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## **The Coalition Report**

### **Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

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#### **Coalition Actions**

The Coalition joined with 87 organizations in submitting extensive [comments](#) to the Council on Environmental Quality on the proposed Phase 2 regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act.

We submitted [comments](#) on visitor use management at Grand Teton National Park. Among other things, the comment letter supports the process and recommends the park consider adaptive management strategies to respond to changing circumstances as data becomes available. Additionally, it requests the plan clarify whether the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway would be included and recommends that it should be.

The Coalition submitted [a letter](#) to Interior Assistant Secretary Shannon Estenez expressing concerns over discrepancies between Department of the Interior press releases detailing plans in the event of a lapse in appropriations and what the actual guidance stipulated. The letter requested information be clarified in the event a lapse occurs and thanked the agency for its work in preparing for the potential shutdown.

#### **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.*

- *Rota Special Resource Study* - On October 5, the NPS transmitted a special

resource study to Congress about the island of Rota in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It concluded the study area does "not have a need for NPS management." Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Increased prices in national park lodging* - *National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) about the increasing costs of lodging in national parks, the rules that govern pricing, and suggestions for how to make the costs more affordable for the average visitor. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

## **Around the Parks**

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

- *Appalachian National Scenic Trail* - The National Park Service submitted public comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission about the relicensing of eight hydroelectric facilities on the Androscoggin River. They requested restored access to the trail near the Gorham hydroelectric power station. Source: [NH Business Review](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On October 12, the Threatened Oceanfront Structures Interagency Work Group held a public meeting focused on the role of government agencies and regulations when structures are threatened by rising sea levels. Five privately owned structures in Rodanthe have collapsed in the past several years. Cape Hatteras Superintendent Dave Hallac spoke at the meeting, as well as Department of the Interior attorney-adviser Trish Cortelyou-Hamilton. The park has recently started a pilot mitigation program, purchasing two oceanfront structures to remove the threat to the public and the park, and expanding the park's acreage. The working group will issue a final report in the near future, with recommendations for policy or program improvements to proactively address structure collapse. Source: [Island Free Press](#)
- *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park* - The Nature Conservancy and The Conservation Fund have acquired 712 acres of property along the Kentucky and Tennessee border around Fern Lake. The property fills a "near-complete inholding" in the park. It is expected to be transferred to the National Park Service "in the coming months." Source: [The Nature Conservancy](#)
- *Dinosaur National Monument* - On October 23, the Quarry Visitor Center will close in order to install a new heating and cooling system, as well as replace the current duct work. The project costs \$577,000 and is being funded by the NPS' repair/rehabilitation fund. The project is expected to be completed by March 30, 2024. A temporary visitor center facility has been opened in the parking lot. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Everglades National Park* - Florida International University published [an article](#) about efforts to restore freshwater wetlands through the Florida Coastal Everglades Long

Term Ecological Research program. Source: *FIU Research Magazine*

- *Fort Stanwix National Monument* - From October 12-31, the park is hosting the Oneida Indian Nation and Colgate University's Story Walk, which has been touring central New York since July. The exhibit focuses on creating awareness of the significance of storytelling within Native culture. Source: [Fort Stanwix National Monument](#)
- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve* - On October 13, the Bureau of Land Management released its draft supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Ambler Road project, a proposed 211-mile route that would go through Gates of the Arctic. It is a reanalysis of a previous EIS that was deemed "flawed" by federal courts. The new analysis includes "more environmental and social problems than previously estimated." The document will be open for public comment from October 20 through December 19 (see below). Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#)
- *Gateway Arch National Park* - The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published [an article](#) about the \$27.5 million renovation project underway on the Old Courthouse, including new exhibits, improved accessibility, and structural and mechanical improvements. The building is expected to be reopened to the public in mid-2025. Source: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On October 6, the park announced that an "extremely rare" tritylodontid bonebed was found inside the park last March. The species is a mammal relative from the Early Jurassic period. The site was found due to low lake levels and now has been re-submerged due to melting snowpack. Many of the fossils were extracted and will be studied by paleontologists at the University of Utah, St. George Dinosaur Discovery Site, Petrified Forest National Park, and Smithsonian Institute. Source: [CBS News](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - In December, the Wyoming State Board of Land Commissioners will determine whether to approve putting a 640-acre parcel of state land on Gros Ventre Road in Kelly up for public auction. The NPS has stated the acquisition of the property is a "long-standing priority." The state has tried for years to find a way to exchange the land with the NPS or sell, but efforts have stalled. The parcel is estimated to be worth \$64 million. A public comment window on the value analysis of the parcel is open until December 1, and the board will consider its sale on December 7. Source: [Buffalo Bulletin](#)
- *Hot Springs National Park* - On October 16, the park started the removal of five Southern magnolia trees from the iconic Magnolia Promenade because they are aged, weakened, and pose a danger to visitors. They are replacing the trees with younger, healthier trees. The replanting project will take about a month to complete. The park intends to replace all of the magnolias along Bathhouse Row in a "phased, generational planting approach" so that the integrity of the landscape will

remain. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Hot Springs National Park* - On October 13, the park began a project to re-stabilize the banks of Whittington Creek on the west side of Whittington Park, including the reinforcement and replacement of historic rock walls. The project is expected to continue through March 11, 2024. The west end of the park will be closed to all pedestrian traffic during the project. Source: [Hot Springs National Park](#)
- *Hot Springs National Park* - The NPS, in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Transportation and U.S. Geological Survey, are testing 13 wells throughout the recharge zone of Hot Springs Mountain to understand the long-term effects of development on the area's thermal features. The wells were dug as part of the extension of the King Expressway, with data collected pre-construction, during construction, and post-construction. One well has lost significant volume, and the three agencies will continue to monitor through at least September 2024. Source: [Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#)
- *Keweenaw National Historical Park* - *The Daily Mining Gazette* published [an article](#) about the park's efforts to convert the former C&H Warehouse No.1 into a curatorial storage facility for Keweenaw, Isle Royale National Park, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Source: *The Daily Mining Gazette*
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - Last week, an award ceremony was held for two NPS rangers and personnel from Bureau of Reclamation and Boulder City Fire Department for their roles in reviving an unresponsive individual at the Hoover Dam bypass parking lot. Source: [KTNV](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey published [an article](#) about the history of the Lassen Volcano Observatory, which existed from 1926 to 1935. The building was "taken over by the National Park Service" when the observatory was discontinued during the Great Depression. Source: U.S. Geological Survey
- *Lava Beds National Monument* - *Oregon Public Broadcasting* published [an article](#) about the Modoc War, in commemoration of its 150th anniversary. Source: *Oregon Public Broadcasting*
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - A new species of prehistoric petalodont ("petal-toothed") shark was discovered in a cave wall and ceiling during a paleontology inventory. It was named *Strigilodus tollesonae*, in honor of Mammoth Cave National Park Guide Kelli Tolleson, who "provided outstanding field support" for the field inventory, discovering many fossil locations during her work, and leading expeditions to remote and challenging cave locations. Source: [Mammoth Cave National Park](#)

- *Natchez National Historical Park* - *The Natchez Democrat* published [an article](#) about renovation work currently taking place on the park's visitor center. The park is working on a multimillion dollar replacement of the HVAC system, redesign of the lobby area, update to the restrooms, and accessibility improvements. The project is expected to be completed during or after Summer 2024. In the meantime, the NPS has relocated to the first floor of the William Johnson House. *The Natchez Democrat*
- *National Historic Landmarks Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On October 9, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 96, which allows a portion of sales and use taxes generated by historic performance venues to be reinvested back into those sites for restoration, maintenance, and other capital improvements. This will allow for the venues to meet compliance requirements to retain their National Historic Landmark status. Source: [Senator Anthony J. Portantino](#)
- *National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On October 13, the NPS, in collaboration with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, announced the award of \$500,000 in grants for 14 projects in 11 states. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program* - On September 28, historian Randy Harris was given the Robert G. Stanton Award for his efforts documenting the history of the Underground Railroad and promoting participation in the program around Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was also given the Wilbur H. Siebert Award for outstanding research and scholarship in the field. Source: [Lancaster Online](#)
- *Niobrara National Scenic River* - On October 20, Quiet Parks International will designate the national wild and scenic river corridor as an official "Quiet Trail," recognizing it as a "pristine natural soundscape largely free from man-made noise." A ceremony will be held at the park visitor center. Source: [Nebraska Examiner](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On October 9, the lower Elwha River was opened for subsistence coho salmon fishing to the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe for the first time since the Elwha and Glines Canyon dams were removed in 2014. The Glines Canyon dam was located within the park. Source: [Seattle Times](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On October 5, the NPS announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for a plan to replant sequoia and other mixed conifer seeds in high severity burn areas from the 2020 Castle Fire and 2021 KNP Complex Fires. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - On October 14, the park began an operation to reduce its South Unit bison population from 700 to 400 due to concerns about

- impacts on other park resources. The bison will be sent to the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Source: [Native News Online](#)
- *White Sands National Park* - Further research on fossilized human footprints in the park confirms previous studies that dated them from 21,000 to 23,000 years ago. The new research dated conifer pollen and quartz grains at the site. The original study from 2021 changed previous thinking about human migration in North America and was somewhat controversial in the archaeology community. This study followed up with further analysis of the site. Source: [NBC Montana](#)
  - *Yellowstone National Park* - *Wyoming Public Radio* published [an article](#) about the park's draft bison management plan (recently open for public comment), which attempts to strike a balance between protecting genetic diversity, supporting Tribal hunting rights, and managing for brucellosis transmission. Source: *Wyoming Public Radio*
  - *Yellowstone National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey published [an article](#) about a long-standing myth that Indigenous people stayed away from the Yellowstone area because they were "afraid" of geothermal activity. Archaeological evidence, oral histories, and early maps are rewriting this story, showing Indigenous people have lived and traveled in the area for thousands of years. Source: U.S. Geological Survey
  - *Yosemite National Park* - *National Geographic* published [an article](#) about efforts to climb Yosemite's big walls in order to monitor and protect bats in the park from a fungus called *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* ("Pd"). Source: *National Geographic*
  - *Yosemite National Park* - The *San Francisco Chronicle* published [an op-ed](#) by Robert Manning about how the park could both accommodate more visitors and make their experience better by creating a public transit system similar to Zion's. Robert is a professor emeritus at the University of Vermont, where he taught about national park management and conducted a research program for the National Park Service. Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*
  - *Zion National Park* - The park issued a prospectus for the concession operation of lodging, food service, and retail. The new contract would begin on January 1, 2025. Notice of intention to submit a proposal is required by December 20. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

## **Personnel Changes**

- *Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site, Gloria Dei Church National Historic Site, Independence National Historical Park, Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial* - Steven Sims has been named the new superintendent. Steven has many years of NPS experience, most recently as the superintendent of Eisenhower National

Historic Site and Gettysburg National Military Park. He will begin his new role in mid-November. Source: [Independence National Historical Park](#)

- *Honouliuli National Historic Site* - Sally Martinez has been named the new superintendent. Sally has 18 years of NPS experience, most recently as the manager of the Volunteers-in-Parks program at Yosemite National Park and as the acting superintendent at Honouliuli. She will begin her new role in November. Source: [Honouliuli National Historic Site](#)

## **Park People**

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

### **Deceased**

- Richard "Dickie" Hendricks Brown, Sr., passed away on September 26. He worked for the NPS for 25 years, including stints at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Antietam National Battlefield, and Monocacy National Battlefield. He retired from the NPS in 2004. Source: [The Shepherdstown Chronicle](#)
- David Clark, 75, passed away on October 1. David worked for the NPS for many years, including at "parks in Utah and Montana," and spent most of his career at Craters of the Moon National Monument. Source: [The Daily Courier](#)
- William "Mitch" Mitchell Hunter, 73, passed away on October 3. Mitch worked for the NPS for a time, retiring at the end of 2012. Source: [The Sentinel-Record](#)

### **In the News**

- Doug Smith, who recently retired as a long-time wildlife biologist in Yellowstone National Park, has written a new book, *Yellowstone Birds*. It was published on October 10. Source: [KBZK](#)
- Rodney Alan Ryalls has been reappointed to the Texas Emergency Services Retirement Board of Trustees, which oversees and governs a retirement fund for volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel in the state. Rodney is the deputy regional fire marshal for the Intermountain Region of the NPS. The board term expires on September 1, 2029. Source: [Office of the Texas Governor](#)
- *Outside* published [an article](#) about Jon Waterman and some of his favorite wild places in the United States. On October 3, Jon's newest book, *Atlas of Wild America*, was published. Jon previously worked as a ranger at Denali National Park and Preserve and Rocky Mountain National Park. Source: *Outside*

## **Open for Comment**

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

- *Anacostia Park* - Public comment is [open through December 1](#) on preliminary management concepts for the future of the park. Source: [Anacostia Park](#)
- *Anacostia Park* - Public comment is [open through November 9](#) on a plan to demolish Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium. The stadium is owned by the District of Columbia, on land administered by the NPS as part of Anacostia Park. Washington Convention and Sport Authority (Events DC) has been responsible for its operation and management. It has not been utilized since 2019. Source: [National Park Service Region 1: National Capital Area](#)
- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - Public comment is open through November 1 on a plan to increase campground and picnic shelter fees, to open the Blue Heron Overlook Gazebo for reservations, and to add campsites to *Recreation.gov* for advance reservations. Comments can be submitted via mail or email. Source: [Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area](#)
- *Canaveral National Seashore* - Public comment is open through October 28 on a plan to increase entrance fees to better support infrastructure and maintenance needs at the park. Comments can be submitted via email. Source: [Canaveral National Seashore](#)
- *Cedar Breaks National Monument* - Public comment is [open through October 31](#) on a plan to increase entrance and camping fees. Source: [Cedar Breaks National Monument](#)
- *Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through October 31](#) on a Land Protection Plan, which allows the park to consider private or other nonfederal land or interests, cooperative approaches, and possible protection methods for resources of interest to the park. Source: [Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - Public comment is [open through October 25](#) on a plan to increase fees for backcountry permits and campgrounds. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)
- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve* - The Bureau of Land Management will [open public comment from October 20 through December 19](#) on a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Ambler Road project. Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - Public comment is [open through October 24](#) on a plan to improve the southern section of the parkway and the Mount Vernon



Trail. Source: [DCist](#), [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park* - The Bureau of Reclamation has [opened public comment through November 3](#) on a notice of intent to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement that will analyze flow options to prevent smallmouth bass and other warm water invasive nonnative fish from establishing below Glen Canyon Dam. Source: [AZ Central](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - Public comment is [open through October 18](#) on a plan to enter into an agreement with Porter County (IN) to build a 6.3-mile section of the Marquette Greenway Trail, including a reroute of the existing Calumet Trail, which is in a "flooded utility corridor." Source: [Indiana Dunes National Park](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is [open through November 30](#) on an Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Source: [NBC Tri-Cities Yakima](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - The NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have [opened public comment through November 13](#) on a proposal to reintroduce grizzly bears to the North Cascades Ecosystem. Source: [Conservation Northwest](#)
- *Obed Wild and Scenic River* - Public comment is open through November 1 on a plan to increase overnight camping fees at Rock Creek Campground. Comments can be submitted by mail or email. Source: [Obed Wild and Scenic River](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* - The NPS, in cooperation with the National Links Trust, has [opened public comment through October 24](#) on a plan to rehabilitate the Rock Creek Park Golf Course. Source: [Rock Creek Park](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - Public comment is [open through October 25](#) on a Livestock Plan for the park. Source: [KXNET](#)
- *Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is [open through November 10](#) on a Kennecott Operations and Management Plan. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

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

- *2 new wildlife refuges* - On October 10, the Department of the Interior announced the establishment of the Wyoming Toad Conservation Area in Wyoming and Paint Rock River National Wildlife Refuge in Tennessee. They are the 569th and 570th units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Wolves in Colorado* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published an experimental population designation for wolves in Colorado under the Endangered Species Act, allowing for wolf releases as early as December 31, 2023. Source: [Rocky Mountain](#)

## [Wolf Project](#)

- *BLM Pride ERG wins Utah award* - The State of Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation presented its 2023 Social Investment Award to the Pride in Bureau of Land Management Employee Resources Group. Source: [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- *Tommy Beaudreau steps down* - On October 4, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Tommy Beaudreau announced that he will depart his role at the end of the month. Tommy has served for just over two years in the position and at the Interior Department for 13 years. 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.*

### **New Public Laws**

**September 30** - Public Law 118–15 (H.R. 5860) was signed, making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024.

### **Senate Actions**

**October 4** - The Senate adopted by unanimous consent a pro forma sessions agreement: providing that the Senate adjourn, to then convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business being conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, October 6, 2023, at 9:45 a.m.; Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 12:00 noon; and Friday, October 13, 2023, at 9:15 a.m.; and that when the Senate adjourns on Friday, October 13, 2023, it next convene at 3:00 p.m., on Monday, October 16, 2023. Consequently, during this reporting time, no business was conducted relating to the National Park Service.

### **House Actions**

**September 27** - The Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing entitled "Destroying America's Best Idea: Examining the Biden Administration's Use of National Park Service Lands for Migrant Camps." Testimony was heard from Joann Ariola, City Council Member, District 32, New York City, New York; Jaime Williams, Assemblymember, 59th District, State Assembly, New York; and public witnesses. [*Editor note: This hearing was omitted from the previous Coalition Report.*]

**October 2** – The Speaker of the House presented a memorial of the legislature of the

state of Alaska, relative to Legislative Resolve No. 5, disapproving the proposed rule by the National Park Service limiting non-subsistence hunting methods; and urging the National Park Service to withdraw the rule. The Speaker referred the matter to the Committee on Natural Resources. The Clerk of the House reported and found truly an enrolled bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker on Saturday, September 30, 2023: H.R. 5860. (An act making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2024, and for other purposes.)

**October 3** - Representative Gaetz submitted a resolution (H.R. 757) to remove Representative McCarthy from his position as Speaker of the House. Upon examination of the resolution, the Chair determined that the resolution qualified. Subsequently, the House rejected the Cole motion to table H.R. 757, declaring the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives to be vacant, by a yea-and-nay vote of 208 yeas to 218 nays. The House proceeded with debate on the resolution and after debate agreed to the resolution by a yea-and-nay vote of 216 yeas to 210 nays. The Chair announced that the Office of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives was thereby declared vacant.

As a result of the House's decision to vacate Kevin McCarthy as Speaker, the House entered a period of no legislative activity, either by the full House or House Committees, until a new Speaker is elected by the House. Consequently, there are no actions of interest to the National Park Service to report after October 3 for the House of Representatives.

## **Incidents**

*Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.*

### **Bandelier National Monument**

#### **Elk poaching**

Between September 28 and 29, a bull elk was illegally killed on State Road 4 between mile markers 45 and 44 within the park. The NPS and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish are investigating the incident and looking for any information the public can provide. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#)

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

#### **Illegal firearm**

In March, a law enforcement ranger came upon a vehicle parked across two parking spaces at the Roanoke River Trail. Upon doing a welfare check, the officer smelled marijuana. After the 28-year-old occupant admitted to having marijuana, the officer conducted a search of the vehicle. During the search, the officer discovered an unregistered, sawed-off shotgun, 50 rounds of assorted ammunition, and seven expended shotgun shells. The NPS and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives conducted an investigation. On October 2, the individual pleaded guilty to one count of

knowingly possessing an unregistered firearm. The individual will be sentenced on January 28, 2024. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office: Western District of Virginia](#)

## **Canyonlands National Park**

### **Fatality**

On October 9, a 63-year-old became unresponsive at Grand View Point. Staff from the NPS, Grand County EMS, and Classic Air Medical responded to the scene. Responders administered CPR, but their attempts were unsuccessful. The incident is under investigation by the NPS and San Juan County Sheriff's Office. Source: [Canyonlands National Park](#)

## **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**

### **Person shoots at group**

On October 8, a party of four people camped near the Dangling Rope Marina were approached by a 46-year-old on a motorized dingy. After talking for a bit, they asked him to leave since they were starting dinner. Upon being asked to leave, the individual became agitated and threatened to "slit their throats." The individual left and later returned, firing "approximately 50 gunshots" at the group. The gunshots struck the rocks near them and a cooler that belonged to the group. The campers ran nearby to find cover and the individual was said to start circling camp, boating back and forth, occasionally pointing a light at one of them and shooting in their direction. Upon arrival, officers found a 46-year-old not wearing pants, with a handgun and several expended 9mm bullet casings on the ground near by. They later found matching casings in the individual's boat that matched the gun on the ground. The individual was also observed to have recently been "trying to sell methamphetamine." On October 11, the suspect was charged in federal court with three counts of aggravated assault, illegal discharge of a firearm, drug possession, carrying a weapon while under the influence of alcohol, possession of drug paraphernalia, and intoxication. Source: [KSL](#)

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

### **Volcanic activity**

On October 7, the park closed several trails, viewing areas, and parking lots due to increased seismic activity and inflation at the summit of Kilauea volcano. The park and the U.S. Geological Survey Volcano Observatory are monitoring the area. Source: [Hawaii News Now](#)

## **Olympic National Park**

### **Drowning**

On October 11, a 52-year old was in the tidal zone at Ruby Beach with family during low tide when they were swept underwater by a wave. The individual's 17-year-old child jumped in to try to rescue the individual, followed by the victim's partner. The two were

able to pull the victim to shore after fighting against a strong current and clinging to rocks. The two individuals and several bystanders performed CPR for about 40 minutes before medics arrived and continued lifesaving efforts. A helicopter transported the individual to Olympia Medical Center, where they were pronounced dead. The NPS is investigating the incident. Source: [Seattle Times](#)

### **Point Reyes National Seashore**

#### **Marijuana grow**

On March 8, a "historic" marijuana cultivation site near the Laguna Trail in the Phillip Burton Wilderness was reported to the NPS. That day, NPS staff removed a pellet rifle and multiple containers of herbicides and pesticides. On May 3, a crew of NPS staff and members of the Conservation Corps North Bay hauled about a half-ton of debris and removed a dam in a nearby creek. On September 9, NPS staff cleared a 20-foot by 20-foot area for a helicopter to land. On October 5, a helicopter removed the remaining trash and chemicals from the site. Source: [Point Reyes National Seashore](#)

### **Yosemite National Park**

#### **Bystander rescue**

On September 2, an off-duty Air Force flight instructor was hiking the cables on Half Dome when they watched a hiker fall about 80 feet, landing on a small ledge ("about six feet by one-and-a-half feet") with 500 feet of exposure below. They were able to reach the fallen hiker, splint their disfigured leg with sticks and a bandage, and cover them in a blanket. The bystander was able to "arrange" a call to the NPS. A ranger arrived on scene and worked with the other individual to help the injured hiker descend partway down the cables. Another emergency responder arrived and re-splinted the patient's leg. A pulley system was created to lower the patient the rest of the way down the cables. A helicopter flew the hiker out of the area to emergency care. Source: [The Guardian](#)

### **Yosemite National Park**

#### **Climber fatality**

On September 28, a climbing guide teaching a group of students rappelled off the end of their rope while descending Sickle Ledge, a section of "The Nose" route on El Capitan. The individual fell about 400 feet and is presumed to have died upon impact. Source: [Climbing](#)

### **Wildfires**

- *Gulf Islands National Seashore* - On October 8, the Jackson Fire started in the Naval Live Oaks Area. NPS staff, Gulf Breeze Fire Department, Midway Fire Department, the Florida Forest Service, and Gulf Breeze Police Department responded and were able to contain the fire at 44 acres. No structures were

damaged. U.S. 98 was closed for many hours and reopened at 6 a.m. on October 9. The cause of the fire is unknown. Source: [Fox 10 News](#)

- *Redwood National and State Parks* - On August 15, a thunderstorm started at least 27 fires across the Six Rivers National Forest and Redwood National and State Parks. Three of those fires occurred in the southern part of the park. Two of the fires, the Glen and Devil Fires, were contained immediately, due to quick response and a sprinkler system tactic. As of October 14, the Six Rivers Forest Lightning Complex and Redwood Lightning Complex comprised 50,198 acres and were 75% contained, with 269 personnel assigned. Source: [Redwood National and State Parks](#), [Inciweb](#)
- *Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - On July 29, the Sourdough Fire was detected. It was started by a lightning strike near Diablo, Washington. Much of the greater area around Sourdough Camp was closed, but has now reopened. The fire is no longer considered active. It burned 6,369 acres. Source: North Cascades National Park (7/29 - [first report](#), [second report](#), [7/30](#), [7/31](#), [8/30](#), [9/15](#)), [Inciweb](#), [Idaho Statesman](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On August 15, the Redwood Fire was discovered, burning near Redwood Meadow. It was ignited by lightning in one of many storms in August. As of October 15, it was 1,957 acres and 45% contained. The Redwood Meadow Ranger Station has been wrapped with structure protection wrap and several trails in the area have been closed. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#), [Inciweb](#)

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

- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - The search for the missing 52-year-old who disappeared while swimming near Wildcat Beach on October 1 (see [10/4/23 Coalition Report](#)) has been scaled back, as of October 6.
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - The search for the missing 49-year-old attempting a 28-mile route in the East Inlet and North Inlet area on September 27 (see [10/4/23 Coalition Report](#)) was suspended, as of October 10. Investigations are ongoing and the park's search and rescue team continues to review aerial photographs and drone footage. Search efforts included drones, heat sensing fixed-wing flights, dog teams, and ground crews. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)

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- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann, Chris Soller
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If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to [report@protectnps.org](mailto:report@protectnps.org).

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