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The Coalition Report Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Coalition Actions

The Coalition signed on to comments related to Regional Haze State Implementation Plans for the 2nd Implementation Periods in [Montana](#) and [Wyoming](#).

The Coalition also signed on to a [letter](#) sent to Bureau of Land Management Director Tracy Stone-Manning, requesting additional NEPA analysis for each of the 2022Q1 lease sales.

The Coalition submitted comments on Air Tour Management Plan alternatives [for Haleakalā National Park](#) and [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#), encouraging the Environmental Assessments to better apply the statutory directive of the NPS Organic Act of 1916, elements of the 2015 Foundation Document emphasizing natural soundscapes (at Haleakalā), and management objectives under the 2016 General Management Plan (at Hawai'i Volcanoes), among other comments.

John King, a member of the Coalition, and NPS staff for over 35 years, submitted [an op-ed](#) published in the *Reno Gazette Journal* that encourages President Joe Biden to designate Avi Kwa Ame (NV) and the Castner Range (TX) as national monuments to support the "30 by 30" initiative to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.

Mike Murray, Chair of the Coalition, [also expressed the Coalition's support](#) for establishing a Castner Range National Monument, in a press release following Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland's visit to the area on March 26.

The Coalition signed onto [a letter](#) with 121 other conservation groups, environmental justice organizations, and local businesses, requesting that the California Coastal Commission put the Consistency Determination regarding the General Management Plan for Point Reyes on their April agenda for action. This would include an option to revoke Conditional Concurrence that was issued in April 2021, pending a water quality strategy within 12 months, which the park has failed to provide. [The Commission will be reviewing the Consistency Determination on April 7. More in Around the Parks, below]

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.

- *National Park Week* - April 16 marks the beginning of National Park Week. Many parks are holding events in celebration all week long. Source: Many.
- *Campground reservation systems add to inequity* - Social scientists from the University of Montana recently published [research](#) that shows that NPS campground reservation systems inequitably reward access to individuals from areas with higher incomes and higher proportions of white residence due to internet speed, workforce limitations, and institutional knowledge. The researchers will next be looking at lottery-type systems as a possible solution. Source: [Phys.org](#)
- *NPS not seeking public input on cell towers* - *National Parks Traveler* ran [an article](#) about a still-standing Trump administration policy that repealed requirements by cell phone tower proposals to conduct tests and require public input or environmental review, and blocked public appeals. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility has requested that NPS Director Chuck Sams restore public involvement in the process and reinstate policies established in 2019. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *16 sites added to Underground Railroad Network* - On March 29, 16 sites from 11 states were added to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, which provides insight into the experiences of freedom seekers escaping slavery and those who assisted them. There are ~700 sites, facilities, and programs in the Network. Source: [NPS Office of Communications](#)
- *4 sites added to Reconstruction Era Network* - On March 31, the NPS announced the addition of four new sites to Reconstruction Era National Historic Network, which connects sites across the country that provide education, interpretation, and research related to the Reconstruction era in the United States. The new sites are all located in South Carolina: First African Baptist Church, Historic Brattonsville, Tabernacle Baptist Church, and the Robert Smalls House. Source: [Reconstruction Era National Historical Park](#)

- *April Fools Day jokes by NPS social media* - In what has become an annual tradition, many national park units posted fantastical plans for park resources on their social media pages as a joke on April 1, "April Fools Day." Popular posts included proposals to [rotate the Lincoln Memorial statue](#), start [riverboat shuttle service on the Virgin River](#) in Zion National Park, and [create a ramp for buses to launch through the air](#) over the Pretty Rocks Landslide in Denali National Park. Source: Many.

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Arches National Park* - The park began its new ticket reservation system on April 3. It will run through October 3. Source: [Deseret News](#)
- *Bandelier National Monument* - The park has entered into a new agreement with Santa Clara Pueblo that will allow the Pueblo to assist in co-management activities in the park, including cultural properties monitoring, maintenance of natural resources, and roads and trail maintenance. It is the first agreement of this kind, as outlined under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, that Bandelier has engaged in. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - Starting the week of April 11, contractors will begin work on the Parkway near Deep Gap and Linville Falls to repair settlement, cracking, and rockfall. Work is expected to continue through September 2022. There will be closures/detours and delays during that time. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - A number of road projects on the Parkway near Roanoke, Virginia, will be completed in the coming months, including rehabilitation of the Roanoke River Bridge and repairs to slope failures near mileposts 119.7 and 127.9. Detours remain in place until work is completed. The bridge has been closed since Summer 2021. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial* - The Outer Banks national park sites have opened Commercial Use Authorization applications for 2022 for a variety of businesses, mostly related to recreation and special events. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historical Trail* - On April 1, 465 acres of land at Fones Cliffs was re-acquired by the Rappahannock Tribe. The land was purchased by the Chesapeake Conservancy with a grant from Walmart's Acres for America Program and the generosity of the family of William Dodge Angle, then given to the Tribe with a permanent conservation easement to the USFWS. The Tribe intends to place the land in Trust with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The land is part of the ancestral homeland of the Tribe, and is where they first encountered and defended their homeland against English settler John Smith in 1608. It is a key

feature along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historical Trail and will remain publicly accessible. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Catoctin Mountain Park* - The park recently completed an Environmental Assessment, including public comment, for the Catoctin Mountain Park Comprehensive Trail System Plan. The Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on March 18. Work on trails will begin in the coming months. Source: [Catoctin Mountain Park](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - The park recently completed planning for a new campground at Prisoners Harbor on Santa Cruz Island. The campground is outlined in the 2015 General Management Plan. The \$140,000 project is being funded, in part, by The Fund for People in Parks and the Channel Islands Park Foundation, and will be constructed by NPS staff. Work is expected to begin in Summer 2022 and open to the public in late 2022. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - The *New Jersey Herald* published [an article](#) about whether or not being designated a national park in name, as proposed by local Sierra Club chapters and former NPS superintendent John Donahue, will be beneficial for the community. Issues of concern include hunting, fishing, agriculture, and housing. Source: *New Jersey Herald*
- *Everglades National Park* - The park announced the reopening of the West Lake Trail, which was heavily damaged in 2017 Hurricane Irma and has been closed for repairs since February 2021. The boardwalk was raised by 1-2 feet in elevation and flow-through decking was installed to mitigate future storm surge uplift and other climate change impacts. Source: [Everglades National Park](#)
- *Flight 93 National Memorial* - The park will complete a 10-year reforestation project this month, fulfilling the original memorial design with 150,000 native trees. To celebrate, the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial, the National Park Foundation, and the NPS will host "Plant a Tree at Flight 93" on April 22-23. Over 4,200 volunteers, and 160 businesses, service clubs, academic institutions, and government organizations have planted 41 varieties of trees and shrubs across 197 acres at the Memorial. Source: [Flight 93 National Memorial](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - The contract for the current concessioner at Hite, on the northern end of the park, expired on April 1. The gas station, retail, visitor comfort station, and designated camping areas will be closed until further notice. The Hite boat ramp also remains closed due to record-low water levels. The Hite Ranger Station will remain open with public restrooms, drinking water, and an RV sewer dump station. Source: [KSL](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - After several years of monitoring, the park is now instituting a trial management plan to limit groups in the Whiteoak Sink area

from April 1 through May 8, wildflower season. The area is quite popular for wildflower viewing and has seen a large amount of plant trampling and soil compaction. Source: [WATE](#)

- *Hopewell Culture National Historical Park* - The park, along with other Hopewell ceremonial sites in the region, has been nominated by the NPS, Ohio History Connection, local Tribes, and other stakeholders to the UNESCO World Heritage list. A nomination would enhance preservation of the sites and likely double tourism in the area. Source: [Chillicothe Gazette](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - On March 31, the park began charging fees to enter the park to help cover costs associated with surging visitation. Source: [Fox 59](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - Following an Environmental Assessment and public comment, the park announced the approval of a Finding of No Significant Impact for construction of a new West Entrance Fee Station. The FONSI was signed by Pacific West Regional Director Frank Lands on March 25. The park will next complete a contract package for bid solicitation, select a proposal, and award a contract, with construction expected to begin in late summer or early fall. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)
- *National Capital Parks-East* - Following public engagement and an Environmental Assessment, the NPS has finalized a deer management plan for national parks in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. Source: [National Capital Parks-East](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS plans to clear two homeless encampments in May located on federal land outside Union Station and at New York Avenue and I Street NW. Superintendent Jeffrey P. Reinbold has made a formal request to the D.C. Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services for assistance finding housing for those affected. Source: [DCist](#)
- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - The park has issued two concession prospectuses for 10-year contracts providing canoe and tube rental, shuttle services, retail, and firewood at two locations in the park. Source: [Ozark National Scenic Riverways](#)
- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - On April 7, the California Coastal Commission will determine whether or not it will revoke its April 2021 support for the park's General Management Plan, based on its submission of water quality and climate change impact mitigation. At the March meeting, the park had requested a delay to submitting their plans, which are due this month (as reported in the 3/23/22 Coalition Report). However, since that time, Superintendent Craig Kenkel submitted a letter on March 24 saying that the General Management Plan had been modified since the Commission first saw it, including a reduction in the amount of grazing, number of cattle and other livestock, and other environmental requirements for

ranch owners. Some environmental groups have asserted that the strategies are not specific enough and would like to see the Commission remove its support.

Source: [Marin Independent Journal](#)

- *Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park* - Betty Reid Soskin, the NPS' oldest active ranger, retired on March 31, at the age of 100. Source: [The Guardian](#)
- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - The park is in the process of rehabilitating the Osceola landing, including expansion of the boat launch to have separate motor boat and canoe/kayak launches, new restrooms, expanded parking, and new walking paths. The \$3.3 million contract was awarded to Nordic Group Inc of Carlton, Minnesota. Work began in Fall 2021 and will continue through Spring 2023. Source: [KSTP](#)
- *San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park* - On March 22, the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association held a celebration event at the Maritime Museum to honor Kenichi Horie, who, as a 23-year-old, sailed alone and non-stop from Osaka to San Francisco in 1962. The journey earned him a key to the city and was celebrated widely, both in Japan and San Francisco. Horie has since completed two more voyages, including a 2002 journey on a boat made of recycled whiskey barrels. He is now 83-years-old and he just departed on March 26 on another solo voyage from San Francisco to Nishinomiya, which will take two-and-a-half months. Source: [San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park](#)
- *Shiloh National Military Park* - The park is commemorating the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Shiloh this week, with a variety of events from April 6 through April 10. Source: [Shiloh National Military Park](#)
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* - A 40-year lease has been issued to the non-profit Balancing Environment and Rehabilitation (BEAR) for the 150-year-old Sleeping Bear Inn and Garage in Glen Haven. It will open as a bed-and-breakfast inn, with a commercial kitchen and dining areas in late Spring 2023. Source: [mLive](#)
- *Whiskeytown National Recreation Area* - Several areas of the park are reopening for the first time since the 2018 Carr Fire, including Boulder Creek Trail, Brandy Creek Trail, Papoose Pass Trail, Sheep Camp and Brandy Creek Campgrounds, Brandy Creek and Mill Creek Roads. The reopening is the culmination of significant restoration efforts by the NPS and its partners, the Northern California Indian Development Council, Smart Business Resource Center of Redding, Friends of Whiskeytown, LLC, California Conservation Corps, and Lassen Volcanic National Park's 2021 trail crew. The park reminds visitors that some areas remain closed. Source: [Whiskeytown National Recreation Area](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - aeon published [a long-form essay](#) about the park's

relationship with fire over time, particularly its different approaches to management strategy. Source: [aeon](#)

- *Yellowstone National Park* - A new study published in *Nature* this week collected geophysical data by helicopter to create a map of the park's hydrothermal pathways through faults and fissures, as well as its shallow groundwater aquifers. The project maps the flow paths more definitively than has been possible before. Source: [Phys.org](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - Angie Richman has been selected as the new superintendent. Angie has 23 years of NPS experience, most recently as the director of interpretation, education, and visitor services for Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. She will begin her new role on May 22. Source: [Grand Forks Herald](#)
- *Women's Rights National Historical Park, Harriet Tubman National Historical Park* - Paula McCartney has been selected as the new Administrative Officer. Paula has 21 years of federal service, most recently for as an Administrative Assistant with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's New York and Long Island field offices. Source: [Women's Rights National Historical Park](#)
- *Women's Rights National Historical Park, Harriet Tubman National Historical Park* - Jessica Bowes has been selected as the new Cultural Resources Specialist. Jessica has 10 years of NPS experience, most recently as a museum technician at Fort Stanwix National Monument. She also was one of the first park rangers at Harriet Tubman in 2018, and has continued to support the park's efforts in preservation and documentation since then. Source: [Women's Rights National Historical Park](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- Randall "Rand" Paul Bauman, 72, passed away on March 10. He worked at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for many years, including doing historic restoration. Source: [The Sun Gazette](#)
- Farrell Ted Blanchard, 85, passed away on March 19. He worked several summers in Grand Teton National Park after graduating from college. Source: [Standard-Examiner](#)
- James Massey, 89, passed away on November 10, 2021. He was a supervisory

architect in the development of Independence National Park and the Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey for the NPS. He later went on to work with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as an adjunct professor at Drew University and the University of Virginia, and as the co-founder of the National Preservation Institute. Source: [Legacy/The Washington Post](#)

- Patricia Rolff, 87, passed away on October 21, 2021. She was a volunteer for the NPS for over 20 years at Home of Franklin D Roosevelt National Historic Site. Source: [Poughkeepsie Journal](#)
- Sue Frances Schofield, 80, passed away on March 23. She worked as a ranger at Salinas National Monument in the 1970s. Source: [The Norman Transcript](#)
- Michael Thomas Sharp, 72, passed away on February 25. He worked for the National Park Service for many years as a ranger, pilot ranger, and special agent in law enforcement, including stints at Independence National Historical Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gulf Islands National Seashore, and Glacier Bay National Park. Source: [Legacy/Dothan Eagle](#)
- James Dale Workman, 88, passed away on March 24. He worked as the NPS Regional Director for the Midwest. Source: [The Register-Herald](#)

In the News

- Rich Fedorchak, who was an employee of the NPS for 34 years before retiring in 2020, has been selected as a board member for the Rocky Mountain Conservancy, the nonprofit partner of Rocky Mountain National Park. Rich will serve on the Education Committee. Source: [Estes Park News](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Amistad National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to increase group campsite camping permit fees beginning in 2022. Comments can be submitted by email or mail. Source: [Amistad National Recreation Area](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on the replacement or rehabilitation of the Ocracoke Light Station due to the damage from recent storms and the threat of future storm damage. [Comments](#) are open until April 13. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open on a fire management plan. [Comments](#) are open until April 17. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a comprehensive trails management plan and environmental assessment. [Comments](#)

- are open until April 30. Source: [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal for a three-year pilot advance day-use reservation system to manage visitation at Tuweep Visitor Use Area, which has increased in popularity. [Comments](#) are open until April 6. Source: [St. George News](#)
 - *Great Basin National Park* - Public comment is now open on upgrades to the Lower Lehman Campground, including adding new sites, reconstructing the potable water line, and updating infrastructure. [Comments](#) are open until April 13. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
 - *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is now open on the Alagnak Wild River Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan. A [storymap](#) on the project is available. [Comments](#) are open until April 19. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
 - *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is now open on options to repair or replace Fryingpan Creek Bridge. [Comments](#) are open until April 9. Source: [Yahoo! News](#)
 - *North Cascades National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to relocate backcountry camps along the Brush Creek Trail and construct additional campsites for Pacific Crest Trail hikers. [Comments](#) are open until April 6. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
 - *Olympic National Park* - Public comment is now open on the proposed rehabilitation of the Cape Alava and Sand Point Trails in the Ozette area. [Comments](#) are open until April 26. Source: [Peninsula Daily News](#)
 - *Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve* - Public comment is now open on an update to the park's fire management plan. [Comments](#) are open until April 15. Source: [Mail Tribune](#)
 - *Padre Island National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on a proposed housing replacement project, just south of the park's visitor center. [Comments](#) are open until April 22. Source: [Padre Island National Seashore](#)
 - *Point Reyes National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on management guidance for Tomales Point, particularly around drought conditions and tule elk. [Comments](#) are open until May 2. Source: [Point Reyes National Seashore](#)
 - *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment is now open on infrastructure repairs and upgrades to Moraine Park Campground, Beaver Meadows Entrance facilities, and park housing units on High Drive. [Comments](#) are open until April 8.

Source: [Estes Park News](#)

- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - Public comment is now open on a land exchange of federally owned lands for privately owned lands to resolve encroachment and ingress/egress issues. Comments are open until April 30 and can be submitted by mail to park headquarters. Source: [Burnett County Sentinel](#)
- *Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a Draft Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. [Comments](#) are open until May 6. Source: [Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - Public comment is now open a livestock management plan for the park. [Comments](#) are open until April 15. Source: [Sidney Herald](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposed land swap of an 11-acre parcel in Estate Catherineberg in the park with Whistling Cay, an 18-acre island north of St. John currently owned by the Virgin Islands territorial government. The exchange would allow for development of a K-12 public school on St. John. A preliminary, nonbinding agreement for the swap was signed in October 2020. [Comments](#) are open until April 27. Source: [The Virgin Islands Daily News](#)
- *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a Special Use Permit application for non-exclusive use of Slaven's Roadhouse from October 1, 2022 through February 1, 2023. Comments must be submitted by mail by May 5. Source: [NPS Region 11](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Agreement reached to address environmental concerns along border wall* - An agreement to begin remediation of areas along the wall on the U.S.-Mexico border has been reached between the Center for Biological Diversity, the Animal Legal Defense Fund, the Defenders of Wildlife, the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Interior. In 2019, President Donald Trump declared the border with Mexico a national emergency and used Department of Defense funding to pay for wall building after Congress declined to fund it. As an emergency declaration, it was not subject to environmental impact rules and regulations, and there was damage to wildlife corridors, habitat, and local springs. The lawsuits filed in 2019 and 2020 accused President Trump of overstepping executive authority. The agreement provides \$800,000 in U.S. Customs and Border Protection funding to restore borderlands and for DOI agencies (including the NPS) to perform a study to assess the wall's damage. It also requires public participation in ongoing efforts to repair the damage. Source: [Herald/Review Media](#)
- *National wildland fire roadmap released* - On April 4, the Department of the Interior released [a roadmap](#) for addressing wildfire risk with the recently approved \$1.5

billion under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This plan, in tandem with the recently-released U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service 10-Year Wildfire Crisis Strategy, and will include monitoring, maintenance, and treatment strategies. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *\$420 million in rural water funding* - The Department of the Interior announced on March 31 that they will invest \$420 million for rural water construction activities in FY22 under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This includes pipeline connections, water treatment plants, pump systems, and reservoir construction. Several projects are underway and one new one has been authorized in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, and South Dakota. 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, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

Senate Actions

March 22 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 555, recognizing the heritage, culture, and contributions of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian women in the United States.

March 31 – The Senate passed the following:

- H.R. 3197, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the City of Eunice, Louisiana, certain federal land in Louisiana, by a vote of 422 yeas to 4 nays. The bill removes some parcels of land from the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.
- S. 1320, to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the state of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System. The bill re-designates Chiricahua National Monument as a national park.

House Actions

April 1 – *The Select Committee on the Climate Crisis* held a hearing entitled "America's Natural Solutions: The Climate Benefits of Investing in Healthy Ecosystems." Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Bandelier National Monument

Visitor killed while climbing park ladder

On March 23, a 54-year-old visitor was struck by a rock while climbing the second of four ladders up to Alcove House, and fell about 25 feet. NPS rangers and the Los Alamos Fire

Department responded to the incident. The victim went into cardiac arrest while being lowered to the ground. Attempts at resuscitation were unsuccessful. The incident is under investigation. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Big Bend National Park

Hiker dies from medical distress

On March 30, the park received a call for emergency assistance on the Hot Springs Canyon Trail. When rangers arrived, they found a 53-year-old hiker in medical distress. They performed CPR for over an hour, including use of an AED, but resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. No more information has been released, but the park has reminded the public about hydrating and getting off the trails by noon due to temperatures over 100 degrees. Source: [NewsWest9](#)

Cape Lookout National Seashore

Visitors cited for taking foal off island

On March 26, a group of visitors encountered a newborn foal in the Wade Shore area. There were no other horses present. The foal followed them for about two hours, and when the group moved their boat to leave, the foal tried to follow them. The group feared the foal might drown, so they lifted it onto their boat and left the island. The foal has been taken to the Foundation for Shackelford Horses and will remain a domesticated animal because it is unlikely the park can reunite it with its mother after being removed from its natural habitat and herd. The group was cited for their action and the park is working with them to assist with educational opportunities and community service projects that will benefit the Shackelford Banks horses. The park reminds visitors to never approach closer than 50 feet to wildlife, even if horses are sleeping motionless on their sides or following them. It is not uncommon for foals to follow other horses or people if it has been separated from its mother. Source: [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#)

Carlsbad Caverns National Park

Blasting caps box removed

In early March, a multi-agency effort was conducted to remove six boxes labeled "blasting caps" from Ogle Cave. Prior to the operation, it was unknown whether the boxes contained explosives. After a 1.25 mile hike, 180-foot rappel, and 45-minute cave scramble, a team reached the boxes and used a portable x-ray device to conclude that the boxes were all empty. NPS staff were assisted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Bomb Squad, Federal Bureau of Investigations Bomb Squad, New Mexico State Police Bomb Squad, Carlsbad Fire Department, Eddy County Fire and Rescue, Trans Aero Medevac, and the Regional Emergency Dispatch Authority. Source: [KTSM](#)

Denali National Park

Climber fined and banned for false claims leading to rescue

In May 2021, a pair of climbers was attempting to summit Denali via the West Buttress route when one of them began experiencing altitude sickness and later fell 1,000 feet. The climber survived and was rescued by NPS rangers. The other climber in the party and two other climbers from a different party spent several hours on the mountain recovering from observing what they assumed had been the fallen climber's death, then decided to descend to safety. The now-solo climber asked via satellite device for a helicopter evacuation for all three, saying they were in shock and experiencing hypothermia. They were told a helicopter couldn't come, and the group began descending. In the meantime, a helicopter was able to launch, but turned back when they heard word that the group was descending back to a base camp. NPS staff later asked the individual to hand over the satellite device, which he declined to do, allegedly to hold onto it for the rest of the planned descent, and rangers also suspected messages were deleted off the device that would incriminate the individual. In a plea deal last month, the individual pleaded guilty to violating a lawful order of a government employee, while charges of interfering with a rescue operations and making a false report were dismissed. The individual received a five-year ban from Denali, and will pay a \$5,000 fine and \$5,000 in a donation to Denali Rescue Volunteers. Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Visitor drowns in whitewater rapid

On March 24, a 68-year-old fell into Hance Rapid while participating in a private boating trip. When the victim was pulled from the water, she was unresponsive and other group members began performing CPR. NPS staff flew to the location by helicopter, but efforts to resuscitate the victim were unsuccessful. Source: [CNN](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Visitor pleads guilty to violation of group size limits

On March 25, a visitor pled guilty for violation for the group size limitation on a rim-to-rim hike in the park. On October 24, 2020, the individual organized a 139-person group to hike rim-to-rim through the inner canyon without a permit. The individual was made aware prior to that date that the group required a permit. Organized groups of 12-30 participants require a special use permit when traveling into the inner canyon. The individual was sentenced to two years of supervised probation and is banned from all national parks, national monuments, and federal lands within the state of Arizona. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Visitor falls to death

On March 4, a 34-year-old private river trip participant fell approximately 20 feet and sustained fatal injuries near Ledges Camp (river mile 152) along the Colorado River. Members of the group noted the victim was unresponsive and began CPR. The park requested Arizona Department of Public Safety emergency helicopter response due to

nightfall. They arrived on scene and pronounced the individual deceased. The incident is being investigated by the NPS and Coconino County Medical Examiner. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Grand Teton National Park

Backcountry skier rescued

On March 31 at 7:30pm, Teton Interagency Dispatch Center received a call from a 27-year-old backcountry skier who reported he was unable to make it out of the mountains due to whiteout conditions. He had climbed the Koven Couloir on Mount Owen, planning to ski it, then decided he wanted to attempt the Cathedral Traverse. He climbed the East Prong, realized he would not be able to reverse course, and conditions began to deteriorate once he reached the top of East Prong. The skier was connected with a ranger, who discussed the skier's plan to stay overnight in a snow cave he had dug out, and ski out with better visibility in the morning. The mountains received over a foot of new snow that evening. On the morning of April 1, the skier sent a text message at 6:30am to report that he was awake and doing okay, and rangers asked him to advise them of their progress and plans. At 7am, the skier called to let them know he was unable to safely proceed due to technical and risky terrain. At 10:30am, NPS staff and Teton County Search and Rescue jointly responded in a TCSAR helicopter to rescue the individual via short haul to the Jenny Lake Rescue Cache. The skier was uninjured. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Downed power lines start wildfires

On March 26, high winds caused trees to fell power lines, starting two fires, the Stone Pile Fire and the Cooper Creek Fire. The two fires have since merged and are called the Thomas Divide Complex Fire. As of April 1, the fires had burned 941 acres near the southern boundary of the park, and was close to complete suppression. No structures burned. Many trails and campsites in the area were closed, but have since reopened. Source: *WSPA* ([3/27](#), [3/28](#)), [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#), [Smoky Mountain Times](#), [Citizen Times](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Wind event closes roads

On March 30, many roads were preemptively closed in the park in anticipation of wind gusts up to 90 mph that could cause hazardous conditions from fallen trees and increased risk of fire danger. Source: [Huron Daily Tribune](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Rock climber takes 80-foot fall

On March 26, a 51-year-old died while rock climbing near the Sheep Pass group campsite

on a route known as "Turkey Terror." The victim had threaded a rope through a pre-established piece of webbing at the anchor station, and when they leaned back to rappel, the weathered webbing failed and they fell 80 feet. Source: [Desert Sun](#)

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Newly collared mountain lion killed by car

On March 23, P-104, a subadult male mountain lion, was struck and killed by a vehicle on the Pacific Coast Highway. It was only two weeks after he was captured and fitted with a GPS collar in the western end of the park. The individual is the 25th mountain lion and eighth collared cat killed by vehicle since the mountain lion study began in 2002. It is relatively rare for pumas to cross the Pacific Coast Highway, but P-104 had done so several times previous to his death. Source: [KXXV](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Chickasaw National Recreation Area* - The Veterans Lake Fire, which started March 19 as a brush pile burn on private land that escaped containment, is now 100% contained at 448 acres. Source: [Inciweb](#)

Acknowledgments

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- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- Issue Contributors: Mark Motsko, Deb Liggett, Steve Hastings, Bill Walters

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

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

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