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The Coalition Report Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Coalition Actions

May 19 marked the 20th anniversary of the Coalition's founding! Read [our blog](#) commemorating the origins and ongoing work of the Coalition.

Coalition Chair Mike Murray joined a *National Parks Traveler* [podcast](#) discussing the potentially devastating impacts significant budget cuts would have on the national parks if they are adopted as part of an agreement to raise the debt ceiling.

An [article](#) by Kurt Repanshek in *National Parks Traveler* discussed with Chair Mike Murray the proposed bans on air tours at Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial and reduced flights at Haleakalā National Park and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Chair Mike Murray was [interviewed](#) by KOTA on the proposal to ban air tours at Mount Rushmore.

The Coalition hosted Walt Dabney for a [webinar](#) on May 10 about the history of public lands in the United States.

The House Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, held a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2024 NPS budget request, and the Coalition submitted [written testimony](#) for the record in support of the President's budget request.

The House Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on H.R. 2989, the Save Our

Sequoias Act, and the Coalition submitted [written testimony](#) for the record. The testimony expresses general support for the intent of the bill in addressing the urgent need to provide additional protections for the sequoias. Additionally, it identifies sections which should be clarified and expresses concerns over some provisions which may set precedents for circumventing environmental laws and regulations.

The Executive Council and staff held its last scheduled meeting with Capitol Hill offices and met with the office of Senator Gary Peters (D-MI).

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.

- *\$2.8 billion in FY24 GAOA funds* - On May 11, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture announced \$2.8 billion in Great American Outdoors Act funding for Fiscal Year 2024. The DOI has proposed 56 National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund [projects](#), 25 of which are slated for the NPS, subject to approval by Congress. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *2023 Challenge Cost Share projects* - On May 23, the NPS and National Park Trust announced \$375,100 in funding for 18 education and outdoor recreation projects across the National Park Service through the Challenge Cost Share Program. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Increasing diversity in LEOs* - The *Desert Sun* published [an article](#) about the NPS' efforts to diversify its law enforcement workforce through the "Direct-to-FLETC" program. The program fast-tracks hires directly to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center at no cost, bypassing the academy-to-seasonal system that has made it difficult for people to ascend the ranks. The program was launched in 2021. Several staff from the NPS were interviewed for the article. Source: *Desert Sun*
- *International agreement between DOI and Georgia* - The U.S. Department of the Interior signed a Declaration of Cooperation with the country of Georgia's Ministries of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Culture and Monuments Protection, and Economy and Sustainable Development. The agreement is part of the DOI's International Technical Assistance Program. In particular, the NPS and Georgia's Conserved Areas Agency are mentioned as partners who have collaborated successfully for many years, and this agreement will allow them to deepen that collaboration for new initiatives. Source: [Georgia Online](#)
- *Regulatory interference to prescribed fires* - *ProPublica* published [an article](#) about the regulatory challenges that make it difficult for public land managers to utilize controlled burns as a tool to combatting wildfires. Source: *ProPublica*

- *EIS overhaul complexity* - Source NM published an article about the complexity of reforming the environmental approval process and the unlikelihood of the federal government working through negotiations before a debt ceiling deal needs to be reached. Source: [Source NM](#)
- *Stargazing in national parks* - *Earth Sky* published [an article](#) about stargazing in national parks. It references a study published in *Science Advances* that shows that 99% of U.S. residents live in light-polluted skies and 80% cannot see the Milky Way from home. The article highlights efforts by the NPS to host stargazing programs. Source: *Earth Sky*
- *Comics by NCPTT* - The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training has created [a collection of graphic stories](#), or comics, demonstrating how different types of resources are preserved. Source: *Green and Grey Report*, Volume VI, Issue 37
- *Great Salt Lake as national park* - The *Deseret News* published [an op-ed](#) by Paul Alan Cox about efforts by a group of students and professors at Brigham Young University to create a national park at the Great Salt Lake. Paul was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize for his work partnering with residents of American Samoa to protect rainforest ecosystems, including the establishment of the National Park of American Samoa. Source: *Deseret News*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Apostle Islands National Lakeshore* - *Wisconsin Public Radio* published [an article](#) about the soaring costs of maintenance at the NPS, despite the influx of funding from the Great American Outdoors Act. The article focuses on Apostle Islands, with quotes from NPS Director Chuck Sams and the park's superintendent, Lynne Dominy. Source: *Wisconsin Public Radio*
- *Cabrillo National Monument* - On May 8, the park began construction on a new trail linking Point Loma to the tidepools. Work will continue for several weeks with a pause for summer and continued work this fall. There is not yet an end date for the project. It is being funded by the Cabrillo National Monument Foundation. This fall, the park will also embark on a project to restore the historic character of the visitor center, which will take two months to complete. Source: [sdnews.com](#)
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - On June 3, the park and the Truro Historical Society will celebrate the completion of a wetu, a traditional Wampanoag dwelling at the Highland House in Truro (MA). The wetu was built by Annawon Weeden, a Wampanoag artist and performer, with help from Truro school students and a blessing by Mashpee Wampanoag spiritual leaders. The wetu will be used for future educational programming and shared events. Funding for the project comes from

- the Truro Historical Commission, the Mass Cultural Council, and Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore. Source: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#)
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - The park has banned drinking and open containers of alcohol at Cahoon Hollow Beach in Wellfleet (MA), in alignment with the town's already-existing ban on alcohol consumption on town property. The ban will begin on May 20 and end September 10. Source: [WHDH](#)
 - *Cape Cod National Seashore* - On June 8, the park and the Center for Coastal Studies will unveil a 14-foot sculpture of an Atlantic white shark, made by artist Cindy Pease Roe entirely of marine debris collected at the park's beaches. The sculpture is part of an exhibit that will raise awareness about marine debris. It will be located at Herring Cove Beach in Provincetown (MA). The exhibit was funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program. Source: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#)
 - *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Following up on a public meeting about the issue of beachfront houses in Rodanthe, NC, falling into the ocean due to rising sea levels (see [9/7/22 Coalition Report](#)), Dare County officials published a 35-page report and engineering assessment about the challenges facing the community. A one-time beach nourishment would cost up to \$40 million and maintaining that beach over 30 years would cost \$175 million. Other options, such as installing structures to slow erosion, are similarly expensive. The county's beach nourishment fund currently has \$6 million and other funding sources are not readily available. A study by Western Carolina University's Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines found that a buy-out of all houses within 300 feet of the high-tide line would cost roughly \$43 million. There are approximately 80 structures, "the vast majority of which are vacation homes." Four houses have collapsed since the beginning of 2022. Source: [The Washington Post](#)
 - *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - The Dare County (NC) Waterways Commission announced plans to submit permit applications to dredge the "recently aligned federal channel as well as the non-federal bar in Hatteras Inlet." This work was previously done by the Army Corps of Engineers and will now be done by the county under a Memorandum of Agreement. The Army Corps of Engineers will also begin dredging Avon Harbor in early 2024, pending the results of testing samples for heavy metals and petroleum. Source: [Island Free Press](#)
 - *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On May 15, the NPS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact for the park's Environmental Assessment to construct a 1.6-mile paved multi-use pathway in the Hatteras Island District. Construction is expected to begin this fall and winter. Source: [OBX Today](#)
 - *Chickasaw National Recreation Area* - Starting in late May, the park is undertaking a renovation of several access roads to the Lake of the Arbuckles and its

- campgrounds. Delays and detours are likely. The project is expected to be complete in December. Source: [Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)
- *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park* - The park was recently given the Bill McGaffee Memorial Region Strong Award from the Cumberland Gap Region Tourism Association for community and tourism development in 2021. The park supported over 800,000 visitors in 2021, which put over \$78 million into the local economy. Source: [Cumberland Gap National Historical Park](#)
 - *Dinosaur National Monument* - On May 30, the park will begin a \$10.1 million construction project that will rebuild and repave seven miles of Harpers Corner Road and adjacent parking areas and will replace drainage structures and culverts. Sunrise Overlook, Plug Hat Butte Trails and Picnic Area, and the Escalante Overlook will be closed for public access during the construction and the road will remain open with delays. The project is expected to be completed by September 30. Funding was provided by the NPS and Federal Highway Administration, including funding from the Great American Outdoors Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Burdick Materials is the prime contractor. Source: [Craig Press](#)
 - *Everglades National Park* - UNESCO published [an article](#) about the work of students from Senior High School in Miami, Florida, who joined scientists in the Everglades to participate in UNESCO's "eDNA" program. The program collects data and monitors marine biodiversity sites across the world. Source: UNESCO
 - *Fort Necessity National Battlefield* - The park is undertaking an archaeological investigation of the Jumonville Glen battlefield, which has thus far turned up several musket balls, as well as other artifacts. The park is attempting to learn more about how the battle unfolded through the dig, which will take place over the course of the next year. Partners involved in the investigation include the American Veterans Archaeological Recovery, NPS Northeast Archaeological Resources Program, NPS Northeast Museum Services Center, Paul Martin Archaeology Associates, and Advance Metal Detection for the Archaeologist. Source: [CBS News Pittsburgh](#), [Fort Necessity National Battlefield](#)
 - *Gateway National Recreation Area* - At its April 27 meeting, the Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee gave The Stillman Group approval to build two apartments at Sandy Hook in the abandoned Officers' Row through a lease with the park. The Stillman Group intends to keep the historical façade of the buildings and "gut renovate the inside." They proposed a lease of 21 buildings, and the committee gave approval for the first two as a trial run. Source: [Patch](#)
 - *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On May 22, the park began a project to repave the roads on the southern portion of the battlefield. Park roads may be closed or incur delays at different times. The project is expected to be complete in four months. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - Due to high winter snowpack, Lake Powell is rising more than a foot per day and is on track to deepen by 70 feet over the coming months. They are the highest spring flows into the lake in its history. However, it will not reverse the megadrought, creating an increase from 20% full to 30% full. Source: [The Washington Post](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On June 1, the park will implement a Lees Ferry Backcountry River Permit system for watercraft using the Glen Canyon Reach between Glen Canyon Dam and Lees Ferry. The permit system will allow managers to have visitor use data to inform decision making about the area. Permits are free and unlimited and available at all times through a self-serve kiosk. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On May 22, the Department of the Interior announced that representatives from the seven Colorado River Basin states have agreed to the submission of a proposal crafted by the Lower Basin states (California, Nevada, Arizona). The proposal will be included as an "action alternative" under the Bureau of Reclamation's draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, which was published last month. It would commit to the conservation of 3 million acre-feet through the end of 2026, which is when current operating guidelines will expire. 2.3 million acre-feet will be compensated through Inflation Reduction Act funding. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The *Navajo-Hopi Observer* published [an article](#) about the challenges for Native artisans to sell their wares inside national park units. The article profiles Monica Nuvamsa, a member of the Hopi Tribe, who currently sells some of her art at the Grand Canyon. Source: *Navajo-Hopi Observer*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - On May 9, Teton County commissioners submitted a letter to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, asking the Bureau of Reclamation to reconsider the reduction of flows from Jackson Lake Dam. Flows have been regulated to conserve the water as long as possible due to full reservoirs downstream. The commissioners argue that the decision "was made unilaterally with little consultation or input from local, state, and other federal government agencies." The county is upset that iconic views and fish habitat in the park and at other places along the Snake River will be negatively affected. One official stated that the flow rate in that section of river would be the lowest it has been in 20-30 years. The *Jackson Hole News and Guide* also published [an op-ed](#) by Leslie Steen from Trout Unlimited and John F. Turner, former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, arguing against the flow cuts. Source: [KHOL](#), *Jackson Hole News and Guide*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - On May 16, the park released its 2023 Annual Report

with updates on different park divisions and the park's five strategic priorities.

Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)

- *Great Sand Dunes National Park* - The park will soon be installing visitor center exhibits to complete a remodeling project that has been ongoing since August 2022. The project is expected to be complete on May 29, including upgrades to the restrooms and lobby. Source: [Great Sand Dunes National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park has reopened Ramsey Cascades Trail and Ramsey Prong Road on Fridays through Sundays each week. Mondays through Thursdays, the trail and road will be closed to allow trail crews to finish ongoing trail rehabilitation. The trail has been closed since a flood event washed out part of the trail in Summer 2022. The trail work is supported by funding from the Friends of the Smokies. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - *WBIR* published [an article](#) about the search for Dennis Lloyd Martin, 6, who disappeared at Spence Field, just off the Appalachian Trail, in June 1969. The Federal Bureau of Investigation recently publicly released the case file of 133 pages of documentation. The article calls it "the biggest national park search of all time;" 1,400 people were involved in the search. Dennis was never found. A new book by Michael Bouchard, *The Disappearance of Dennis Lloyd Martin: Lost in the Great Smoky Mountains*, offers various theories on the case. Liz Hall, the park's emergency manager, is quoted in the article. Source: *WBIR*
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On May 23, the park unveiled two new wayside signs at Mingus Mill that better tell the stories of Black people in the region, part of the larger "African American Experiences in the Smokies" project. At the unveiling, musician Eric Mingus performed music in honor of his family and the region. One of the waysides tells the story of Eric's father, legendary jazz bassist Charles Mingus, Jr., and his family. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park* - A nonprofit organization, Hawai'i Unites, is suing the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources and Board of Land and Natural Resources over the park's mosquito suppression plan to reduce avian malaria among rare and endangered birds. They argue that the DLNR did not prepare an environmental assessment for the plan, while the DNLR says they collaborated with the NPS on their environmental assessment, which took place in December 2022. The organization is concerned that the release could actually increase the spread of avian malaria due to a 2014 study and that the science is untested. Source: [Hawai'i Public Radio](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - A new [10-minute film](#) in the "'Ike Hana No'eau" ("Experience the Skillful Work") series has been released, "'Ohi Wai." The documentary shows the importance of lava tubes, both culturally and as

- ecosystems. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - The author Ruth Ozeki is participating in an artist residency this month at Twenty Summers, an arts organization in Provincetown, Massachusetts. As part of her work, she is combing through a file recently conveyed to her by "a young park ranger" about her grandfather, who was "the first official photographer for Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park." Prior to his time at the park, he was a Japanese immigrant who served an indentured servant on a sugarcane plantation. After his time at the park, he became an early target of arrests following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Source: [The Provincetown Independent](#)
 - *Ice Age National Scenic Trail* - On April 22, the Ice Age Trail Alliance hosted its 17th annual conference in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. 500 attendees participated in the three-day conference. Many volunteers were honored for their work on the trail. Source: [Ice Age National Scenic Trail](#)
 - *Indiana Dunes National Park* - On May 16, the Town Council of Porter (IN) approved an agreement between the town and the NPS, which will formalize the ability of NPS law enforcement to enforce its laws on town streets in the Porter Beach area. This will free up some town resources and ensure continuity of law enforcement in the area. Source: [Chesterton Tribune](#)
 - *Keweenaw National Historical Park* - On May 4, the park and its partners, the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance, Village of Calumet, Calumet Downtown Development Authority, Main Street Calumet Houghton County Land Bank Authority, and Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, received the Michigan Governor's Award for Historic Preservation for the Bring Back Calumet initiative. Under the project, the group has completed or begun work on ten building rehabilitations, with three more planned, and over \$8 million of public and private investments in the historic copper mining district. Source: [Keweenaw National Historical Park](#)
 - *Manzanar National Historic Site* - A new book, *Manzanar Mosaic: Essays and Oral Histories on America's First World War II Japanese American Concentration Camp*, has been published. Dr. Arthur A. Hansen is the author. Source: [The Rafu Shimpo](#)
 - *National Historic Landmarks* (an NPS-administered program) - *The New York Times* published [an article](#) about Hinchliffe Stadium, which was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 2014 due to its status as one of the last Negro baseball league ballparks still standing. Since that time, the park has undergone a \$100 million redevelopment project, including an athletic facility, preschool, restaurant and event space, senior housing, parking, and a museum about the stadium. On May 19, the site hosted an opening ceremony for the stadium. Source: *The New York Times*

- *New Philadelphia National Historic Site* - *St. Louis Public Radio* published [an article](#) about the history of New Philadelphia, the first town to be legally registered and platted by formerly enslaved people, in 1836. The article chronicles the town's founding and decline, as well as community efforts to preserve its legacy, including its December 2022 establishment at the 424th unit of the National Park Service. Mike Ward, deputy regional director for operations and facilities in the Midwest Region, is quoted in the article. Source: *St. Louis Public Radio*
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - Babcock State Park (WV) has recently completed a new 8.5-mile hiking and biking trail, the Old Sewell Road, along an 1886 railroad grade to connect Babcock with New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. After the rail line was abandoned, it was converted to a four-wheel-drive road until it closed several years ago due to washouts and neglect. The Department of Transportation's Division of Highways utilized a \$350,000 federal grant to complete the trail. Source: [The Intelligencer: Wheeling News-Register](#)
- *Niobrara National Scenic River* - Brandeis University published an article about student Kate Danziger, who will begin her first job after graduation this summer as a biological science technician at Niobrara. Source: [Brandeis Now](#)
- *Pacific West Region* - The region has awarded three staff for their work protecting cultural resources: Tom Leatherman, superintendent of Pearl Harbor National Memorial for his work leading the Japanese American Confinement Sites Working Group; Joseph Kaiama, facility maintenance specialist at Kalaupapa National Historical Park for his work restoring the buildings at Molokai Light; and Lauren Kirn, cultural resource specialist at Channel Islands National Park for her work developing a cooperative agreement with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians to better steward the park's resources. The three will be considered for the national Director's Awards for Natural and Cultural Resources. Source: [National Park Service Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12](#) (Pacific West Region)
- *Redwood National and State Parks* - On April 26, the NPS, California State Parks, and the Tribal Council of Resighini Rancheria signed a General Agreement that will allow them to better collaborate and partner on projects. In particular, the agreement allows them to work together at better protecting Yurok cultural sites and resources and involving Yurok people in interpretive planning and programming. Source: [Del Norte Triplicate](#)
- *San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park* - On May 17, the park moved the 1907 steam tugboat, *Hercules*, from its Hyde Street Pier berth to a drydock facility in Alameda, California, to undergo preservation work. The ship requires cleaning, painting, and other maintenance to repair impacts from aging and weathering. Its return date is not yet known. The park has a virtual tour of the ship that can be viewed by app. Source: [San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park](#)

- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - The NPS has awarded a contract to AMG & Associates, Inc. to replace park facilities that were lost in the 2018 Woolsey Fire, including four buildings at Paramount Ranch that can accommodate film operations and other events, one administrative building, and one multi-plex housing unit. The project will begin in June and is expected to be complete in Fall 2024. Some closures will take place in the construction areas. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
- *Shenandoah National Park* - On May 18, the park celebrated the donation of 1,000 acres of land from the Shenandoah National Park Trust. The parcel includes the headwaters of Naked Creek in the Tanners Ridge area of Page County (VA). The Trust acquired the property by partnering with the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of the Interior Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program, the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as local partners and landowners, to purchase three contiguous properties. Funding for the purchases came from a 2016 DuPont environmental damage settlement. Source: [Shenandoah National Park](#)
- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - On May 15, the NPS doubled the area designated as "frontcountry," allowing more areas for people to bring their pets (on leash). They are now allowed in the Cabin District, an area that has already been heavily impacted by humans and domesticated animals. Source: [Albuquerque Journal](#)
- *Wild and Scenic Rivers Program* (an NPS-administered program) - The National Park Foundation published [an article](#) about a public-private partnership that is working to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources on the Musconetcong Wild and Scenic River. Vincent Mann, who is the Turtle Clan Chief of the Ramapough Luunape Nation, the Musconetcong Watershed Association, the Student Conservation Association, the National Park Foundation, and the NPS are currently repairing a 1.8-mile section of trail along the river while preserving ancestral sites, including ceremonial stone landscapes. Source: National Park Foundation
- *Yellowstone National Park* - *The Washington Post* published [an interactive article](#) about the hunting of buffalo just outside the park's boundaries by the Yakama people, per an 1855 treaty. The article highlights the tension between traditional Tribal rights and conservation. The *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* also published [an article](#) about the record number of bison killed by hunters this year. The article includes an overview of the complex history of bison management in the West. Source: *The Washington Post, Bozeman Daily Chronicle*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On May 11, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition announced that it intends to raise \$2.5 million by October 1 to purchase a gold

- mine on the park's northern border. The purchase would include the mineral rights, leases, and claims to 1,368 acres, currently owned by Crevice Mining Group, LLC. GYC has already raised \$3.74 million toward the \$6.25 million purchase price. GYC is also working to purchase 300 acres in private in-holdings on Crevice Mountain to donate to the Custer Gallatin National Forest. The mine and the parcels are located within migration corridors for wildlife. Source: [Billings Gazette](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey published [a blog](#) about the "silicious geyserite" mounds that gave Biscuit Basin its name, but are now far fewer in number. Source: U.S. Geological Survey
 - *Yellowstone National Park* - A physicist at Anglia Ruskin University in England has created a computer program that turns data into sheet music. NPR's "All Things Considered" program aired [an interview](#) with him that included a piece of music based on real time seismic readings from Yellowstone. Source: *NPR Illinois*
 - *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* published an article about the 28-year effort to restore native cutthroat trout populations in Lake Yellowstone. More recent efforts have been especially effective, dropping non-native lake trout populations by 86% since 2011. Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)
 - *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* - On May 1, Doyon, Limited, an Alaska Native corporation representing Indigenous people from the Alaskan Interior, posted an explanation of why it had withdrawn its membership from the Alaska Federation of Natives in 2019. They explained that part of the reason for leaving was due to AFN's support of the National Park Service in the *Sturgeon v. Frost* case, which ultimately approved an individuals' right to use a hovercraft to hunt moose in Yukon-Charley Rivers. Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#)
 - *Zion National Park* - The Zion Forever Project has acquired a 37-acre conservation easement adjacent to the park's entrance through a \$250,000 grant from the National Park Foundation and George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation. The easement compliments the larger East Zion Initiative, which will eventually include a new visitor center and trails on private property adjacent to the park. Source: [National Park Foundation](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Deputy Director, Operations* - Frank Lands was selected to be the National Park Service's Deputy Director for Operations, serving under the NPS Director. Frank has been at the NPS since 2021 after a 20+ year career managing natural and cultural resources with the U.S. Army. He was most recently the director of the Pacific West Region. He begins his new role on June 5. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Division of Fire and Aviation Management* - Chris Wilcox was selected as the new

chief of the division. Chris has 30 years of federal firefighting experience, most recently as the chief for fire management with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is the recipient of the Department of the Interior Distinguished Service Award for his leadership during the pandemic. Source: [Wildfire Today](#)

- *Wildland Fire Program* - Jason Fallon was selected as the new branch chief. Jason has 19 years of federal wildland fire experience, most recently as a wildland fire evaluation specialist with the Department of the Interior Office of Wildland Fire. He begins his new role on June 4. Source: [National Park Service Wildland Fire Program](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- Leonel "Leo" J. Bernard, 98, passed away on May 10. Leo "volunteered in several locations for the National Park Service." Source: [Sun Journal](#)
- Harry Allen Butowsky, 78, passed away on May 6. Harry worked for the NPS for 35 years, mostly at headquarters in Washington, DC, working to preserve "historical artifacts" and the NPS' History webpage. He retired from the NPS in 2012. In his retirement, he co-founded *NPSHistory.com* and *ParksCanadaHistory.com*. Source: [Enders and Shirley Funeral Home](#)
- John Edson Hale, 87, passed away on May 8. For a time, he served as a "volunteer ranger" at Rocky Mountain National Park. Source: [Estes Park News](#)
- James "Jim" W. Huskey, 79, passed away on May 4. Jim worked for the NPS for a number of years, as a backcountry ranger and as "an advocate for historical preservation, natural conservation and maintenance" at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Source: [Denning Family Funeral Home](#)
- James "Jim" C. Killian, 90, passed away on May 10. Jim worked for the NPS for 32 years, with 22 of those years as the Management Assistant at Cape Cod National Seashore. He retired from the NPS in 1994. Source: [Cape Cod Times](#)
- Sandra "Sandy" West, 89, passed away on May 5. Sandy worked in many NPS-adjacent functions in Yosemite National Park, including as school secretary at El Portal Elementary, employee of the Yosemite magistrate court, El Portal librarian, employee at the Yosemite Credit Union in Yosemite Valley, and staff at the Mariposa Visitor Center. Source: [Mariposa Gazette](#)

Retired

- Scott Guenther is retiring at the end of May. Scott has worked in Grand Teton

National Park for 33 years and is retiring as the park's Jenny Lake District Ranger.

Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

In the News

- Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong, current superintendent of Honouliuli National Historic Site, has been selected as the new executive director of the Japanese American Museum of Oregon. She will begin her new role in June. Source: [The Rafu Shimpō](#)

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](#)
- *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](#)
- *Great Basin National Park* - Public comment is [open until May 30](#) on a plan to open two new cave tours in Lehman Caves - a 30-minute tour for those with time or mobility limitations and an off-trail experience. Source: [Great Basin National Park](#)

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Public comment is [open until June 2](#) on a Laurel Falls Trail Management Plan. Source: [WATE](#)
- *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](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open until June 1](#) on a plan to improve Cottonwood Cove Road to Lake Mohave. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)
- *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](#)
- *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 construct 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

- *\$62.5 million for endangered species* - On May 19, Endangered Species Day, the Department of the Interior announced \$62.5 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding to help plan for endangered species recovery efforts, particularly due to climate change and habitat loss. An initial plan will focus on 32 threatened and endangered species that have completed Species Status Assessments and future efforts will be prioritized and included on annual national recovery work plans. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$12 million for climate change initiatives in Territories* - On May 11, the Department of the Interior announced \$12 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding for climate change planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resilience for the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$4 million for wildlife migration* - On May 10, the Department of the Interior announced \$4 million in grants for 13 projects in nine states to help secure key migration paths and restore critical wildlife habitat. The grants are matched by \$9.2 million in contributions from the recipients. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Renewable energy project approved* - On May 18, the Bureau of Land Management announced a Record of Decision for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, which is expected to transport up to 4,500 megawatts of mostly-renewable energy from New Mexico to Arizona and California. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Updated guidance for mining* - On May 16, the Department of the Interior released a Solicitor's Opinion to outline approaches that applicants may take to site waste rock and tailings facilities on federal lands claims. This will enhance permitting capacity for the agency by creating consistency for mining operators. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Bears Ears and Grand Staircase lawsuit update* - On May 5, the U.S. Justice Department filed a motion to dismiss a lawsuit by the State of Utah and two of its counties that attempts to overturn the most recent boundary restoration by President Joe Biden for Bears Ears National Monument and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (both Bureau of Land Management units). The motion argues that Utah officials failed to show that Congress relinquished sovereign immunity and that they cannot prove standing in the case. Utah authorities dispute the use of the Antiquities Act for such a vast landscape. Both the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and a group of Tribes submitted briefs in support of the Department of Justice's motion. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Intent to sue over grizzlies on ESA list* - On May 10, the State of Idaho filed a notice of intent to sue the Department of the Interior if it does not remove grizzly bears in the Lower 48 from the Endangered Species Act list. Idaho previously submitted a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, arguing that the bears do not constitute a "distinct population segment" from Alaskan grizzlies. The USFWS rejected the petition, arguing they weren't substantial enough to warrant further investigation. Two separate petitions, by the States of Montana and Wyoming, were submitted to the USFWS, asking them to reevaluate individual recovery zones, divided into the Continental Divide and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The USFWS is considering these petitions. Source: [Idaho Statesman](#)
- *Intent to sue over trapped grizzlies* - On May 9, the Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force filed a notice of intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana's Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for failing to study and oversee the degree to which grizzly bears are injured or killed by traps set out for other animals. They argue it is a violation of the Endangered Species Act. Source: [Missoulian](#)

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 10 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for Fiscal Year 2024 for the National Park Service, after receiving testimony from Charles F. Sams III, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

May 11 – The Senate agreed to [S. Res. 211](#), expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the United States during Public Service Recognition Week.

May 17 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered favorably reported the following business items:

- [S. 92](#), to designate the outdoor amphitheater at the Blue Ridge Music Center in Galax, Virginia, as the "Rick Boucher Amphitheater"
- [S. 162](#), to amend the Smith River National Recreation Area Act to include certain additions to the Smith River National Recreation Area, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain wild rivers in the state of Oregon
- [S. 199](#), to codify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of

- the Interior to conduct certain landscape-scale forest restoration projects
- [S. 593](#), to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to establish the Cerro de la Olla Wilderness in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and to modify the boundary of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument
 - [S. 612](#), to reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act
 - [S. 736](#), to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the state of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System
 - [S. 776](#), to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Gila River system in the state of New Mexico as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over certain federal land in the state of New Mexico
 - [S. 873](#), to improve recreation opportunities on, and facilitate greater access to, federal public land, with amendments
 - [S. 1466](#), to adjust the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor
 - [S. 1540](#), to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to provide for circumstances under which re-initiation of consultation is not required under a land and resource management plan or land use plan under those Acts, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

House Actions

May 10 – The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on [H.R. 2989](#), the "Save Our Sequoias Act." Testimony was heard from Randy Moore, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Dennis Townsend, Chairman and Supervisor, District 5, Tulare County Board of Supervisors, California; and public witnesses.

May 10 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries held a hearing on the following bills:

- [H.R. 524](#), to amend the Coastal Barrier Resources Act to create an exemption for certain shoreline borrow sites; [H.R. 615](#), the "Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2023"
- [H.R. 2689](#), the "Trust in Government Act of 2023"
- [H.R. 2872](#), to amend the Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013 to allow states to issue electronic stamps under such Act, and for other purposes.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Katie Porter (CD-CA), David Rouzer (R-NC), and Rob Wittman (R-VA); Matt Strickler, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior; Bryan McClinton, Undersecretary, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana; Darryl Mills, Mayor, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina; and public witnesses.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Arches National Park

Fatality

On May 15, rangers were alerted to a report of CPR in progress on a 73-year-old at Devils Garden Campground. Personnel from the NPS, Grand County Sheriff's Department, and Grand County EMS responded. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful and the individual was pronounced deceased at the scene. Source: [Arches National Park](#)

Buffalo National River

River fatality

On May 16, a 39-year-old waded into the river near Grinders Ferry, then lost their footing and was swept under the current. They were not observed resurfacing. The individual was not wearing a personal flotation device. On May 18, the individual was found deceased near Shine Eye landing, just downstream from the area they went under. Personnel from the NPS, Searcy County Sheriff's Office, Searcy County Dive Team, Marshall Fire Department, North Arkansas Regional Medical Center, Harrison Fire Department, Mennonite Disaster Services, Searcy County Office of Emergency Management, Newton County Sheriff's Office, Marion County Search and Rescue, Carroll County Search and Rescue, Boone County Office of Emergency Management, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Dive Team, Hasty Fire Department, and the American Red Cross supported the search. A near-drowning and the hospitalization of multiple people happened in the same location a few days prior. Source: Buffalo National River ([5/17](#), [5/18](#))

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Vandalism

On May 17, while on morning beach patrols, rangers observed that nine signs had been vandalized the night before near Cape Point. The park is looking for any information the public might have about the incident. Source: [Island Free Press](#)

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

Hiker fatality

On April 18, a 46-year-old was walking home from work with two dogs on Vickery Creek when they fell off a cliff. Based on the accident scene, it appears the individual got tangled up with their dogs while trying to bypass a section of trail with several trees down across it. The individual fell 15 to 20 feet, hit their head, and fell into the water. The individual was found deceased. The trail on Vickery Creek is an unauthorized walking trail and has now been closed after a meeting between the NPS, City of Roswell, and Georgia Government Fire and Rescue. The trail will be covered in natural debris to discourage

unauthorized use. Source: [WSB-TV](#)

Death Valley National Park

Motorcyclist fatality

On May 6, a 73-year-old lost control of their motorcycle on a "curvy section" of Highway 190 between Panamint Springs Resort and Father Crowley Point, causing them to slide into the other lane and collide with another vehicle. Staff from the NPS, California Highway Patrol, and Inyo County Coroner's Office responded to the scene. The individual was pronounced deceased at the scene. Source: [Sierra Wave Media](#)

Death Valley National Park

Marijuana farm

A marijuana grow operation was discovered during a fly-over of Jail Canyon, on the western slope of the Panamint Mountains. Upon learning they were discovered, the growers abandoned the site. Crews from the NPS, American Conservation Experience, and the California Air National Guard recently removed 10,000 plants, 35 cubic yards of trash, and dangerous chemicals left behind at the site. A safety closure for Jail Canyon had been in place for the operation and has now been lifted. The plants were estimated to be worth \$7 million. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Death Valley National Park

Vehicle fire outside park

On May 17, a semi-truck was pulling two dumpster trailers full of brush trimmings on a 3,000 foot climb out of Death Valley on Highway 190 just outside the park when it broke down and caught on fire. Firefighters from the park and Southern Inyo Fire Protection District responded to the fire and the highway was shut down temporarily. Firefighting foam was used to contain the fire in the cab and first trailer and there were no injuries reported. Source: [KTNV](#)

Denali National Park and Preserve

Climber rescues

On May 19, a 24-year-old was climbing the West Buttress route just above a fixed line at 16,200 feet when they took a fall. They fell over 1,000 feet. The individual's climbing partner saw the fall occur, but couldn't see where the individual came to rest. The following day, NPS staff responded and a helicopter transferred the individual to a hospital. Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#)

On May 21, two climbers got stuck on Peak 11,300 on the West Fork of the Ruth Glacier. They incurred damaged ropes, lost gear, and minor injuries. They utilized a satellite device to request help. Due to inclement weather, rescuers were not able to get to them that evening. The following morning, an NPS helicopter launched, and rescuers were able to

conduct a short-haul rescue to rescue both climbers from a steep face and bring them to a staging site for assessment. The two climbers were then flown to Talkeetna. Source:

[Denali National Park and Preserve](#)

Gateway National Recreation Area

Vandalism delays work

Vandalism of government and contractor property has occurred at Spring Creek. The NPS and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were expected to begin studies into the reactivity of the area, which is a Superfund site due to being a dump in the 1940s. In 2017, a survey identified elevated levels of radium radiation and five "radiological artifacts" were recovered and removed from the park. The study has been halted due to the vandalism, and there is no timeline for resumption of activities yet. Source: [Queens Chronicle](#)

Glacier National Park

Hiker fatality

On May 22, a 28-year-old fell off a rocky overhang into Avalanche Creek and was swept into the gorge below. The individual was spotted in the creek, passing under the bridge of Trail of the Cedars, by bystanders. The bystanders waded into the water and pulled the individual out. They began CPR immediately and sent others to call 911. Staff from the NPS, ALERT, and Three Rivers Ambulance responded. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful and the individual was pronounced deceased at the scene. The individual's body was carried out by litter and transferred to funeral services. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Hiker bitten by bear

On May 9, the park closed Cosby Knob Shelter on the Appalachian Trail due aggressive bear behavior. The bear "showed no fear of humans and bit a hiker." Source: [Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#)

Point Reyes National Seashore

Deceased whale

The weekend of May 6-7, a deceased gray whale was discovered floating a mile offshore of the park. It later washed up on North Beach. The whale had been noted for a record 75 days of being spotted in San Francisco Bay prior to its death. A necropsy by the Marine Mammal Center and California Academy of Sciences found that it was a 39-foot male that had sustained traumatic injuries which probably led to its death. Source: [Nature World News](#)

President's Park (White House)

Intentional vehicle damage

On May 22, U.S. Park Police and U.S. Secret Service Uniform Division officers responded to the 1600 block of H Street NW, adjacent to Lafayette Park, for reports of a truck that appeared to intentionally crash into bollards at the park. The driver, a 19-year-old, was arrested and charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, reckless operation of a motor vehicle, threatening to kill/kidnap/inflict harm on a president, vice president, or family member, destruction of federal property, and trespassing. Source: [U.S. Park Police](#)

Shenandoah National Park

Missing person found deceased

On May 15, the Virginia State Police issued a "critically missing adult alert" for a 21-year-old individual. The individual had last been seen on May 5 in Oakton, Virginia, and was headed to George Mason University, located four miles away. On May 17, the individual's vehicle was found in a parking lot at Mile 21 of Skyline Drive in the park, which is about 70 miles from Oakton. Fairfax County Police have said that the individual may have been "endangered due to mental and/or physical health concerns." The park closed Overall Run, Traces, Mathews Arm, Tuscarora, Beecher Ridge, and Thompson Hollow to the public to conduct a wide search. On May 21, a deceased person was found 1.6 miles from the individual's car in steep terrain near several rock outcrops. The person's body was transported to the Office of the Medical Examiner in Manassas, Virginia, where it was positively identified as the individual. Officials are still working on a determination of cause of death. The search involved Shenandoah National Park Search and Rescue, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Fairfax County Police, Virginia State Police, Piedmont SAR, Blue Ridge Mountain Rescue Group, Old Rag Mountain Stewards, Virginia Rescue Dog Association, Christian Ministries SAR, SAR Tracking Institute, Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad, Shenandoah Mountain Rescue Group, Blue and Grey Rescue Dogs, TrotSAR, and K9 Alert. Source: [WHSV](#), [The News and Observer](#), Shenandoah National Park ([5/19](#), [5/21](#)), [WJLA](#)

Springfield Armory National Historic Site

Stolen medals returned

On May 17, the NPS, U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts, and the Boston Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation held a ceremony to celebrate the return of 24 19th-century marksmanship medals that were stolen from the park in the 1990s. The medals were awarded to two members of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia in the late 1800s and were donated to the armory in 1944 by two of their descendants. In October 2021, a collector contacted the park's curator, asking about the marksmanship medals. Based on information provided by the collector, the park was able to determine that they were the missing medals and the FBI seized the medals. In July 2022, the U.S. Attorney's Office filed a civil forfeiture action to assert claims to the property, and after the case was determined, the Department of Justice granted the NPS' petition for the return of the medals. The medals are currently on display at the site's visitor center. Source: [Springfield Armory National Historic Site](#)

Virgin Islands National Park

Staff pleads guilty to fraud

On May 11, the deputy superintendent for the park pleaded guilty to many fraud-related crimes related to housing expenses and reimbursements. The individual had been employed by the NPS since 2007. They were indicted by a grand jury in April 2021. The individual was accused of not paying rent for six months while living in government housing, directing a subordinate to reclassify their housing to "dormitory-style" for a reduced rate, receiving false relocation reimbursements for family members, and false claims for reimbursement of meals and travel expenses, a total of \$46,000. The individual originally pleaded not guilty and their lawyer claimed the individual was targeted for a civil rights claim they had filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The U.S. Attorney General stated that the investigation by the Inspector General started two months before the civil rights claim. The case would have gone to trial on May 16, but the individual filed a plea agreement five days prior. The individual is likely to serve six to twelve months probation and pay several thousand dollars in fines. A sentencing date has not yet been set. Source: [Virgin Islands Daily News](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Fatality

On May 13, rangers observed a single vehicle that had been driven into a snowbank on Craig Pass. An individual stood outside the car. A deceased person was found inside the car. The individual outside the car was detained and arrested for drug possession and other traffic-related charges. An investigation into the cause of death for the other individual is in process by the NPS with support from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Attorney's Office, and Teton County Coroner's Office. The road between Old Faithful and West Thumb was closed for 24 hours while the scene was processed. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Bison lawsuit

The Neighbors Against Bison Slaughter have filed a lawsuit against the NPS and U.S. Forest Service. While obtaining documents related to the lawsuit, the plaintiff's attorney obtained an April 27, 2022, briefing statement to the U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Interior in which Montana Governor Greg Gianforte asked the NPS to withdraw its notice of intent to update the park's bison management plan. The briefing document noted that the State of Montana had previously agreed upon two of the preliminary alternatives included in the plan through an interagency bison management plan, but that they were no longer happy about any of the three alternatives. Montana threatened to litigate if their demands for bison vaccination and a population target of 3,000 individuals were not met. The park released a plan with three alternatives in Winter 2022 and expect to release a final plan in 2024. Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Bison killed due to habituation

On May 20, a bison calf had been separated from its mother when the herd crossed the Lamar River near the confluence of the river and Soda Butte Creek. As the calf struggled, an individual pushed the calf up the riverbank and onto the roadway. Visitors observed the calf walking up to people and cars. NPS staff tried repeatedly to reunite the calf with the herd, but the efforts failed, and the calf continued to approach cars and people on the highway. NPS staff ultimately put the calf down. The park is seeking information from the public about the unidentified individual who moved the calf onto the road. Source:

[Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yosemite National Park

Flooding

On May 15, the park closed Lower Pines Campground, North Pines Campground, and Housekeeping Camp in Yosemite Valley due to forecasted flooding of the Merced River. As of May 22, they remain closed and many of the roads and pathways around Yosemite Valley have partial closures. Source: [SF Gate](#), [Yosemite National Park](#)

Zion National Park

Bridge closed

During a routine inspection, it was found that a trail bridge near Zion Lodge is shifting on its foundation. The bridge is closed until the NPS can consult with engineers and geologists to assess options to restore access. Access to Emerald Pools can still be reached by the trailhead at the Grotto. Source: [Zion National Park](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Big Cypress National Preserve* - The Sandy Fire, which began on May 1, is 16,600 acres and 35% contained with over 100 firefighters assigned (as of May 14). The Florida Highway Patrol has shut down traffic on a 60-mile section of Tamiami Trail, also known as U.S. 41, due to smoke and haze. Source: [WUSF](#)
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - The park was able to conduct temporary repairs to reopen the Whitewater entrance of East Palisades after January storm damage forced them to close it. The park is discussing long-term repair options. They were also able to repair the step-down ramp at Powers Island, which will open Memorial Day. Source: [Marietta Daily Journal](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - The two climbers who recently went missing off Moose's Tooth (see [5/10/23 Coalition Report](#)) are believed to be deceased. Evidence suggested the two individuals had been carried by a small slab avalanche

onto a heavily crevassed glacier. Due to the severity of the terrain, sub-freezing temperatures, and duration of time passed, survival is no longer considered a possibility. The individuals' bodies have not been found. The park will continue the aerial search for signs of the two over the coming months. Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#)

- *Rock Creek Park* - On May 22, the U.S. Park Police arrested a 43-year-old for their involvement in a March 15, 2023, crash on Rock Creek Parkway that killed three occupants in one of the vehicles (see [3/22/23 Coalition Report](#)). The individual was charged with second degree murder. Source: [U.S. Park Police](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - On May 3, the *Timberjay* posted body camera footage they received from a Freedom of Information Act request they filed about an altercation between two park rangers and a local business operator in June 2022 (see [1/25/23 Coalition Report](#)). They also acquired "roughly 100 pages" of documents related to the incident. The footage and documents show a series of events that led to an eventual tasing of the business operator. Both officers remain on active duty. Source: [Timberjay](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - On May 15, a 29-year-old pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. In Summer 2021, the individual took up residence in private home in Wawona for several months. During a search of the house, the firearms and ammunition were found. The case was investigated by the NPS, with support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, U.S. Marshals Service, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, California Department of Justice's Bureau of Forensic Services, and Madera County Sheriff's Office. The case is part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods, an interagency effort by the Department of Justice to reduce violent crime and gun violence. The individual is scheduled to be sentenced on September 5. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office: Eastern District of California](#)

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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."

To receive a copy of this free publication, [join or support the Coalition](#). Any current, retired, or former-salaried (GS, Wage System, Seasonal, Temporary, or SES) National Park Service employee or volunteer who served under a signed volunteer agreement can join the Coalition. Coalition supporters who do not qualify under those criteria [may also join](#) and receive the newsletter.

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