



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Coalition Actions

The Coalition [celebrated the designation](#) of Chuckwalla National Monument and S attitla Highlands National Monument, both located in California (see more below in “National/Regional NPS Updates”).

We joined several dozen conservation organizations in [a letter](#) to members of the House of Representatives asking them to vote no on the Fix Our Forest Act, which would remove science from land management decisions, roll back the Endangered Species Act and National Environmental Policy Act, and increase vulnerability to wildfires.

The Coalition released [a statement](#) in opposition to introduced legislation that would strip presidential authority to designate national monuments under the Antiquities Act.

We joined several organizations in [submitting comments](#) on the Bureau of Land Management Wyoming Office’s Second Quarter Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale Draft Environmental Assessment, agreeing with the decision to defer 11 whole parcels and one partial parcel, and recommending they also defer 17 additional parcels.

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.

- *Chuckwalla and S attitla Highlands National Monuments created* - On January 7, President Joe Biden utilized the Antiquities Act to designate Chuckwalla National Monument and S attitla Highlands National Monument. Chuckwalla comprises 624,000 acres of land in southern California just south of Joshua Tree National Park, and will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management. S attitla Highlands encompasses 224,000 acres in northern California, including Medicine Lake Volcano, and will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Source: [The White House](#) [Editor note: The link included here is from the Internet

Archive, Wayback Machine, as the White House's previous press releases were taken down on January 20.]

- *Federal hiring freeze* - On January 20, President Donald Trump issued a presidential memorandum freezing federal hiring for 90 days. The freeze will not apply to military or positions related to immigration enforcement, national security, or public safety, or non-career Senior Executive Service. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *Schedule F reinstated* - On January 20, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to reinstate Schedule F, a proposal from the end of his previous Presidential term that would convert tens of thousands of career federal workers in “policy-related” jobs from merit-based competitive service to at-will positions. The Office of Personnel Management has been tasked with disbanding regulations enacted during the Biden Administration to define “policy-related” positions. It is unclear whether the new direction will include a public comment period or move forward with an interim final rule. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *Interim DOI and NPS team* - Walter Cruickshank, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management was instated as the acting Secretary of the Interior, and Jessica Bowron, the NPS comptroller, was selected as the acting NPS Director. Source: [E&E News](#)
- *Reflections on efforts* - *USA Today* published [an interview](#) with Chuck Sams about his tenure as National Park Service Director. Meanwhile, many sources also published articles about Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland’s term, including [this one](#) by the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Secretary Haaland’s official closing remarks were also [published](#) by the Department of the Interior. Source: *USA Today*, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Department of the Interior
- *Modernizing commercial services contracts* - On January 16, the NPS announced the finalization of a regulation for hospitality services contracts under the new Visitor Experience Improvements Authority granted by Congress. The rule is intended to modernize and improve commercial facilities and visitor services “using contracting models common in the hospitality industry” and provide more flexibility in the solicitation process, among other changes. The rule will go into effect after 30 days. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Park Science magazine* - On January 15, the NPS published its Winter 2024 *Park Science* digital magazine, including a roundup of research around the parks and perspectives on the use of technology in parks. Source: [Park Science](#)
- *Tribal-federal relationships* - The journal *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* published new research entitled, “From paternalism to self-determination: examining evolving Tribal-federal relationships and co-management arrangements through three case studies.” One of the case studies in the research is the relationship between the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Badlands National Park. Source: [Nature.com](#)

- *Mining impacts on parks* - *National Parks Traveler* published its fourth annual “threatened and endangered parks” list, with a focus on mining impacts on parks, including Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Death Valley National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Voyageurs National Park, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, and Canyonlands National Park. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park* - On January 17, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced five current and former schools in Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia as affiliated areas of Brown v. Board of Education NHP. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Castillo de San Marcos National Monument* - The park became the first NPS unit to be designated a Certified Autism Center by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards. The certification comes as part of a larger initiative led by the St. Johns County (FL) Chamber of Commerce and the City of St. Augustine to support individuals with autism and sensory sensitivities. Source: [Castillo de San Marcos National Monument](#)
- *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* - On January 8, the Dark for the Park Alliance released new lighting standards for New Mexico’s oil and gas industry to help restore dark skies and improve workplace safety. Source: [Carlsbad Caverns National Park](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - *History.com* published [an article](#) about the history of the name change from Mount McKinley to Denali in 2015. Source:
- *Dinosaur National Monument* - Starting on September 8, the park will begin a project to revamp the parking lot and sidewalk at the Dinosaur Quarry Exhibit Hall, as well as the road from the boundary to the exhibit hall. The exhibit hall will remain closed throughout the project, which is expected to be complete in late October. The rest of the park will remain open during that time. Source: [Dinosaur National Monument](#)
- *Everglades National Park* - On January 31, the park will host U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón as part of the “You are Here: Poetry in Parks” tour. It is the sixth stop on the tour; there will be one more performance at Saguaro National Park. Source: [Everglades National Park](#)
- *Fort Pulaski National Monument* - On January 7, the NPS finalized a Finding of No Significant Impact for the park’s Development Concept Plan. Source: [Fort Pulaski National Monument](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park, Eisenhower National Historic Site* - On January 8, a new

exhibit opened at the Gettysburg museum and visitor center, featuring a gown reproduction of the one Mamie Eisenhower wore at the 1953 inaugural ball of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The reproduction was created by two park staff, Alyce Evans and Eva Blankenhorn, from Eisenhower NHS, which is adjacent to Gettysburg NMP. The gown will remain on display through Spring 2025. Source: [Eisenhower National Historic Site](#)

- *Glacier National Park* - In Fall 2024, the park began a project to improve water and road systems in the Many Glacier and Swiftcurrent area. From July to September this year, the park will restrict personal vehicle access and provide a temporary shuttle service. The project is expected to be complete in mid-May 2026. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)
- *Glacier National Park*- The NPS published [an article](#) showing repeat photos of the Grinnell Glacier over time, documenting tremendous decline. Source: National Park Service Office of Communications
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On January 10, the park issued a new rule for Off Road Vehicle use in the park, prohibiting their use on about 24 miles of park roads, establishing stricter quiet hours for Lone Rock Beach Play Area, identifying lake elevations for shoreline closures, and limiting accessible shoreline area travel. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - *Knox News* published [a photo essay](#) highlighting a number of volunteers fulfilling different types of roles in the park. Source: *Knox News*
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On January 17, the park put out a call to the public to help identify and document former homesite locations within the park for the historical record. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Harpers Ferry National Historical Park* - On January 21, the park will begin a project to demolish five structures at the Henkle Farm House. It will help restore the battlefield landscape of the 1862 Battle of Harpers Ferry and remove a safety hazard from the park. The project is expected to take about a month. Source: [Harpers Ferry National Historical Park](#)
- *Heritage Documentation Programs* (an NPS-administered program) - On January 13, the Library of Congress and the NPS announced the 2024 Leicester B. Holland Prize has been awarded to Laura Pressley for a drawing of the Wainwright Tomb at Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. The prize honors the “best single-sheet, measured drawing of a historic building, site, or structure prepared to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, the Historic American Engineering Record, or the Historic American Landscapes Survey.” Source: [Library of Congress](#)
- *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve* - On January 16, the NPS announced the conveyance of two easements to Cook Inlet Region, Inc., to allow for the transportation of minerals from the Johnson Tract inholding. This conveyance is directed by the 1976 Cook

Inlet Land Exchange Act, which fulfills entitlements under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This phase only allows for planning phase easements, such as geotechnical drilling, creation of helicopter landing zones, and environmental surveys. Further phases of development will include additional public engagement, permitting, and analysis. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - On December 31, 2024, the NPS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact for the park's Land and River Trails Management Plan. Implementation of the plan will begin in Summer 2025. Source: [WCLU](#)
- *Minute Man National Historical Park* - On January 12, the park reopened the Battle Road Trail after a project to fix drainage, erosion, and surfacing issues. Source: [WBZ News Radio 1030](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On January 17, the park announced that it has changed its wilderness permit fees for the first time in 26 years, moving to a per-person-per-night structure from a flat-fee-for-trip structure. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East* - On January 15, the NPS announced that it has received Great American Outdoors Act funding 12 improvement projects at Anacostia Park, River Terrace Park, Fort Dupont Park, Kenilworth Park, Fort Stanton Park, Battery Ricketts, Fort Davis Park, and Shepherd Parkway. Renovations are expected to begin in Summer 2025 and be completed by Fall 2027. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - On January 8, the park announced a Revised Record of Decision for its General Management Plan Amendment, as well as a settlement agreement resolving litigation. The revised plan reflects voluntary closure agreements between the private operators of six dairy and six beef ranches with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The ranches will cease operations within 15 months and surrender their leases in exchange for compensation from TNC. The park will issue a cooperative agreement and lease option to TNC to collaborate on natural resource restoration. 20-year leases have been issued to seven beef ranches in the northern district of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and the NPS is working to negotiate long-term leases for the remaining two beef ranches in Point Reyes. Tenants and employees living on the ranches will be given severance and housing/transition assistance. Settlement signatories include the NPS, several ranch owners, the Point Reyes Seashore Ranchers Association, The Nature Conservancy, Resource Renewal Institute, Center for Biological Diversity, and Western Watersheds Project. Source: [Point Reyes National Seashore](#)
- *Shenandoah National Park* - On December 11, 2024, Dale Meyerhoeffer, a biological technician at the park, was awarded a 2023 Director's Award for Excellence in Natural Resource Management for efforts saving eastern hemlock trees from the invasive woolly adelgid. Source: [Shenandoah National Park](#)
- *Underrepresented Communities Grant Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On

January 15, the NPS announced the award of \$1.25 million for 20 projects in 17 states and the District of Columbia for the survey and nomination of places associated with groups underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Yellowstone National Park* - New research published in *Forest Ecosystems* found that 40% of the park contains dead, standing trees due to climate change warming, pests, and disease. Many of the densest stands of dead trees are adjacent to important park infrastructure, raising concerns about wildfire. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey published [an article](#) about the efforts of George D. Marler, a Yellowstone “ranger naturalist” for over 40 years, to document and publish research on hydrothermal activity in the park in the 1950s through the 1960s. George was honored with a distinguished service award from the Department of the Interior in 1967 for his work. Source: U.S. Geological Survey

Personnel Changes

- *Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley National Park, Noatak National Preserve* - Siikauraq Whiting was selected as the new superintendent of the three parks, comprising the Western Arctic National Parklands. Siikauraq is lifelong resident of Kotzebue (AK), and has experience with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as the mayor and chief executive officer of the Northwest Arctic Borough, and as the executive director for the Native Village of Kotzebue. Source: [Kobuk Valley National Park](#)
- *Division of Fire and Aviation Management* - Karma Hope was selected as a management and program analyst with a focus on agreements. Karma has 10 years of federal fire experience, most recently as the executive assistant to the Bureau of Land Management Fire Director. Source: [National Park Service Division of Fire and Aviation Management](#)
- *Jean Lafitte National Historical Site and Preserve, New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park* - Rebecca Lasell was selected as the new superintendent. Rebecca has 27 years of public service, including 11 years with the NPS, most recently as the deputy superintendent of these two parks. Rebecca started her new role on January 12. Source: [Jean Lafitte National Historical Site](#)
- *Monocacy National Battlefield* - Derek Carter was selected as the new superintendent. Derek has several years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. He began his new role on January 13. Source: [Monocacy National Battlefield](#)
- *National Capital Region (Region 1)* - J. Patrick “Pat” Campbell was selected as the associate regional director for resource stewardship and science. Pat comes from a background in domestic and international conservation program management. He began

his new role on December 29, 2024. Source: [National Park Service National Capital Region \(Region 1\)](#)

- *National Park Friends Alliance* - Katie Nyberg was selected as the new executive director for the non-profit. It is the organization's first full-time executive director. Katie has many years of non-profit management experience, most recently as executive director of Great River Passage Conservancy in Minnesota. She has also served on the Friends Alliance Steering Committee for over ten years. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

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

- Angenette "Angie" Bjorgan, 93, passed away in December 2024. Angie worked for a time as a server in Yellowstone National Park. Source: [The Minnesota Star Tribune](#)
- Lance Foster, 64, passed away on January 12. Lance worked for the NPS for a time. Source: [Many Signals Communications](#)
- Randy Dale Justice, 72, passed away on January 5. Randy spent his career working in law enforcement for the NPS, including time at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Death Valley National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Shenandoah National Park, Lowell National Historical Park, Valley Forge National Historical Park, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, and Petrified Forest National Park. Source: [Legacy/Best Funeral Services Phoenix](#)
- Karl Clayton Leebrick, Jr., 106, passed away on January 1. Karl spent a season as a ranger in Glacier National Park after World War II. Source: [Eagle News Online](#)
- Justine Miriam Peters, 92, passed away on January 1. Justine worked seasonal jobs in a number of NPS units starting in 1983, including at Yellowstone National Park, Everglades National Park, Acadia National Park, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Source: [Seacoastonline](#)
- Dennis T. Ruddy, 82, passed away on January 7. Dennis worked in maintenance at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area for a time. Source: [Gower Funeral Home and Crematory, Inc.](#), Philip Selleck, Chris Nelson

In the News

- Hamilton College published [an interview](#) with alumnus Kayley Boddy about her path to becoming a backcountry ranger at Arches National Park. Source: *Hamilton College News*

- *The Revelator*, a media initiative of the Center for Biological Diversity, published [an essay](#) by Hilary Clark arguing for natural preserves within NPS lands with no public access. The essay argues that the preserves would provide for wildlife that has struggled to thrive due to human influence. Hilary worked for the NPS for 18 years, including time at Mojave National Preserve. Source: *The Revelator*
- Carleton College published [an article](#) about alumnus Jasmine Cutter, who works at Grand Teton National Park doing ecological restoration. Source: *Carleton College News*

Open for Comment

Items will stay on this list until public comment has closed. Listed alphabetically, except for items affecting entire NPS, which are listed on top.

- *National Park Service* - Public comment is [open through January 27](#) on revisions to Director's Order #20: Agreements. This is the first revision since 2003. Source: [National Park Service Policy](#)
- *National Park Service* - Public comment is [open through March 17](#) on a proposed rule to determine where and how micromobility devices, such as e-scooters, hoverboards, and Segways, may be operated in national park units. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park* - Public comment is [open through February 9](#) on a proposal to rehabilitate the amphitheater adjacent to the South Rim campground, including improvements to accessibility, acoustics, and dark sky viewing. Source: [Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#)
- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through February 6](#) on a fire management plan for the two parks. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through March 7](#) on a development concept plan for Great Falls in Montgomery County, Maryland. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Fort Raleigh National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through February 7](#) on alternatives to stabilize one mile of shoreline that is rapidly eroding. Source: [Fort Raleigh National Historic Site](#)
- *Glen Echo Park* - Public comment is [open through January 24](#) on a management plan amendment focused on expanding programming, improving accessibility, exploring environmental sustainability, and addressing wayfinding and circulation issues. Source: [Glen Echo Park](#)

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Public comment is [open through January 30](#) on a proposal to increase non-commercial river trip costs. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East* - Public comment is [open through February 10](#) on design concepts to restore 10 acres of habitat at Kingman Lake within the Anacostia River Watershed. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *National Trails System* - Public comment is [open through February 15](#) on a Buckeye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study to evaluate potential inclusion in the National Trails System. Source: [National Park Service Midwest Region](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - Public comment is [open through February 12](#) on a plan to allow Tribal members to collect plants for cultural and traditional uses. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Colorado River alternatives* - On January 17, the Bureau of Reclamation released alternatives for a post-2026 operations plan for the Colorado River, offering a range of proposals submitted by Basin states, Tribes, cooperating agencies, and non-governmental organizations. A draft Environmental Impact Statement will be published in Summer 2025. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Lost Coast Redwoods acquired* - On January 10, the Bureau of Land Management announced that it has acquired a 4,500-acre parcel known as the Lost Coast Redwoods property. The acquisition was funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Save the Redwoods League, and the State of California's Wildlife Conservation Board and Coastal Conservancy. Source: [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- *Supreme Court turns down UT challenge to federal land holdings* - On January 13, the U.S. Supreme Court denied the State of Utah's request to file a lawsuit with the court challenging the federal government's "ability to own land indefinitely." Utah officials argued that the federal government was not meant to hold Bureau of Land Management lands in perpetuity to make profits due to promises made to Utah when it entered the United States of America. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *ANWR lease goes unbid* - On January 8, the Department of the Interior documented that a congressionally-mandated oil and gas drilling lease auction in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska received no bids from energy companies. The mandate was required by the 2017 Tax Act. Source: [Reuters](#)

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Chris Soller, former superintendent of Fire Island National Seashore and legislative specialist for the National Park Service.

New Public Laws

Public Law 118-226, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Location Act (H.R. 1318) was signed into law by the President on Saturday, January 4, 2025. The purpose of H.R. 1318 is to authorize the location of a monument on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the women's suffrage movement and the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. While the text of the legislation does not specify a location on the Mall for the Monument, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation has identified Constitution Gardens as the optimal location.

Public Law 118-230, the AACE Act (H.R. 5443) was signed into law by the President on Saturday, January 4, 2025. The "Accelerating Appraisals and Conservation Efforts Act" establishes policy regarding appraisal and valuation services for real property for a transaction over which the Secretary of the Interior has jurisdiction.

Public Law 118-234, The "EXPLORE" Act (H.R.6492) was signed into law by the President on Saturday, January 4, 2025. The Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act sets forth policies for the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture related to recreation on certain public lands. Issues addressed include

- itemized budget information for outdoor recreation across departments;
- long-distance bike trails;
- recreational climbing activities;
- target shooting ranges;
- overnight campsites in Arkansas;
- filming and still photography;
- motorized and nonmotorized access;
- invasive species;
- gateway communities;
- real-time information for the public on visitor levels;
- broadband and cellular service;
- public-private partnerships;
- access for persons with disabilities to trails and recreation opportunities;
- recreational and job opportunities for military members and veterans;
- youth access to recreational lands;
- issuance of special recreation permits;
- a digital version of the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass;
- extension of seasonal recreation opportunities; and
- volunteers on public recreational lands.

Public Law 118-247, the Jackie Robinson Ballpark National Commemorative Site Act (H.R. 8012)

was signed into law by the President on Saturday, January 4, 2025. H.R. 8012 designates the Jackie Robinson Ballpark in Daytona Beach, Florida, as the Jackie Robinson Ballpark National Commemorative Site. It also makes the site a part of the African American Civil Rights Network established under the African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017. In addition, the bill directs the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site to evaluate its national significance and determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the site as a national historic landmark.

Congressional Actions

During this reporting period, both chambers of Congress were engaged in activities of organizing and establishing the rules and procedures for the operation of the 119th Congress. They elected their leaders, swore in members of each chamber, certified the election of the President, and in the Senate, undertook the confirmation hearings of the President's nominees for cabinet secretaries. Additionally, they began organizing committee membership. A breakdown of committee membership will be provided in our next *Coalition Report*.

Senate Actions

January 16 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources concluded a hearing to examine the expected nomination of Doug Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senators Hoeven and Cramer, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

House Actions

Nothing specific to report.

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park.

Bandelier National Monument

Water line break

On January 10, a water line break was discovered at the Tsankawi Unit. The unit remained closed through January 17, when it was able to be fixed. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#), [Bandelier National Monument Facebook page](#)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Fire

On January 7, staff from Eastern National, which operates the store in the Bodie Island Double Keepers' Quarters, called 911 after observing smoke in the building. All occupants safely evacuated. Personnel from Nags Head (NC) Fire Department, Roanoke Island Volunteer Fire

Department, Kill Devil Hills Fire Department, Colington Fire Department, and Dare County Emergency Medical Services responded to the scene and extinguished the fire. The park is evaluating internal damage and working with the Nags Head Fire Department to investigate the incident. The Double Keepers' Quarters are closed indefinitely. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)

Death Valley National Park

Illegal off-roading

In late December or early January, a vehicle or multiple vehicles illegally drove on the Eureka Dunes, damaging several endangered Eureka dunegrass plants, and likely causing damage to seed beds and other rare plants. Over two miles of vehicle tracks were left on the dunes. The park is looking for any information the public can provide about the incident. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Hiker rescue

On January 15, two individuals went hiking in Mosaic Canyon. At a junction, the two hikers decided to split up, one staying on the main trail, while the other went into a side canyon, intending to loop back to the trail further up. The off-trail hiker eventually found themselves in steep and unstable terrain, unable to ascend or descend. They had a satellite-enabled phone and called for help. NPS personnel responded to the slope and were able to reach the individual on foot. A rescue helicopter from Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake was also dispatched to the scene, but the risk of rotor wash dislodging loose rocks on scene was too great for a hoist operation. The NPS personnel set up a rope rescue anchor and lowered the individual down the slope. They then rappelled down the cliff to complete the rescue. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Bomb threat

On January 8, an individual called 911 reporting a bomb/shooting threat at Furnace Creek Ranch. The caller claimed to be a relative of a former employee at the lodging facility. Inyo County (CA) law enforcement, in collaboration with NPS personnel from Death Valley and Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Inyo-Mono County Special Enforcement Detail, and Nye County (NV) Sheriff's Office dispatched to the lodge and conducted a thorough search with an explosive detection K-9 unit. No threats were identified, and "the investigation remains active and ongoing." The investigation is being aided by the NPS, California Highway Patrol, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Source: [Pahrump Valley Times](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Chlorine gas leak

On January 15, the park experienced a chlorine gas leak at Roaring Springs. The park closed all

inner canyon corridor trails to day and overnight hikers. A crew was able to stabilize the leak and complete repairs, and the trails were reopened on January 16. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park Facebook page](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Prison escapee apprehended

On January 13, three individuals escaped from the Hale Nani Correctional Facility outside of Hilo, Hawai'i. On January 14, one of the individuals, 41 years old, ran out of gas while driving on Highway 11 near mile marker 33 in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. NPS officers recognized the individual from wanted bulletins and took them into custody "without incident." The individual was charged with second-degree escape, first-degree theft of a motor vehicle, first-degree unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle, and a no-bail warden's warrant for violating prison furlough. They are back in custody at the Hawai'i Community Correctional Center. As of December 18, one of the other escapees had been taken into custody, while the other remained at-large. Source: [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#)

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve

Vandalism

Around December 23, an individual used red spray paint to vandalize rocks near the Long Point overlook. The park is looking for any information the public can provide about the incident.

Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Wildfires

On January 7, the Palisades Fire began due to unknown causes. On January 8, the park closed the Paramount Ranch area for fire operations. The King Gillette Ranch Visitor Center was later closed due to a Level 3 Evacuation Order for the Palisades Fire. On January 9, the Kenneth Fire ignited adjacent to a trailhead near Victory Boulevard in the Calabasas area, possibly due to arson. On January 10, the park closed the Solstice Canyon and Cheeseboro Canyon areas due to both fires. AAs of January 21, the Palisades Fire was 23,713 acres and 63% contained, with 5,337 personnel assigned. As of January 12, the Kenneth Fire was 100% contained at 1,052 acres. A person has been taken into custody for a probation violation, and is under consideration as a "person of interest" in the Kenneth Fire incident. No charges have been filed, as of January 21. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#), CalFire ([Palisades](#), [Kenneth](#)), [Los Angeles Times](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *George Washington Memorial Parkway, U.S. Park Police* - On December 16, the two U.S. Park Police officers involved in the shooting and death of Bijan Ghaisar in November 2017 were reinstated. They had been on paid administrative duty followed by paid leave since the incident. In November 2024, the Department of the Interior found that the two officers

did not violate any USPP policies in the incident (see [11/27/24 Coalition Report](#)). Source: [NBC Washington](#)

- *Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site* - New York State Police stated in early January that they have identified the deceased individual found near Bard Rock on December 6, 2024 (see [12/11/24 Coalition Report](#)). They are 69-years-old. The death is considered “suspicious,” and law enforcement are requesting any help the public can provide. Source: [Syracuse.com](#)

Acknowledgments

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Debbie Reed, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Phil Francis, Phillip Selleck, Bill Walters

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to:

report@protectnps.org.

* * * * *

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.

--- ### ---