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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

Coalition Actions

The Coalition issued a [press release](#) thanking Interior Secretary Deb Haaland for visiting Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni and proposing its designation as a national monument.

We joined with numerous organizations in sending a [letter](#) to Congress opposing [H.R. 1380](#), the Protect America's Rock Climbing (PARC) Act, as it would weaken the 1964 Wilderness Act.

The Coalition submitted [a letter](#) to Shannon Estenoz, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of Interior, on behalf of 16 former federal and state officials with wildlife management experience in Alaska. The letter supports the proposed rule on hunting and trapping in Alaskan national preserves.

We signed [a joint letter](#) to the California Assembly Transportation Committee, expressing concerns with, and requesting amendments to, a draft Direct Contracting Public-Private Partnership Authority I-15 Wildlife Crossings Trailer Bill.

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.

- *Debt ceiling ramifications for NPS* - On June 3, President Biden signed the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 into law, which suspends the nation's debt limit through January 1, 2025 and creates "flat funding" for Fiscal Year 2024. The President's

- draft budget for FY2024 had previously included an increase of 8% for the NPS over current funding to allow for investments in park staffing, scientific research, and safety, among others. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland has said that this proposed cap will have "very real and damaging impacts." Source: [Buckrail](#)
- *New NPS Advisory Board members* - On May 24, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland appointed 15 new members to the National Park Service Advisory Board for a term of four years. The board has been inactive for nearly two and a half years. The board will meet later this year. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
 - *\$21 million for civil rights history* - On May 25, the NPS awarded \$21 million for 37 projects in 16 states through the Historic Preservation Fund's African American Civil Rights grant program. The HPF is funded by revenue from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
 - *\$3.8 million for Civil War battlefields* - On June 1, the NPS announced \$3.8 million in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants through the American Battlefield Protection Program to protect 398 acres on five battlefields in Virginia and West Virginia. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
 - *\$3.4 million for Japanese American incarceration sites* - On May 31, the NPS announced \$3.4 million in Japanese American Confinement Sites grants to support 14 projects across the country. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
 - *9 new national recreational trails* - On June 3, in celebration of National Trails Day, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced the designation of nine new national recreational trails in nine states, comprising 340 miles. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
 - *EV charging station locator tool* - *Design News* published [an article](#) about a new electric vehicle charging station locator tool, developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in collaboration with the NPS. The article highlights that there are currently still limited options near national parks. Source: *Design News*
 - *Supreme Court ruling on Clean Water Act* - On May 25, the Supreme Court made a ruling that redefines the Environmental Protection Agency's authority over wetlands. The National Parks Conservation Association is concerned that the wetlands within many national park units would lose their current protections and is urging that Congress pass legislation protecting the nation's waterways. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
 - *Aerial fire retardant continues* - On June 2, the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana ruled that the U.S. Forest Service can continue to use aerial fire retardant

while it pursues a Clean Water Act permit. The USFS had been sued by the Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics for failing to have a permit. Source: [The Sun](#)

- "We need a new approach to wildfires" - The *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* published [an op-ed](#) by Aubrey Bertram, the staff attorney at Wild Montana, about needed reforms to building and fire codes, subdivision approval processes, and fire-safe construction methods to prevent homes from being destroyed by wildfire in the state of Montana. The op-ed points out that vegetation treatments and prescribed fires alone cannot resolve the issues associated with the urban-wildland interface. Source: *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Amache National Historic Site, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site* - *NPR for Northern Colorado's* "Morning Edition" program featured [a piece](#) about this year's annual pilgrimage ceremony to honor those who lived at the Japanese American incarceration center, particularly the effort to connect the parallel stories of loss, government upheaval, and remembrance between both Amache and nearby Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. Eric Leonard, the new superintendent of the two sites, is quoted in the article. Source: *KUNC*
- *Andersonville National Historic Site* - On May 29, Memorial Day, U.S. Army Corporal Luther H. Story was buried at Anderson National Cemetery. As an 18-year-old in 1950, Luther was injured during a tense conflict of the Korean War, and as his last act, provided cover for his regiment as they withdrew from the fight. He was never seen alive again and his final resting place was a mystery. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery. Last month, a U.S. military lab was able to match DNA from Luther's niece and his late sister to the bones of an "unidentified American soldier" recovered from Korea the month after Luther's final battle. Source: [South Florida SunSentinel](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - *The Big Bend Sentinel* published [an article](#) about current efforts to get much of the park designated as federal wilderness, an effort that has been underway since the late 1970s. Source: *The Big Bend Sentinel*
- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - *The New York Times* published [an interactive article](#) called, "How to Open a National Park for the Summer Season," which focuses on many different aspects of operations at Bryce Canyon. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Camp Nelson National Monument* - The park received the 2023 Thomas D. Clark Award of Excellence from the Kentucky Historical Society for their high quality programming at the site. Source: [Camp Nelson National Monument](#)

- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - *The Provincetown Independent* published [an article](#) about the park's efforts to demolish 44 dilapidated buildings inside the park. The project is supported by \$8.3 million in Great American Outdoors Act funding. About 75% of the buildings will have been taken down by the end of June. Source: *The Provincetown Independent*
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - On May 22, the Provincetown Select Board voted unanimously to send an official complaint to the park about its current Request for Proposals for leasing eight dune shacks in the Peaked Hill Bars Historic District. Several individuals are upset that the NPS has changed course several times about the shacks. Source: [The Provincetown Independent](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - The Southern Environmental Law Center, on behalf of the North Carolina Coastal Federation, sent letters to the park and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, urging them to address threats to public health and safety due to the preponderance of collapsing homes and abandoned septic tanks in Rodanthe. Source: [CoastalReview.org](#)
- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - On June 10, the park will host a Middle Passage Remembrance Ceremony and unveil a new permanent historical marker that shows the location of Portsmouth Village as a Middle Passage arrival site for the Trans-Atlantic slave industry. Recent research by Eastern Carolina Foundation for Equity and Equality, Inc., uncovered documentation confirming the site's history. The ceremony will honor the African ancestors who survived or passed away on the journey through the Middle Passage. Source: [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#)
- *Chaco Culture National Historical Park* - On June 2, the Department of the Interior published a public land order that blocks energy and mining claims within a 10-mile radius of Chaco. The Bureau of Land Management has not issued an oil and gas lease within the buffer zone for the last ten years, and a moratorium on new claims has been in place since January 2022 while the BLM assessed a proposed withdrawal. Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren has publicly criticized the decision, citing that it undermines the Tribe's sovereignty. President Nygren said the Tribe had wanted a five-mile buffer rather than a 10-mile buffer. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#), [Fronteras](#)
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - The park received the Excellence in Historic Preservation and Sustainable Design award from the Maryland Historical Trust for its efforts rehabilitating a historic retaining wall and towpath and combatting flood impacts between McMahons Mill and Lock 42. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - This summer, the park will close the parking lot at Raymondskill Falls on weekends and holidays, requiring all visitors to take a shuttle from the Milford Knob Trailhead. Source: [Lehigh Valley Live](#)

- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - The park recently began the final stage of restoration at George W. Childs Park. The park has been closed since March 2018 due to winter storm damage to utilities, roads, trails, and structures. The restoration will continue through early winter this year and the park is expected to reopen to the public in 2024. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - The park is transitioning to a cashless fee system at Smithfield, Milford, and Turtle Beaches. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - Construction on the bridge across the Polychrome Pass rock glacier at mile 45 of the Denali Park Road has been delayed due to the discovery of more clay than was anticipated. Instead of 30,000 cubic yards of clay to be excavated, there are now 80,000 cubic yards to remove. It is now expected to be completed in 2026 instead of 2025. Source: [Alaska Public Media](#)
- *Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site* - On June 8, a celebration will be held to launch a new Eleanor Roosevelt quarter. The event will be held at the Culinary Institute of America, and co-hosted by the institute, the U.S. Mint, National Park Service, FDR Presidential Library and Museum, and the Roosevelt Family. Source: [Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site](#)
- *Fire Island National Seashore* - Two contracts have been awarded for the stabilization of the Fire Island lighthouse. AJCE Corp. has been awarded the contract to remove the separated shotcrete panels and brick rubble on the northeast side of the lighthouse terrace. Lee Construction, Inc., has been awarded the contract to wrap the lower white day marker with a steel cable mesh system. The tower will remain closed for the duration of both projects, which began on June 6. The Lens Building, Keepers Quarters, and museum store remain open. Source: [Fire Island National Seashore](#)
- *Gateway Arch National Park* - The Jefferson National Parks Association recently launched a new virtual reality experience in the Gateway Arch lobby called "Cobblestones and Courage." It transports visitors to the St. Louis riverfront in the 1850s, highlighting the stories of three different individuals. Source: [Gateway Arch National Park](#)
- *Gateway Arch National Park* - On June 19, Juneteenth, the park will host the Gateway to Inclusive History Conference, including speakers from the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, Reconstruction Era National Historic Network, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Washington University in St. Louis, and Great Rivers Greenway. Source: [Gateway Arch National Park](#)

- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - The park will transition to a cashless fee system at Jacob Riis Park and Sandy Hook, starting on June 24. Source: [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - The Visitor Center Drive has been completely replaced. The Taneytown Road entrance into the park and all other associated areas will reopen on June 8. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - The *Flathead Beacon* published [an article](#) about the West Glacier Historic Gateway Project, which is an effort to restore and beautify the West Entrance area. The grassroots project has been led by a coalition of groups, including Gateway to Glacier Trails, the Montana Department of Transportation, the West Glacier Garden Club, the Center for Native Plants, the Kalispell Daybreak Rotary Club, the Glacier Park Conservancy, local businesses, and community volunteers. Source: *Flathead Beacon*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - The *Lake Powell Chronicle* published [a profile](#) about the new executive director for the Glen Canyon Conservancy, Debbie Moses. Source: *Lake Powell Chronicle*
- *Grand Portage National Monument* - *Minnesota Public Radio* published [an article](#) about Superintendent Heather Boyd, who is the first woman and first Anishinaabe to be the park's superintendent. She has held the position since Summer 2022. The article highlights efforts at the park and across the NPS to partner more effectively with Indigenous groups. Source: *Minnesota Public Radio*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - The Superintendent's Compendium has been updated to allow for small amounts of collection and consumption of specified vegetation, including fruits, berries, nuts and mushrooms. Source: [Buckrail](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park* - The grizzly bear known as 399 is now officially the oldest known grizzly in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem to birth a cub. She is 27 years old and has had eight litters, totaling 18 cubs. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The *Citizen Times* published [a profile](#) about Eric Mingus, whose grandfather and father are now commemorated in a interpretive exhibit at Mingus Mill to better tell the story of Black Americans in the park. Eric was present and performed a musical piece at the unveiling of the new exhibit. Source: *Citizen Times*
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - The PBS TV show, "SciGirls," has filmed an episode at the park, called "Dragonfly Detectives." It features local girls investigating how dragonflies help park scientists monitor water quality. On June 2, the park held a

- special screening of the show, including a meet and greet with the girls and two park staff featured in the show. Source: [Indiana Dunes National Park](#)
- *Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument* - Construction is underway on a visitor contact station on Lookout Mountain. The \$35 million project is being funded by the Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters. The center will be named "Tekakapimək," which is a Penobscot Indian word meaning "as far as one can see." The center is expected to include exhibits created by Wabanaki artists and teachers. Source: [Spectrum News](#)
 - *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - Between June 15 and October 31, the park will implement a new permit system to access the Brooks River Corridor for all activities except redfish subsistence activities. The park piloted a permit system in 2022 and ran a public comment process to finalize the plan. There are currently no limits to the number of permits issued as the park analyzes visitor capacity. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
 - *Keweenaw National Historical Park* - On June 6, the park's Advisory Commission announced \$125,963 in Keweenaw Heritage Grants for 15 projects to preserve and interpret the story of copper on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Source: [Keweenaw National Historical Park](#)
 - *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The U.S. Economic Development Administration has awarded \$32 million in disaster supplemental funding to the park to help maintain access to the lake during the next water deficit. The park has also received \$17 million in Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funding and \$5 million in Great American Outdoors Act funding. The park will engage in studies and designs next, which will eventually be open to public comment. Source: [8 News Now](#)
 - *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The park recently received a donation of 74 children's life jackets from the Assistance League of Las Vegas to stock lifejacket loaner stations at seven locations at the park. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)
 - *Lake Powell National Recreation Area* - Due to rising lake levels, the park has reopened the Halls Crossing Boat Ramp. Dangling Rope Marina remains closed and dilapidated structures there have been removed, so there continues to be no midlake fuel available. Source: [Lake Powell National Recreation Area](#)
 - *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument* - The NPS, in collaboration with Oxford American and Memphis Public Libraries, has announced the program for "No Tears Project Memphis," a series of events taking place June 10-14. The events use conversation and the arts to engage communities in learning about civil rights. Source: [Little](#)

[Rock Central High School National Historic Site](#)

- *National Heritage Areas* (an NPS-administered program), *Piscataway Park* - On May 25, a celebration was held at Piscataway Park in honor of the recent establishment of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area. Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shannon Estenoz, Maryland Governor Wes Moore, Piscataway Indian Nation Chief Mark Tayac, and Piscataway Conoy Tribe Chair Francis Gray attended. Source: [Maryland Matters](#)
- *National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act* (an NPS partnership program) - The U.S. General Services Administration is offering a record number of lighthouses through the NHLPA this year, including at least six to nonprofits and government entities and at least four to the public through auctions. The GSA has issued Notices of Availability for six historic lighthouses in five states thus far. The NPS is responsible for application review for NOAs. Source: [U.S. General Services Administration](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - KHQA published [a profile](#) on NPS volunteer coordinator James Pierce, who is a military veteran and works with many groups to maintain the integrity of the National Mall. Source: KHQA
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the plan to rehabilitate seawalls at Tidal Basin and West Potomac Park. Work is expected to begin in Summer 2024. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)
- *National Natural Landmarks Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On May 18, a celebration was held to recognize a new National Natural Landmark at the Lanphere and Ma-le'I Dunes Complex for its natural and cultural significance. The Ma-le'I Dunes Cooperative Management Area is a 1,000-acre area co-managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is the 602nd site in the National Natural Landmarks Program. Source: [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - Staff from the Historic Preservation Training Center recently conducted a workshop with park maintenance staff at the Thurmond Depot. They worked on the preservation and repair of windows, doors, and wood siding. Preservation on the building will continue this summer and fall. Source: [New River Gorge National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - The Graves Creek area reopened on May 26, including Graves Creek Campground and the East Fork Quinault Trail to Enchanted Valley. The "Pony Bridge" replacement project is ongoing and there may be short delays for hikers. In August, the park will close the Graves Creek Road temporarily to finalize repairs. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

- *Petroglyph National Monument* - The park is closing 30 unofficial access points to the park to prevent degradation at the site. Source: [KQRE](#)
- *Saguaro National Park* - On May 25, a federal judge denied a government motion to partially dismiss a lawsuit challenging the approval of route options for the proposed 280-mile Interstate 11, which would run between Saguaro and Ironwood National Monument. The Federal Highway Administration approved the highway despite postponing an environmental review, in which the public would have the opportunity to comment. The lawsuit, which was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection, Tucson Audubon Society, and Friends of Ironwood Forest, will move forward. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#)
- *Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park* - On May 31, the park, in collaboration with the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, Chesterwood, and the American Federation of the Arts, debuted a new traveling exhibition that features the work of two sculptors: Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French. The exhibit showcases 80 works of art, some never displayed on exhibit before, and demonstrates the American identity in the era between the Civil War and the Great Depression. The national tour opens in Alabama and will travel for the next two years. Source: [Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - A mountain lion known as P-77 has given birth to three female kittens, now known as P-113, P-114, and P-115. They were born in the Simi Hills and located by park staff on May 18. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* - On May 23, the park acquired two parcels of land, consisting of nine acres, from the Leelanau Conservancy. Source: [Federal Register](#)
- *Stonewall National Monument* - The National Parks Conservation Association published an article about their efforts to improve the visitor experience at the park, including the development of a new visitor center with other partners, which will open in 2024. They have also developed a walking tour in three languages, initiated regular partnership meetings, hosted school groups, and developed an audio "talking statues" project. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - On May 24, the St. John Coastal Zone Management Committee heard an application from the NPS to rehabilitate two sections of the Salomon Bay Road, which was damaged in 2017 hurricanes. The road has embankment failures and utilities currently are exposed. The project would involve installation of a stabilized earth retaining wall and a "rock face trapezoidal rockery wall." Source: [Virgin Islands Daily News](#)

- *Voyageurs National Park* - The *Duluth News Tribune* Editorial Board published [an op-ed](#) arguing against proposed restrictions to the use of all-terrain vehicles in wintertime. The restrictions were proposed as part of a "Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan," which held open comments through June 3. Source: *Duluth News Tribune*
- *Voyageurs National Park* - On June 5, the park gave an update on the concession prospectus for the Kettle Falls Hotel operations. No proposals were received by the deadline. The current operator's contract continues through the end of 2023. The park is evaluating its options. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Cowboy State Daily* published [an article](#) that speculated what resources could be extracted from Yellowstone if it were not a national park. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*
- *Yosemite National Park* - The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has confirmed several rare sightings of a wolverine in the Sierra Nevada mountains, including one in Yosemite National Park. Only two wolverines have been confirmed in California during the last 100 years. CDFW is collaborating with the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service to try to collect genetic samples from the wolverine through hair, scat, or saliva. Source: [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)
- *Zion National Park* - The St. George News published [a profile](#) on Natalie Britt, the new President and CEO of the park's non-profit partner, Zion Forever Project. The article also explores her vision for the future of the organization. Source: *St. George News*

Personnel Changes

- *Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument* - Dustin Sene was selected as the new superintendent. Dustin has over 15 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Tonto National Monument. Dustin began his new role on June 4. Source: [KULR8](#)
- *Shiloh National Military Park* - Catherine Bragaw was selected as the new superintendent. Catherine has worked for the NPS for 41 years, most recently as the superintendent at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park. She begins her new role on July 2. Source: [Shiloh National Military Park](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park*
 - Laura Bellasalma was selected as the new supervisory facility operations specialist. Laura has over 16 years of NPS experience, most recently as the facility management systems specialist, housing manager, and fleet manager at Crater Lake National Park.

- Chad Nevalainen was selected as the new Namakan District roads and trails supervisor. He has many years of experience at Voyageurs dating back to 2003, most recently as the Namakan District's roads and trails work leader.
- James Smith was selected as a new biological science technician in June 2022. James has many years of federal service, including three seasons at Voyageurs.
- Cat Berrick was selected as the new wildlife technician in May 2022. Cat has many years of federal service, including one previous season at Voyageurs.
Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- William "Larry" Lawrence Bancroft, 84, passed away on April 11. Larry worked for the NPS for 34 years, including time at Rocky Mountain National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Blue Ridge Parkway, Everglades National Park, and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. He received "numerous awards" from the NPS. Source: [Legacy/The Union](#)
- Doris Omundson Bowen, 90, passed away on November 22, 2022. Doris worked for the NPS for many years and was the "first uniformed woman employee of Point Reyes National Seashore," as well as the "first NPS woman superintendent in the western region of the U.S." In addition to Point Reyes, she worked at Muir Woods National Monument and as superintendent at John Muir National Historic Site, Cabrillo National Monument, and at Lava Beds National Monument before retiring. Source: [Herald and News](#)
- Emily Anne Butteri, 93, passed away on May 17. Emily worked for a time as a registered nurse in Yosemite National Park. Source: [The Joplin Globe](#)
- David "Dave" Lee Cole, 72, passed away on May 23. Dave worked for many years as a civil engineer "for the Department of the Interior in Yellowstone National Park" until his retirement. Source: [KBZK](#)
- Gordon Miller, 82, passed away on May 27. Gordon was the founder and first president of the International Ranger Federation. He was also the Honorary President of the Countryside Management Association of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. In 2009, he received the Alfred Toepfer award for his work celebrating and gathering rangers. Source: [Countryside Management Association](#)
- Gerald "Gerry" D. Patten, 85, passed away on May 12. Gerry worked for the NPS for many years, including as manager of the Denver Service Center, regional

director of the Northeast Region, and the WASO director of strategic planning. He retired in 1994. Source: Denver Service Center, via Kathy Ziegenfus

- Shirley Ann Dietrich Peterson, 86, passed away on May 3. She worked for the NPS for many years, including as a safety inspector and as staff at the Denver Service Center. Source: Denver Service Center, via Kathy Ziegenfus

Retired

- Paul Labovitz, the superintendent of Indiana Dunes National Park for the last nine years, will retire in late June. He has spent 35 years working for the National Park Service, including stints at several regional offices and seven years as the superintendent at Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. He is the recipient of the 2022 Paul H. Douglas Memorial Award from Save the Dunes. Source: [Chicago Tribune](#)

In the News

- On May 31, U.S. Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN) released an official statement for the Congressional Record, honoring Peter L. Gove. Peter was formerly the chief of the NPS Office of Legislation and was heavily involved in the establishment of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. He is also a recipient of the National Parks Conservation Association's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award and the Department of the Interior Public Service Award. Source: [U.S. Representative Betty McCollum](#)
- Dolly Marshall is being honored alongside other women at the Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade in Portland, Oregon, on a special float honoring original "Rosies" who entered the workforce during World War II. The Rosie the Riveter National Convention is taking place in Portland the same weekend. Dolly said that her job during the war, monitoring the sky for enemy aircraft for the U.S. Army, inspired her to pursue public service, including later work with the National Park Service. Source: [KAKE](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *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](#)
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - Public comment is [open until June 17](#) on proposed increases to frontcountry camping fees at the park, starting October 1. Source: [WBOC](#)
- *Badlands National Park* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration have

- opened [public comment until June 16](#) on a draft Air Tour Management Plan. Source: [Badlands 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](#)
 - *Death Valley National Park* - Public comment is [open until June 16](#) on a plan to rehabilitate the water and wastewater systems at Furnace Creek and Cow Creek. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)
 - *Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open until June 16](#) on a plan to replace the docks at both forts. Source: [The Post and Courier](#)
 - *Glacier National Park* - Public comment is [open until June 14](#) on a plan to remove non-native rainbow trout from Gunsight Lake using a fish toxicant, and then translocate native cutthroat trout and bull trout to the lake. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)
 - *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open until June 15](#) on a plan to enact fees for electric vehicle charging stations for the first time. Fees would begin later this year at select stations. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
 - *Guilford Courthouse National Military Park* - Public comment is [open until July 1](#) on a preliminary Development Concept Plan. Source: [Guilford Courthouse National Military Park](#)
 - *Haleakalā National Park* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration have opened [public comment until June 16](#) on a draft Air Tour Management Plan. Source: [Haleakalā National Park](#)
 - *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration have opened [public comment until June 16](#) on a draft Air Tour Management Plan. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
 - *John Muir National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open until June 11](#) on a comprehensive site management plan and Environmental Assessment for the Mt. Wanda unit of the park. Source: [John Muir National Historic Site](#)
 - *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument* - Public comment is [open until June 30](#) on a draft Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Assessment that will guide park operations and planning. Source: [Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home](#)

National Monument

- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is [open until June 11](#) on a plan to implement a timed entry system during the summer months for three of the park's entrances. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)
- *Mount Rushmore National Memorial* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration have opened [public comment until June 16](#) on a draft Air Tour Management Plan. Source: [Mount Rushmore National Memorial](#)
- *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](#)
- *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](#)
- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - Public comment is [open until June 9](#) on a general management plan/development concept plan for the park. Source: [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - Public comment has been [extended until June 9](#) on a Notice of Realty Action for a land exchange of property on the island of St. John with the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands to constructed a public K-12 school. The park already has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the land exchange, and this public comment period refers to the realty action. Source: [The Virgin Islands Daily News](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *New oil lease plan coming* - *E&E News* published [an article](#) about the forthcoming draft oil and gas regulations from the Department of the Interior. The Biden administration has been meeting with oil companies and environmental groups in private listening sessions. Source: *E&E News*
- *Mexico violating endangered species agreement* - On May 26, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland notified Congress that citizens of Mexico are violating the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in the illegal take and commercial trade of totoaba, which also threatens the vaquita porpoise, the "world's most endangered marine mammal." The Secretary has certified the finding to President Biden under the Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 and the President has 60 days to notify Congress of action. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Appeals court calls for female grizzly protection* - On May 25, a federal court of appeals sided with environmental groups who sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service in 2020 for not limiting the number of female grizzly bears that can be killed for preying on livestock in their cattle grazing plan for the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The plan does limit the number of grizzlies that can be killed, but it does not distinguish between male and female bears, which the groups argued is critical to the species. Grizzlies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are currently protected under the Endangered Species Act. Source: [Casper Star Tribune](#)
- *\$725 million to clean legacy pollution* - On June 1, the Department of the Interior announced \$725 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to help clean up pollution and hazardous conditions caused by past coal mining. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$161 million for landscape restoration* - On May 31, the Department of the Interior announced \$161 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding to restore 21 "restoration landscapes" on Bureau of Land Management land in 11 western states to improve wildlife habitat, wetlands, and watersheds. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New DOI appointees* - On June 1, the Department of the Interior announced several new appointees: Phil Burton, senior advisor for infrastructure equity; Sara Moffat, senior advisor at the Bureau of Land Management; Jacek Pruski, deputy solicitor for general law; Zaheer Tajani, senior advisor for oversight. 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

May 31 – The Committee on the Judiciary was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 226, designating May 20, 2023, as "Kids to Parks Day," and the resolution was then agreed to.

June 1 – The Senate passed H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling, by a vote of 63 yeas to 36 nays. See House action of May 31, below, for further information about the bill's impact on federal spending in the next two fiscal years. The bill now goes to the President to be signed into law. [*Editor note: The bill was signed by the President after this update was submitted for editing; see "National/Regional Updates" above or the next *Coalition Report* for more details.*]

House Actions

May 31 – The House passed H.R. 3746, to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling, by a recorded vote of 314 yeas to 117 noes. Along with authorizing an increase in the debt ceiling, the bill also keeps the overall amount of federal spending flat for Fiscal Year 2024 among the various discretionary appropriations bills considered by Congress, although the exact amount that will be provided for each federal agency in FY2024 remains to be decided later this year. The bill would allow a 1% increase in discretionary spending in FY2025 under the terms of the bill. The bill now goes to the Senate for its consideration.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Arches National Park

Hiker fatality

On May 25, a 69-year-old had a medical emergency on the Primitive Loop section of the Devils Garden Trail. CPR was administered, but unsuccessful, and the individual was pronounced deceased at the scene. Personnel from the NPS, Grand County (UT) EMS, and a Life Flight helicopter were involved in the response. Source: [KSL TV](#)

Blue Ridge Parkway

Hit and run

Early in the morning on May 30, a 33-year-old was found deceased near milepost 221 on

the Parkway. NPS law enforcement arrived on scene and found the individual had been struck by a vehicle. An investigation is underway by the NPS Investigative Services Branch with assistance from the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, North Carolina Highway Patrol, and Alleghany County Sheriffs Department. They are looking for any information the public can provide. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)

Cape Lookout National Seashore

Boating accident

On May 28, three people were on a rented boat when a wave threw them into the water. The three passengers were able to get to Shackleford Banks, but one of them, a 42-year-old, collapsed near the wave line. The two other individuals were unable to move the patient, but they called 911 and started CPR. NPS staff arrived within 15 minutes and utilized an AED on the individual. Paramedics with Harkers Island Fire Department and Beaufort Fire Department also responded. CPR was conducted for an hour, but resuscitation efforts were not successful. The U.S. Coast Guard and North Carolina Wildlife are leading the accident investigation. Source: [WITN](#)

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

Business may close due to safety concerns

After 23 years of business, a watercraft rental business called "Shoot the Hooch" has been asked by the NPS to move from Powers Island to a part of the river 20 miles north of Duluth. The business owner said that the river is unsafe due to fallen trees and dam releases that have eroded the riverbank. The owner also said the NPS does not have enough people patrolling the water to keep visitors safe. The owner said they are not currently operating their rentals and may close if conditions stay the same. Source: [Atlanta News First](#)

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Vehicle sinks into lake

On June 2, Murray County (OK) Dispatch received a 911 call from two 25-year-old individuals who said they had driven into the water at the Buckhorn Boat Ramp at the Lake of the Arbuckles. NPS rangers arrived on scene in 12 minutes, finding the vehicle fully submerged. The staff attempted to reach the vehicle, but were unable to. They requested assistance from the Chickasaw Lighthouse Dive Team to assist and they were able to pull the vehicle out of the water two hours later. Both individuals inside of the vehicle were pronounced dead at the scene. The vehicle was not towing a boat. Source: [KOCO](#), [KXII](#)

Death Valley National Park

Flooding

On May 20, the park closed the Badwater Road due to safety concerns after a flash

flooding event. Several park visitors attempted to drive through active flooding and needed to have their vehicles pulled from the mud by park staff. The park moved dirt and rocks off the road and filled in unsafe drop-offs on road edges. The road was reopened on May 25. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Dinosaur National Monument

Diseased bat

On May 28, visitors reported strange bat behavior. The NPS Office of Public Health and TriCounty Health Department (UT) are now following up and looking for any visitors that may have encountered the bat, suggesting the behavior may be a sign the bat was carrying rabies. Source: [KSL](#)

Gateway National Recreation Area

Teenager drowns, 6 others rescued

On May 28, a 15-year-old drowned in the waters off Sandy Hook. Six other people were rescued, four of whom were taken to local medical centers for care. There are no lifeguards at the beach and swimming is prohibited. Source: [News 12](#)

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

Cruise ship fire, medical emergency

On June 5, an engine fire occurred on a 178-foot cruise ship in Glacier Bay. The crew extinguished the fire and called for Coast Guard assistance. Nobody was injured in the incident. Two Coast Guard ships and a helicopter were deployed to support the rescue. 51 passengers and 16 crew were transferred to a much larger cruise ship nearby by the larger ship's lifeboat. 11 crew remained on board and a tugboat was expected to tow the vessel to Ketchikan. An oil boom was deployed on the ship, possibly due to a fuel or oil leak, but the boat did not sustain serious structural damage and the Coast Guard helicopter reported "no visible sheen from fuel or oil near the drifting vessel."

In an unrelated incident, an individual was medically evacuated by helicopter from the larger cruise ship the same day. Source: [Juneau Empire](#), [Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve](#)

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Fire among house boats

On June 2, a vessel moored at Wahweap Marina on B dock near the Latitude 37 Restaurant was reported to be on fire. It spread to "more than half a dozen" other house boats. An owner of a house boat management company utilized a garden hose to douse flames and NPS personnel responded shortly thereafter. Other responders included the Big Water Fire Department, Page Fire Department, Coconino County Sheriff's Office, Kane County Emergency Medical Services, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Arizona

Department of Public Safety.. At least one boat on fire was pulled off the dock to create a fuel gap; it was stopped by the breakwater, which then caught fire. The fires were extinguished and contained by that evening. At least one boat was said to have been "destroyed." Two individuals were evaluated for smoke inhalation by emergency crews and then released. Some sections of the dock remain closed for public access due to the damage. The cause of the fire is under investigation by the NPS and officials are looking for any information the public may have.. Source: [ABC News](#), [KUTV](#), [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Hiker fatality

On May 14, a group of four hikers hiked to the Colorado River from the South Rim. On their return trip up the Bright Angel Trail, about halfway in between Three-Mile Resthouse and Mile-and-a-Half Resthouse, a 36-year-old in the party became unresponsive. Emergency personnel responded within the hour, and shortly after they arrived, the individual's pulse was lost. Attempts to resuscitate the individual were unsuccessful. The death was believed to be caused by heat-related illness and hyponatremia. The Coconino County (AZ) Medical Examiner is working with the NPS on an investigation of the incident. Source: [Arizona Daily Sun](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

"Hundreds of incidents" over Memorial Day weekend

Over the three days of Memorial Day weekend, the park recorded 568 incidents: 252 warnings, 48 citations, 12 arrests, three boat accidents, five motor vehicle accidents, six emergency medical calls, two fires, and 22 search and rescue calls. Source: [8 News Now](#)

Mount Rainier National Park

Climber fatality

On May 31, a 41-year-old was climbing with a guided group, Alpine Ascents International, when they collapsed near the summit. Attempts at CPR were unsuccessful. The following day, guides with AAI and Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., worked with NPS staff to extract the individual's body from the summit. Later that day, the individual was taken off the mountain by the park's A-STAR helicopter. The Pierce County (WA) Medical Examiner will determine a cause of death. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)

Rock Creek Park

Dog attacks beaver

On May 14, an off-leash dog attacked a wild beaver near Boulder Bridge. The beaver was severely hurt and had to be euthanized. The owner was not fined for the incident. The NPS reminds visitors that dogs are required to be on leash in the park. Source: [The Washington Post](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Backcountry bridges out

On May 25, the parks announced significant winter snowpack damage to two popular backcountry trail bridges on the John Muir Trail/Pacific Crest Trail: Woods Creek Bridge and the San Joaquin Bridge. Neither bridge is usable and there is no timeframe for repair yet. Neither location has a safe ford. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)

Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail URL redirecting to Filipino casino

In 2012, Maryland released a new license plate to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, including a URL at the bottom for *starspangled200.org*. The URL redirected visitors to the home page for the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. It was the default plate for Maryland cars between 2012 to 2016, for a total of roughly 768,000 plates. "Sometime in the last year," the URL began redirecting to the homepage of a Filipino online casino. The domain has changed hands several times, but has always been held by government entities until recently. The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration is aware of the issue and working to try to restore the URL. Source: [Gizmodo](#)

U.S. Park Police Excessive force

On May 24, the Office of Inspector General released a report about allegations of excessive force related to an incident between U.S. Park Police officers and two journalists during June 2020 protests. The report concluded that one officer violated policy when they used a baton to strike a retreating reporter that did not pose a threat. Another officer was found to have complied with policy when they used a shield to control a separate journalist, but that when they pushed the journalist's camera, it exceeded the "minimum level of reasonable force." The report has been send to NPS Director Chuck Sams "for any action deemed appropriate." Source: [Politico](#)

U.S. Park Police Hit and run

On June 1 around 10 PM, a 61-year-old pedestrian was struck on Suitland Parkway near Naylor Road by one or more vehicles that did not stop in the immediate area. The U.S. Park Police Major Crimes Unit is seeking information from the public. Source: [U.S. Park Police](#)

Yellowstone National Park Visitors transport baby elk

Over Memorial Day weekend, while driving on Highway 191 in the park, visitors captured a baby elk, put it inside their vehicle, and drove to the West Yellowstone Police Department (MT). At some point, the calf escaped and ran off into the forest adjacent to the police department. The calf's condition is unclear. The incident is under investigation. Source: [East Idaho News](#), [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Multiple wildlife-vehicle accidents

On May 18, two adult black bears were struck and killed by vehicles in two separate incidents. One incident occurred near milepost 14 on Highway 191 and the other occurred at milepost 29 on Highway 191. Additionally, one elk and one bison were also hit by vehicles in the past week. The incidents are under investigation and visitors are reminded to obey speed limits within the park. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Zion National Park

Wildfire

On May 31, lightning ignited a wildfire on Crater Hill in the southwestern section of the park. As of June 1, the fire was 136 acres and 100% contained. Source: [St. George News](#), [Inciweb](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The Federal Labor Relations Authority ruled that under their own regulations, individuals cannot file decertification petitions against their union within 12 months of multiple bargaining units being consolidated into one. Federal law does not explicitly ban the practice. The decision comes after employees at Blue Ridge Parkway petitioned the FLRA to consolidate their bargaining unit under the National Association of Government Employees with another unit to come under the American Federation of Government Employees. Shortly thereafter, a member of the unit filed a petition to decertify the newly consolidated union, backed by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, an anti-labor organization. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - The park has reopened Santa Barbara Island to public visitation. Winter storms had caused substantial damage to the dock wharf and its adjacent building. Repairs are ongoing, but access has been restored. San Miguel Island remains closed and trail work is expected to occur this summer. Cuyler Harbor on San Miguel Island remains open to public visitation. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - The missing individual last seen April 30 at Black Rock Campground (see [5/10/23 Coalition Report](#)) is still missing after an extensive multiagency search. On June 6, the search entered a "limited and continuous"

phase. Source: [KESQ](#)

- *Olympic National Park* - After assessing the damage sustained to the Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge during a fire (see [5/10/23 Coalition Report](#)), the park has announced that the entire Hurricane Ridge area will remain closed for ongoing investigation and hazards. The cause of the fire is still unknown. Source: [MyNorthwest](#)
- *President's Park (White House)* - More details have been released about the May 22 intentional car crash into bollards at Lafayette Square (see [5/24/23 Coalition Report](#)). The vehicle was a 26-foot U-Haul truck. After crashing into the bollards twice, the driver removed a Nazi flag from a backpack. After arrest, the individual praised Adolf Hitler and said that they "aimed to "kill the President" in order to overthrow the government and put himself into power. The individual said they had been planning the attack for six months. The individual is currently being held in custody without bail and has not yet entered a plea. Source: [CNN](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On June 2, the Giant Forest area of the park reopened for the first time since winter storms damaged the parks' roads and infrastructure. It is only accessible through the Big Stump Entrance on Highway 180. The section of General Highway between the foothills area and Giant Forest remains closed, with an estimated opening date of early July. No camping is available in Giant Forest or Lodgepole until later in June. Source: [The Sentinel](#)
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* - On May 24, a 62-year-old individual who created a diversion of water on the Platte River in August 2022 (see [9/7/22 Coalition Report](#)) was charged with vandalism and tampering. The individual has not yet entered a plea. Source: [United States Attorney's Office: Western District of Michigan](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On May 31, an individual pleaded guilty to one count of feeding, touching, teasing, frightening, or intentionally disturbing wildlife, in connection with a May 20 incident at the park. The individual moved a newborn bison calf toward a road after it got separated from its herd and the calf later had to be euthanized by park staff (see [5/24/23 Coalition Report](#)). "There was nothing in the report that revealed [the individual] acted maliciously." The individual was charged a \$500 fine, a \$500 community service payment to the Yellowstone Forever Wildlife Protection Fund, and \$40 in assessment and processing fees. Source: [Yellowstone National Park/U.S. Department of Justice, District of Wyoming](#)

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- Issue contributors: Bill Halainen, Mike Murray, Bill Waters, Kathy Ziegenfus

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

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

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