oil and gas drilling within a 20-mile radius of the park to protect culturally significant sites. Protesters, a group of Navajo landowners, blocked the road and prevented the delegation from arriving. Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said the celebration was disappointing and disrespectful because allotment owners did not support the ban and fear their parcels are now landlocked. Secretary Haaland said, "To see any road into any of our national parks or our public lands blocked was heartbreaking because our public lands belong to all Americans." Source: [Navajo-Hopi Observer](#)

### **Channel Islands National Park**

#### **Charter boat sinks**

On June 15 around 2 am, a charter vessel struck a rock and began taking on water near Santa Cruz Island. Everyone on board, which consisted of ten passengers and four crew members, left the ship via a life raft. The captain anchored the vessel in place. The Coast Guard issued a marine radio broadcast asking for help from nearby vessels and dispatched a boat and helicopter from the mainland. A nearby vessel was able to take on the passengers and crew, and they were later transferred to boats from the Coast Guard and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to return to the mainland. The Coast Guard found the charter vessel still anchored and fully submerged, and a sheen was seen on the water. The Coast Guard is working with other partner agencies to respond to the pollution. Source: [KSBY](#)

### **Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park**

#### **Guardrail lawsuit dismissed**

A federal court dismissed a lawsuit brought against the park in August 2023 that claimed the NPS' failure to install guardrails in a section of the parking lot led to a car accident. Source: [Virginia Lawyers Weekly](#)

### **Grand Teton National Park**

#### **Visitor touches bison calf**

On June 4, two individuals were observed approaching and touching a bison calf at the southern end of Elk Ranch Flats. The park has images of the incident and is asking the public for any information they might have about the incident or the individuals. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)

### **Grand Teton National Park**

#### **Suspicious dam release**

On May 25, the amount of water leaving the Jackson Lake Dam spiked from a steady 280



cubic feet per second at 7 pm to 1,500 cfs by 8:30 pm. Water flows then returned to 280 cfs around 11 pm. The Bureau of Reclamation has said that this was not a planned release and they are investigating the matter. The impacts of the surge on downstream ecosystems is said to be "minimal" and "didn't cause any harm." The BOR had recently run into disagreement with the Wyoming State Game and Fish Department over flow rates. The BOR had wanted to put the river at 50 cfs to prevent overage flows on the downstream Milner Dam, while Game and Fish wanted higher flows to protect fisheries in Oxbow Bend. A compromise was reached at 280 cfs. River runners and environmentalists have also criticized the low flows, leading to speculation that the flow spike may have been an instance of "monkeywrenching." The investigation is ongoing. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

## **Grand Teton National Park**

### **Bridge washes out**

On June 8, a bridge over Sheffield Creek, near the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, collapsed and washed away. The bridge leads to the Sheffield Campground on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Five families and concession employees were stranded at the campground. NPS staff were contacted and were able to find a bridge in their maintenance facilities that was no longer in use. Within 24 hours, they cut it from 62-feet to 45-feet, reinforced it, added safety edges, hauled it to the site, and set it in place. They tested the weight limit and were able to allow the group to cross the river. Source:

[Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

## **Gulf Islands National Seashore**

### **Severe weather**

On June 16, the park closed the Fort Pickens area due to a severe weather event that resulted in flooding and power outages. The park is assessing conditions and making repairs; no reopening date has yet been announced. Source: [Gulf Islands National Seashore](#)

[Seashore](#)

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

### **Volcano eruption**

On June 7, Kīlauea volcano began erupting from the Haleama'uma'u crater. Scientists are monitoring hazards from volcanic gas and volcanic glass fragments that can fall downwind. No infrastructure is currently threatened and the eruption took place in an area already closed to the public. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#), [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Facebook page](#)

## **Joshua Tree National Park**

### **Wildfire**

On June 10, a wildfire started in the area of Geology Tour Road. Staff from the Bureau of

Land Management, NPS Fire, and CalFire responded, including several helicopter resources. As of June 17, the Geology Fire was 100% contained at 1,088 acres. Several areas nearby are currently closed to hiking, and staff are continuing to check for heat and starting to assess rehabilitation needs. Source: [Desert Sun](#), [Inciweb](#)

## **Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

### **Possible suicide**

On June 16, a 20-year-old individual "appeared to have intentionally went over the edge near Sugarloaf Mountain." They died from the jump. NPS staff, Mohave County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue, and a Western Air Rescue Kingman Department of Public Safety helicopter assisted with the recovery of the individual's body, which was located in steep, hazardous terrain. An investigation of the incident is underway. Source: [Mohave Valley Daily News](#)

## **Lake Mead National Recreation Area**

### **High flow warnings**

From June 20-22, the Southern Nevada Water Authority will hold back water, then make releases, resulting in a series of low and higher flow events. Visitors are advised to avoid lower Las Vegas Wash, downstream of Northshore Road. Source: [KTNV](#)

## **Mount Rainier National Park**

### **Climber fatality**

On the night of June 5, two guides spotted an unresponsive climber 30-50 feet down in a crevasse at about 11,500 feet near the Ingraham Direct route. They reported it to authorities and a helicopter was sent to investigate the following morning. A five-member crew was able to remove the individual's body. The Pierce County (WA) Medical Examiner will work to identify the individual, who is believed to be an 80-year-old known to be on the route May 30-31 and reported missing on June 1. A five-day search ensued, including responders from the park's A-STAR helicopter, the Army National Guard 1-168th General Support Aviation Battalion Blackhawk helicopter, and ground teams. The individual was an experienced climber who once held the record for the oldest person to climb Mt. Everest and this was their 50th ascent of Mt. Rainier. Source: [The Spokesman-Review](#), [Mount Rainier National Park](#)

## **Natchez Trace Parkway**

### **Illicit sexual activity**

On June 7, law enforcement conducted an operation to detect and apprehend individuals engaging in "illicit sexual activity" in the parkway's parking lots and other public areas. Two individuals were charged with disorderly conduct and indecent exposure. The parkway's chief ranger has stated that this type of operation is a priority for 2023. Source: [WKRN](#)

## **National Mall and Memorial Parks**

### **NPS truck crashes into river**

On June 14, an NPS truck crashed through a guardrail and came to a stop while dangling over, and partially submerged by, the Potomac River near the intersection of Ohio Drive and Buckeye Drive in East Potomac Park. The driver was able to self-extricate and was unharmed. A tow truck and DC Fire and EMS responded. The cause of the accident has not been released. Source: [NBC Washington](#)

## **Olympic National Park**

### **Missing backpacker found**

On June 5, a 44-year-old began a three-day, 40-mile backpacking trip, starting from Deer Ridge Trailhead. The family had contact with the individual via text the morning of June 6. The individual was due back in Seattle by midday on June 7, but did not arrive. On June 9, the NPS began a ground search, including personnel from the park's Search and Rescue team, Washington State SAR Planning Unit, Quilcene Fire & Rescue, Snohomish County Volunteer SAR, Kitsap County ESAR, Jefferson County SAR, Olympic Mountain Rescue, Pierce County ESAR, Tacoma Mountain Rescue, Clallam County SAR, Mount Rainier National Park, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Coast Guard. On June 10, the individual exited the wilderness with the assistance of other hikers, via the Dosewallips River Trail. The individual was driven to Quilcene, Washington, where they met with medical responders, park staff, and family. Source: [Olympic National Park](#), [KOMO](#)

## **Olympic National Park**

### **Kayaking fatality**

On June 9, two individuals were kayaking on Lake Crescent near the Log Cabin Resort. The kayak of a 37-year-old began taking on water until they were forced to abandon it and enter the water. The other kayaker attempted to rescue the person in the water, but their kayak overturned and they also entered the water. The second individual was able to swim to shore, but the 37-year-old was unable to. Neither individual wore a life jacket. Staff from the Log Cabin Resort responded with a boat to the place they were last seen, but were unable to locate them. Staff from the NPS and Clallam County Fire District 2 searched the area for several hours, but were unable to find them. As of June 13, the individual was not found and is assumed to be deceased. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

## **Rocky Mountain National Park**

### **Climbing accident**

On May 21, a 37-year-old took a 30-foot fall while on rope on a "mixed route on Taylor Peak." NPS staff were assisted by Northern Colorado Med Evac's air ambulance to determine the individual's exact location. Due to the location and the individual's injuries, the park requested assistance from a Colorado National Guard helicopter from Buckley

Air Force Base to extricate the individual via a hoist operation. The individual was flown to Upper Beaver Meadows and transferred to a ground ambulance to Estes Park Health.

Source: [Estes Park News](#)

## **San Juan National Historic Site**

### **Water leak**

On June 14, the park closed the Paseo del Morro trail due to a water leak through an opening in the historic wall. The trail is closed indefinitely until the leak can be repaired.

Source: [San Juan National Historic Site](#)

## **Stonewall National Monument**

### **Pride flags vandalized**

On June 10, about 60 Pride flags along a fence in Christopher Park were ripped down and "snapped in two." The New York Police Department's Hate Crimes Task Force is investigating the incident. A group of individuals was caught on camera in connection with the incident, and the police are looking for any information the public may have. The vandalized flags have been replaced. Source: [Forbes](#)

## **Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River**

### **Drowning**

On May 12, an individual was observed camping near the edge of the Delaware River at a campground in Barryville. The following day, a witness noticed the doors to the individual's van were wide open and the campsite was set up from the previous day. Sullivan County Sheriff's Office was dispatched to the site, where they found a set of clothing on the shore of the river. The following day, a full-scale search was enacted, including responders from the NPS, Sullivan County Sheriff's Office and Dive Task Force, New York and Pennsylvania State Police, Lumberland EMS, and fire companies from Yulan, Highland, Lumberland, White Lake, Kauneonga, and Port Jervis. The individual's body was found washed up near Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania. The individual was not wearing a life jacket. An autopsy confirmed the cause of death was drowning. Source:

[Press Connects](#)

## **Yellowstone National Park**

### **Bear harassment**

Park officials are investigating a video in which an individual exited a car on a park road, then ran "growling, grunting and making barking noises" toward a black bear. The bear ran off and the individual turned toward the camera, ripped off their shirt, flexed, and made "gorilla" noises. The individual apparently has been recorded doing so "numerous times." Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#)

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

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On June 9, the NPS finished its investigation of the June 2 Wahweap Marina fire that damaged several house boats (see [6/7/23 Coalition Report](#)). The report found "the source of the fire was undetermined and accidental in nature." Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - On June 14, the final necropsy results for the mountain lion known as P-22 were released by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and NPS. The postmortem examination was completed by the veterinary pathologists of the San Diego Zoo. P-22 had experienced recent trauma to his head and right eye, including an orbital fracture with bleeding and early stages of scar tissue, consistent with a reported vehicle strike. He also had older traumatic injuries, causing internal injuries. He also had kidney disease and a severe parasitic skin infection due to both mange and ringworm. It was confirmed that he had exposure to five anticoagulant rodenticide compounds, but no evidence of poisoning from those compounds. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)

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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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