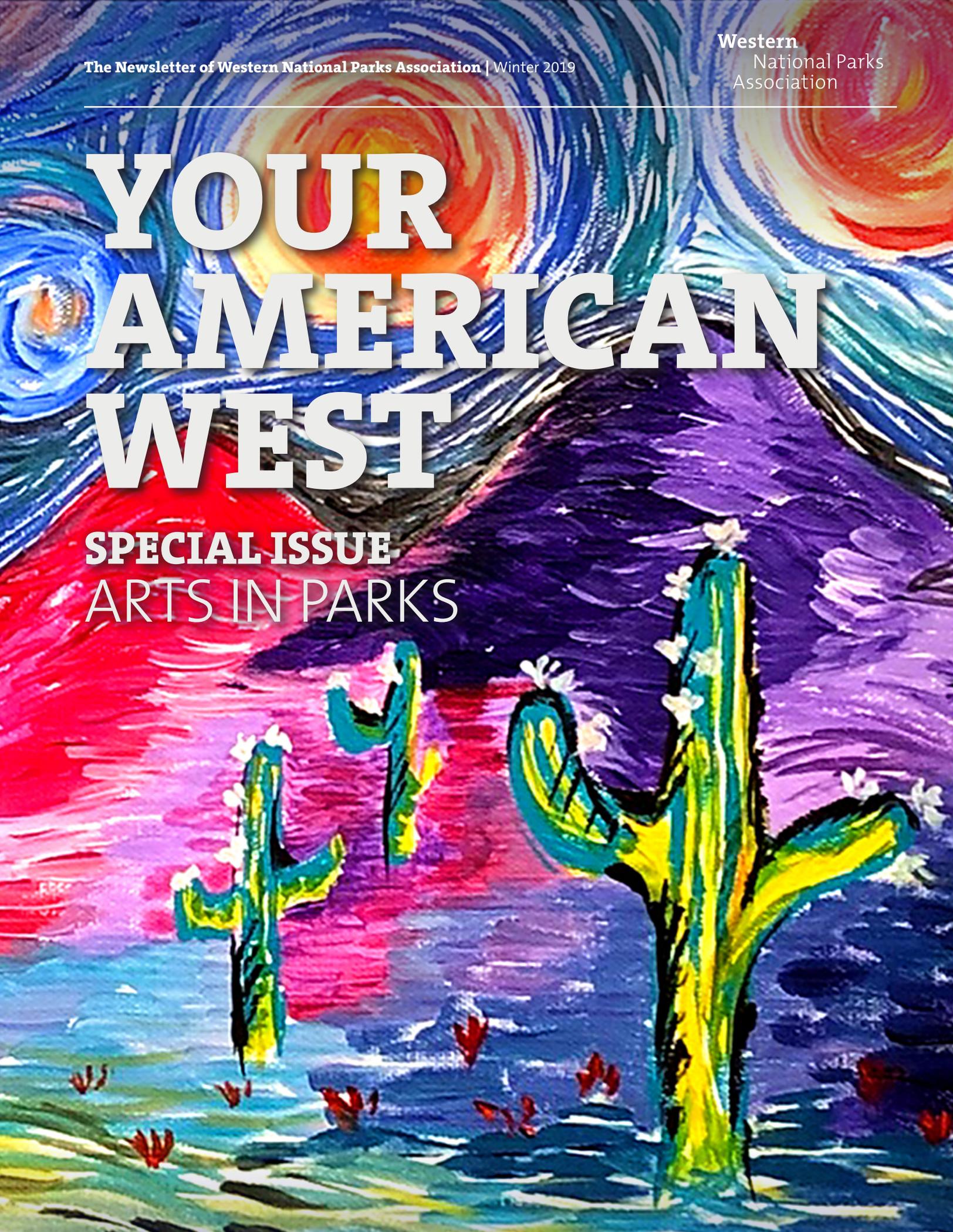


# YOUR AMERICAN WEST

**SPECIAL ISSUE**  
**ARTS IN PARKS**





Orange flowers grow in the aftermath of wildfire (courtesy of NPS). [See page 13 for more.](#)

# Table of Contents

Letter from the Chief Executive Officer.....3

Research Matters.....4

People & Happenings.....8

In the Parks.....10

Focus On.....11

New & Notable Releases.....12

Featured Events & Activities.....13

Kids in Parks.....17

All photographs courtesy of WNPA unless otherwise credited.  
Cover image courtesy of April Newman.

**James E. Cook**  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Details

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, serving more than 70 national parks in the western United States.

The Home Office and The National Parks Store are located at 12880 N Vistoso Village Drive, Tucson, AZ 85755. Learn more by contacting [info@wnpa.org](mailto:info@wnpa.org) or visiting [www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org).

# Letter from the Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to the first special issue of *Your American West*, full of art inspired by our national parks. We at Western National Parks Association (WNPA) chose to do an art issue because connecting people to national parks is at the core of everything we do, and one of the many ways people connect with parks is by creating and viewing art.

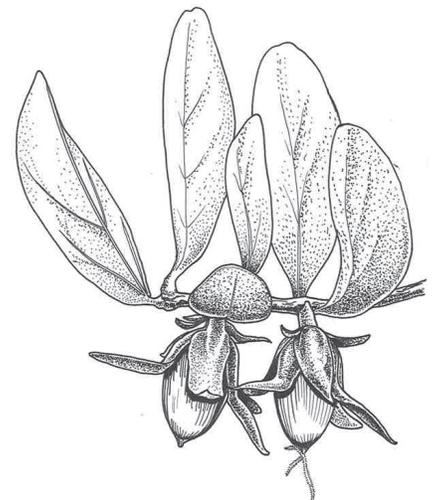
Art is a universal language, allowing people to interpret things they see, hear, touch, smell, taste, or feel for themselves and for others who may not be able to have these same experiences in person. Sharing your experiences may even inspire others to have their own national park adventures. WNPA wants to inspire your adventures too, which is why we create Park of the Month videos, showcasing the beauty of our partner parks, and encourage you to participate in National Park Service (NPS) Servicewide themes, such as Arts in Parks month this past October.

Creating art is also an act of preservation. When you make national parks your muse, you are connecting yourself to these special places and preserving your memories of them for those who come after you. From the pictographs and petroglyphs created by our ancestors to the photographs taken today by middle-school-aged participants in the Parks in Focus® program, everything you paint, sculpt, draw, write, photograph, or compose conserves what is safeguarded in our national parks for everyone, for all time.

We hope you enjoy seeing the many ways people connect themselves to national parks, and we hope you are encouraged to make your own connections in the coming year. On behalf of the board of directors, staff, volunteers, and national park partners that make up WNPA, I wish you a joyful holiday season and the best for 2020.

Sincerely,

**James E. Cook**  
Chief Executive Officer



*Scientific illustrations like this (jojoba) are both works of art and tools to help us learn about the world around us (courtesy of Bill Wignall).*

**Thank you to our  
Education Partner:**



# Research Matters

The California condor may not be conventionally beautiful, but there is no doubt the largest bird in North America—with a wingspan of more than nine feet—is visually stunning.

In October it was announced that a record number of wild California condor chicks were documented in the Southwest after the birth of the fifth chick in Grand Canyon National Park. Five doesn't seem like very many, but it is significant for the condor, which has a slow reproductive rate and nearly became extinct in the 1980s. In July 2019 the California condor population reached more than 500 worldwide, but unfortunately they are still categorized as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species and continue to die unnaturally because of factors such as lead poisoning.

**Pinnacles National Park**, located between San Francisco and Los Angeles, California, is one of the national parks involved in the California Condor Recovery Program and the only NPS unit managing a release site for captive-bred condors. In 2014 WNPA provided a research grant to help fund a study on the stress response in lead-exposed condors in Pinnacles NP and its effects on their reproduction. Read on for a summary of this research project.

This article was originally published [online](#).

## Keeping the Lead Out: The Endangered California Condor

By **Susan Swanberg**, assistant professor of journalism at the University of Arizona

The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) is an endangered New World vulture and the largest bird in North America. In the 1980s, the entire population of California condors was reduced to 22 birds.

With the assistance of captive breeding programs, the condor was brought back from the brink of extinction. Captive-bred birds have been reintroduced to California, Arizona, Utah, and Baja California. There were more than 230 condors in the wild in 2013, but the bird's recovery has been sluggish.

The extremely slow reproductive rate, usually one egg per clutch, and the fact that females don't nest every year, prevents condor numbers from booming. Young condors are dependent upon their parents for as much as a year and can take 6 to 8 years to mature.



## THE IMPACT OF LEAD ON CONDOR REPRODUCTION

In addition to a slow reproductive rate, the condor's susceptibility to lead poisoning caused by ingesting lead ammunition fragments is a major impediment to establishing a viable wild population. Lead impairs the stress response, and elevated stress is known to interfere with avian reproduction.

In 2010, the Peregrine Fund reported that 72 percent of condors captured in Arizona had lead in their blood. Of this number, 34 birds were treated by chelation, a technique for removing heavy metals from the blood. To mitigate lead poisoning in reintroduced condors, each bird is recaptured two times a year and tested for blood lead levels. If a condor tests high for lead, a chelation treatment is warranted.

## RESEARCH PROGRESS

In 2014, Western National Parks Association awarded a grant to scientists from the University of California Santa Cruz to help fund a study of the stress response in chronically lead-exposed condors and the associated effects on reproductive success. This study is being conducted under the auspices of the condor program at Pinnacles National Park in central California where park officials are currently managing about 25 free-flying condors.

Graduate student Zeka (Kuspa) Glucs, working under the supervision of UC Santa Cruz Professor Donald Smith, along with toxicologist and Adjunct Professor Myra Finkelstein, is examining condor fecal samples for elevated stress hormones in captive condors over a 24-hour period following a routine capture and handling event. After establishing a baseline for stress hormones in the fecal samples of the recaptured birds, the scientists will compare their findings to stress hormone data from condors with high-lead blood levels.

The data collected by these scientists will increase our understanding of the effect of ingested lead on the stress response and reproductive success of this magnificent, endangered bird.

In September 2014, Glucs presented her preliminary findings at a joint meeting of the American Ornithologists Union, the Cooper Ornithological Society, and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists.

*Continue reading on the next page.*



*California condor in flight (courtesy of NPS/Gavin Emmons).*

## AN ENCOURAGING UPDATE

Although lead poisoning remains the most serious threat to the re-establishment of viable wild California condor populations, significant progress has been made toward understanding the stress response in lead-exposed condors.

Since 2014, when WNPA awarded seed money to a group of dedicated University of California, Santa Cruz condor researchers, these scientists and their collaborators published an important study in PLOS One, a peer-reviewed, open access journal.

[The study](#) examined stress hormone levels in a captive condor population as well as in two populations of wild

Former graduate student Glucs, who conducted much of the research, has since been awarded a PhD by the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is now the director of the Predatory Bird Research Group which is housed at the UC Santa Cruz Institute of Marine Sciences.

In a phone conversation with Glucs, she noted that WNPA was a key funding source for her graduate work on condors and that her collaboration with the researchers at Pinnacles National Park was invaluable.

“I’m very grateful for the experience of working with Pinnacles as a graduate student,” Glucs said. “One of the great advantages of working with Pinnacles was that they were already doing so much research. We were able to add data to what they were already collecting. Because of Pinnacles’ daily monitoring we were able to know so much about the birds—how old they were and who their parents were.”

According to Glucs, a second paper that “stands on the shoulders of the WNPA grant” will soon be submitted for publication.

***This research is an excellent example of the work that can be accomplished when academic scientists, national park experts, and other stakeholders like WNPA collaborate to meet the challenges of protecting and maintaining our treasured, iconic animal species.***

condors, including the Pinnacles National Park condors. Based upon their data, the researchers concluded that non-invasive collection of fecal and feather samples holds promise as a way to measure condors’ physiological responses to environmental and human-induced stressors. The researchers also determined which of several assays provided the most reliable analysis of condor stress hormones in these samples.

Glucs is encouraged by the fact that wild condor populations are increasing.

This research is an excellent example of the work that can be accomplished when academic scientists, national park experts, and other stakeholders like WNPA collaborate to meet the challenges of protecting and maintaining our treasured, iconic animal species.

*View of the Balcones Cliffs from the High Peaks Trail (courtesy of NPS).*



**This video provides an overview of the research project funded by WNPA to study the effects of lead exposure on the California condor.**

## Click to watch!

Video will open in browser.



*Since 1938 WNPA has funded scientific research to help advance the management, preservation, and interpretation of our national parks. WNPA has partnered with the University of Arizona School of Journalism to provide engaging stories about the research projects completed with the aid of WNPA funding. Your American West will feature one of these stories in each of the next few issues. Discover more of the historical, social, and environmental research projects WNPA has funded in recent years on our [website](#).*



# People & Happenings

## Arts in Parks Month

The NPS celebrated Arts in Parks month in October by inviting everyone to make national parks their artistic inspiration. WNPA collected park art throughout the month to show off on our [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#). Here are some of our favorites!

**Sometimes the artistry of nature is plain to see. Other times it is hidden from view and must be revealed.**

**Connie Craig discovered this gift from nature, saying, “Nature sends many image gifts on rocks, seeds, bark, seashells, etc. Here is a little wolf from a rock rubbing.”**



“Wolf Howling,” natural crayon rock rubbing (courtesy of Connie Craig).



Desert saguaro tallit, textile (courtesy of Beth Surdut).

Chiricahua National Monument,  
photograph (courtesy of Diane Marie Demarco).



Van Gogh-inspired Sonoran Desert scene, acrylic (courtesy of April Newman).

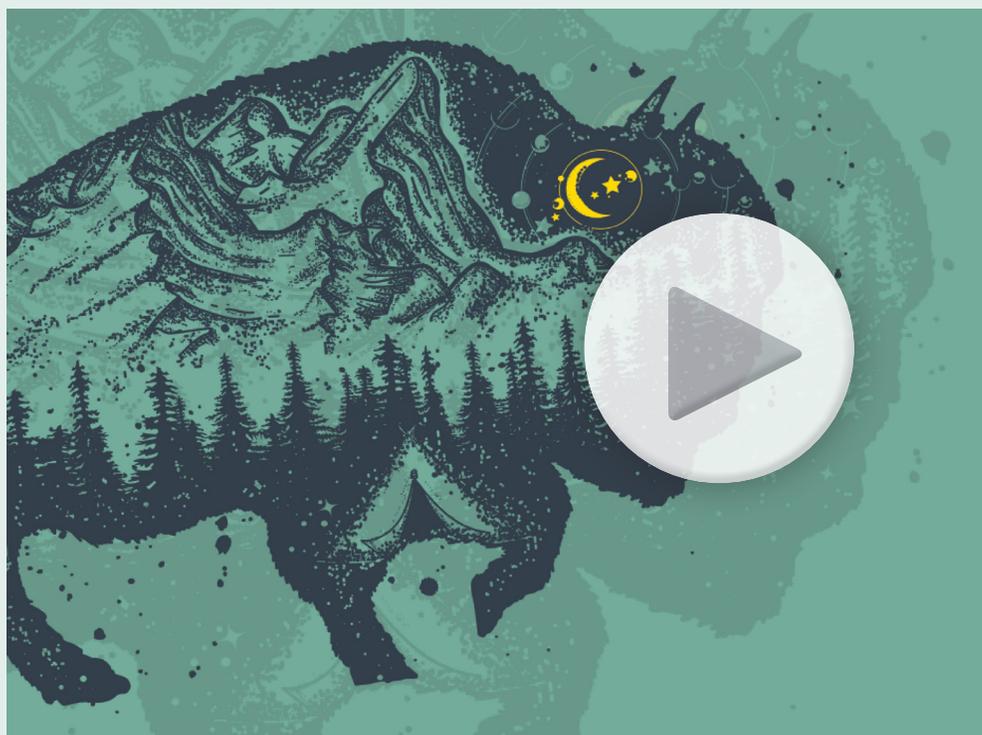
# In the Parks

As we at WNPA look back at 2019, we have a lot to reflect on. With nearly \$8 million provided in aid to parks—including \$52,151 awarded in scientific research grants—and more than 400 educational events supported, we can be proud of how much we have achieved by working together toward a common goal.

Enjoy this retrospective video of our 2019 year, and please join us in creating even more experiences and memories in 2020!

## Click to watch!

Video will open in browser.



**LOVE +**  
**PROTECT**  
*your parks*

**Western**  
National Parks  
Association

[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)



# YOUR PARKS STILL NEED YOU!

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### GIVE

When you give to WNPA, your donations directly benefit parks. Donations ensure that all our partner parks, regardless of size, are able to enhance the visitors' experience, understanding, and appreciation of national parks. Visit [www.wnpa.org/donate](http://www.wnpa.org/donate) to give today.

### SHOP

Visit more than 70 WNPA park stores located in our partner parks and The National Parks Store in Tucson, Arizona, or shop online at [store.wnpa.org](http://store.wnpa.org). Your purchases support parks!

# Focus On

Every month WNPA picks a Park of the Month and creates a video which includes beautiful pictures and interesting facts about that park. The videos are shown at The National Parks Store, sent out to our [email subscribers](#), and published on our [YouTube channel](#).

We took a look at which of our 2019 Park of the Month videos was the most popular, and the winner is **Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail**! Enjoy the video below, and be sure to check out our YouTube channel for more great videos about national parks.

## Click to watch!

Video will open in browser.



# New & Notable Releases

## Love + Protect Your Parks Ball Cap

Show your love for national parks with this ball cap featuring our exclusive Love + Protect graphic, a reminder that national parks protect our nation's culture, wildlife, history, and natural beauty, and we need to protect them in return. Available [online](#) and at The National Parks Store in Tucson, Arizona.



## Casa Grande Mini Block Set

Build your own national park experience with our mini block sets! This set creates a miniature replica of Casa Grande (Great House), as seen at **Casa Grande Ruins National Monument**. The Great House was built during the 1300s and is one of the largest prehistoric structures ever built in North America. Available [online](#).

## Junior Ranger Selfie Prop Set

Take the perfect picture of your Junior Ranger with our six-piece photo prop set! Create cute and sharable photos and spread the #JuniorRanger message to your friends, family, and followers. Each Junior Ranger-inspired prop (map, sign, compass, hat, binoculars, mustache) has a handle to help you get the best shot. Available [online](#).



# Featured Events & Activities

## California Fire and Recovery Photography Exhibit

**Monday, January 13–Friday, February 21**  
9 AM–5 PM each day

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area  
King Gillette Ranch  
26876 Mulholland Highway  
Calabasas, CA 91302

Following a devastating fire, the recovery process begins. This process can include plants, referred to as “fire followers,” that are hardly seen—except in the aftermath of a fire. This photo exhibition at **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area** will show the raw and heartbreaking side of wildfires, the rare “fire followers,” and the regrowth and transformation of fire recovery. For more information, [click here](#).

## Women’s Right to Vote: The 19th Amendment Exhibition

**Friday, January 17–Tuesday, January 21**  
9 AM–5 AM each day

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site  
1515 SE Monroe Street  
Topeka, KS 66612

**Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site** will host *Women’s Right to Vote: The 19th Amendment Exhibition*. This traveling exhibit by the League of Women Voters of Kansas tells the story of how women gained the right to vote in Kansas in 1912 and nationally in 1920. For more information, [click here](#).



Images courtesy of NPS.



The Milky Way extends across the sky over Lower Cliff Dwelling at Tonto National Monument (courtesy of NPS).

## Film Screening and Discussion: *A Walk on the River*

**Saturday, January 18, 6 PM–8 PM**

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park  
6701 San Jose Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78214

Join **San Antonio Missions National Historical Park** for a free screening of the film *A Walk on the River: A Black History of the Alamo City* as well as a 30-minute Q&A session with its producers. The film highlights San Antonio's African American culture and history. For more information, [click here](#).



Sunset over San Juan Mission (courtesy of NPS).

## Milky Way Photography 101

**Saturday, February 22, 7 PM–9 PM**

Tonto National Monument  
26260 N AZ Hwy 188  
Roosevelt, AZ 85515

Join Bettymaya Foott of the International Dark-Sky Association for a night sky photography workshop at **Tonto National Monument**. Learn introductory techniques for wide-field astrophotography with a DSLR or mirrorless camera. No experience necessary. For more information, [click here](#).

## FEE-FREE DAY

**Monday, January 20**

Enjoy fee-free entrance to all NPS sites in honor of the Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.!

# Tucson Festival of Books

**Saturday, March 14 & Sunday, March 15**

**9:30 AM–5:30 PM each day**

The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721

Come celebrate literacy and national parks at the 12th annual Tucson Festival of Books (TFOB)! TFOB is one of the largest book festivals in the country and is free and open to the public. WNPA will once again host our popular The National Park Experience Pavilion, with representatives from our partner parks, informational and educational activities, and pop-up shops for The National Parks Store and **Hubbell Trading Post**.

## **THE NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE PAVILION PANEL SCHEDULE**

### **Saturday, March 14**

Small but Mighty | 10 AM–11 AM

Every Strand Tells a Story | 11:30 AM–12:30 PM

Our Shared Earth | 1 PM–2 PM

Apocalypse Now-ish | 2:30 PM–3:30 PM

Women in the Wild | 4 PM–5 PM

### **Sunday, March 15**

Land That We Love | 10 AM–11 AM

Every Strand Tells a Story | 11:30 AM–12:30 PM

Water in the West | 1 PM–2 PM

A Picture of Preservation | 2:30 PM–3:30 PM

Essay Contest | 4 PM–5 PM

For a full list of authors and books at the event, visit the Tucson Festival of Books [website](#).

## **Hubbell Trading Post on the Road Navajo Rugs & Jewelry**

Showcasing fine vintage and contemporary Navajo weavings & Southwestern American Indian jewelry direct from Hubbell Trading Post. Stop by the tent for weaving demonstrations and rug talks by trader Edison Eskeets each day at 11:30 AM.



***For more events at national parks near you, check out their websites!***

**Arizona**

[Canyon de Chelly National Monument](#)  
[Casa Grande Ruins National Monument](#)  
[Chiricahua National Monument](#)  
[Coronado National Memorial](#)  
[Fort Bowie National Historic Site](#)  
[Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site](#)  
[Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)  
[Montezuma Castle National Monument](#)  
[Navajo National Monument](#)  
[Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument](#)  
[Saguaro National Park](#)  
[Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument](#)  
[The National Parks Store](#)  
[Tonto National Monument](#)  
[Tumacácori National Historical Park](#)  
[Tuzigoot National Monument](#)  
[Walnut Canyon National Monument](#)  
[Wupatki National Monument](#)

**California**

[Channel Islands National Park](#)  
[Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site](#)  
[John Muir National Historic Site](#)  
[Mojave National Preserve](#)  
[Pinnacles National Park](#)  
[Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial](#)  
[San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park](#)  
[Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)  
[Whiskeytown National Recreation Area](#)

**Colorado**

[Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site](#)  
[Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#)  
[Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)  
[Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve](#)  
[Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site](#)

**Kansas**

[Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site](#)  
[Fort Larned National Historic Site](#)  
[Fort Scott National Historic Site](#)  
[Nicodemus National Historic Site](#)

**Montana & Wyoming**

[Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area](#)  
[Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument](#)

**Nevada**

[Great Basin National Park](#)  
[Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

**New Mexico**

[Aztec Ruins National Monument](#)  
[Bandelier National Monument](#)  
[Capulin Volcano National Monument](#)  
[Carlsbad Caverns National Park](#)  
[Chaco Culture National Historical Park](#)  
[El Malpais National Monument](#)  
[El Morro National Monument](#)  
[Fort Union National Monument](#)  
[Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument](#)  
[Pecos National Historical Park](#)  
[Petroglyph National Monument](#)  
[Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument](#)  
[White Sands National Park](#)

**Oklahoma**

[Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)  
[Washita Battlefield National Historic Site](#)

**Texas**

[Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument](#)  
[Big Thicket National Preserve](#)  
[Chamizal National Memorial](#)  
[Fort Davis National Historic Site](#)  
[Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)  
[Lake Meredith National Recreation Area](#)  
[Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park](#)  
[Padre Island National Seashore](#)  
[Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park](#)  
[San Antonio Missions National Historical Park](#)

**Utah**

[Golden Spike National Historical Park](#)  
[Timpanogos Cave National Monument](#)

**Trails**

[Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail](#)  
[Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail](#)  
[Santa Fe National Historic Trail](#)  
[Trail of Tears National Historic Trail](#)

# Kids in Parks

The Stewart L. Udall [Parks in Focus](#)® program connects middle-school-aged youth to nature through photography. Working alongside park rangers and professional photographers, participants are taught introductory photography concepts and the importance of national parks. Since 1999 Parks in Focus has grown from a small program that reached 12 kids every summer into a year-round program that reaches nearly one thousand kids at program sites across the country annually. This is made possible in part through donations provided by WNPA, the program's official nonprofit partner.

Parks in Focus uses WNPA funds to provide supplies, food, and educational materials for after-school activities, weekend field trips, and camping trips. For many participants, this program offers a rare opportunity to engage in these kinds of hands-on outdoor activities.

WNPA also hosts an annual exhibit at The National Parks Store featuring photographs taken by program participants. The photographs are available for sale, with funds from purchases going back to Parks in Focus. Some photographs from this year's exhibit are seen here.

Instilling a love and appreciation of public lands in people from a young age is a mission WNPA is happy to support in any way we can, and we hope you will consider supporting it too. Donations can be made to Parks in Focus through WNPA [online](#) or [by mail](#).



Photo by Mileah, age 13



Photo by Adan, age 10



Photo by Jazzlyn, age 12



Photo by Mia, age 13



Photo by Lluvia, age 14



Photo by Kai, age 11

**Western National Parks Association is a nonprofit education partner of the National Park Service. We support parks across the West, developing products, services, and programs that enhance the visitor experience, understanding, and appreciation of national parks.**

**Your purchases support parks.**

**Western  
National Parks  
Association**



[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)