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The Coalition Report
Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Note from the Editor: In the July 27, 2022 edition of the Coalition Report, I mistakenly referred to assistance from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program as "grants." However, the RTCA program does not issue financial assistance. Rather, they offer professional and technical assistance. I apologize for the mistake. Thank you to Cassie Thomas for bringing it to my attention. -KW

Coalition Actions

We released a report - in partnership with Archaeology Southwest - on the threats oil and gas development pose to cultural landscapes, ancestral homelands, and sacred sites of Tribes within and adjacent to national parks in the United States. You can read the press release and the report [here](#).

The Coalition joined our partners in celebration of the second anniversary of the Great American Outdoors Act on August 4th. We signed on to [a letter](#) sent to Senate offices that was accompanied by a social media toolkit.

Coalition Chair Mike Murray authored [a joint op-ed](#) with National Parks Conservation Association CEO Theresa Pierno in support of the Great American Outdoors Act, highlighting several successful projects which will benefit from its funds, and calling on Congress to extend the funding and fix more national parks. It was published in *The Hill* on August 7.

Coalition member Mark Butler wrote [an op-ed](#) for the *Los Angeles Times* about the

devastating impact of fires exacerbated by climate change.

The Coalition submitted comments to the Department of the Interior's Law Enforcement Task Force. We thanked the DOI for undertaking a series of listening sessions and offered additional written comments, which can be found [here](#).

We also submitted [comments](#) on a draft regional haze state implementation plan for Nevada.

August 8 was "Global Sleep Under the Stars Night"! Take a look at [this excellent interview](#) with Coalition Executive Council Member Linda Mazzu on the importance and beauty of NPS Dark Sky Parks.

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.

- *Better protection of fossils* - On August 1, the Department of the Interior published a final rule to implement the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act, which aims to give a more consistent management approach to the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bureau of Land Management. It standardizes preservation and storage techniques, requires the agencies to utilize an approved repository, and prohibits agencies from releasing specific locality information. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$192 million for urban parks and rec* - On July 29, the Department of the Interior announced \$192 million in Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grants that support urban communities in creating new outdoor spaces, revitalizing existing parks, and forming connections between the outdoors and underserved communities. Of particular interest this go-around are projects that increase access to "nature's benefits," such as green spaces, shady areas, and natural landscapes, as well as projects that provide climate benefits, such as heat island reduction. Grant applications are being accepted through May 31, 2023, with an early submission/awarding opportunity of January 31, 2023. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$2.1 million in NAGPRA grants* - On August 8, the NPS announced \$2.1 million grants to nine Tribes and 20 museums to support their efforts in the consultation, documentation, and repatriation of ancestral remains and cultural items under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *\$820K in American Battlefield grants* - On August 2, the NPS announced \$820,612 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to state and local government agencies in

three states to protect 73 acres of Civil War battlefield sites. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *\$150,000 for Network to Freedom* - The NPS announced the award of \$150,000 in National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom grants to 26 network members to preserve structures and stories related to the underground railroad. The grant program is funded by the 400 Years of African American History Commission and administered through the Association of African American Life and History. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Wounded Knee items sought for repatriation* - *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) about the efforts by a group of Oglala Lakota and Cheyenne River Sioux members to repatriate objects that were looted from those killed at the Battle of Wounded Knee and later donated to a museum in rural Massachusetts. The NPS-administered Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Program and some of the challenges associated with the act are outlined in the article. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *"Repairing the parks in the age of climate change"* - *National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) looking at climate change-driven disasters in the National Park System and what it takes to recover from them. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Profile on InterTribal Buffalo Council* - *Civil Eats* ran [a profile](#) about the InterTribal Buffalo Council, which has worked to reconnect Indigenous groups with American bison, including advocacy work, habitat preservation, and relocating buffalo from Wind Cave National Park, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Yellowstone National Park, and other public lands. Source: *Civil Eats*
- *Senate passes Inflation Reduction Act* - On August 7, the United States Senate passed the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. It will next go to the House of Representatives for a vote. Among other provisions, it would allow the NPS to hire more staff and work on projects related to habitat restoration and climate change resiliency. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#) [Editor note: the final text was unavailable in time for our Congressional Actions section below, but we will include more information in the August 24 Coalition Report.]
- *Lack of snowpack across West* - *Bloomberg* published [an article](#) about the dwindling snowpack across the western United States and its far-reaching effects. Though the article does not explicitly discuss national parks, it does look closely at the Sierra Nevada, where several national park units are located (and which store much of California's snowpack). Source: *Bloomberg*
- *"The case against commercial logging in wildfire-prone forests"* - *The New York Times* published [an op-ed](#) by Dr. Chad Hanson of the Earth Island Institute and Dr. Michael Dorsey of Arizona State University that argues against increasing

commercial logging as a wildfire management strategy. They argue that research shows that logging tends to increase extreme fires by reducing the windbreak effect and bringing in invasive grasses that are highly flammable. In particular, the op-ed argues against Yosemite's forest thinning project, as well as the Save Our Sequoias Act which has been introduced by a bipartisan group in the House of Representatives. Source: *The New York Times*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Acadia National Park* - The park is starting a project to restore the health and function of the Great Meadow Wetland. The project will cost \$500,000, and is being funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [News Center Maine](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - The park opened the brand new Lone Mountain Trail on August 5. It is three miles in length and circumnavigates Lone Mountain, just north of park headquarters at Panther Junction. The trail was completed with support from the Texas Conservation Corps. Source: [Big Bend National Park](#)
- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - The NPS has opened a prospectus for a 10-year concession for the Bandy Creek Stables and Campground Store. Proposals are due November 9. Source: [Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area](#)
- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - The Leave No Trace organization will be working with the NPS on the Mossy Cave Trail to provide information and service work from August 25-29 as one of its 2022 "Hot Spots" that has experienced a great deal of visitor impact. Source: [KSL](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - A genetically-rare, mostly-white baby loggerhead hatched in the Outer Banks and successfully entered the Atlantic Ocean. The turtle looks albino, and is actually "leucistic," meaning it has some pigmentation in its body and normally-pigmented eyes. Source: [Miami Herald](#)
- *Chickasaw National Recreation Area* - On October 1, campsite fees will go up to offset rising utility and collection costs. Source: [Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)
- *Congaree National Park* - The University of South Carolina published [an article](#) about their SC 7 Wonders Expedition, a 30-day adventure program aimed at inspiring people to connect with and protect natural places around the state, including Congaree. Source: University of South Carolina
- *Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site* - *Mid Hudson News* ran [an article](#) about the National Park Service's Urban Archaeology Corps, spotlighting the participation of nine Dutchess County students who spent three weeks interning and learning

archaeology skills, including looking for evidence of the original rose arbor that led from President Roosevelt's garden to his home. Source: *Mid Hudson News*

- *George W. Carver National Monument* - The NPS National Historic Preservation Training Center recently completed a restoration project on 3,000 square feet of rock wall at the Carver Family cemetery. The \$272,000 project was financed by Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund. Source: [George W. Carver National Monument Twitter Page](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On July 26, the park began a \$13 million rehabilitation of Little Round Top. The area will be closed for approximately 18 months for infrastructure updates, including fixing parking issues, stabilizing erosion patterns, revegetating the landscape, and creating better accessibility, in addition to improved interpretive signage and new trail alignments that better allow visitors to understand the observe the historic battlefield. Funding for the project comes from federal and private funding, including from John Nau III, Gettysburg Foundation, American Battlefield Trust, and the National Park Foundation. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - The park is starting an environmental assessment for a proposed project to remove an earthen dam at Tennessee Valley to improve visitor safety and access to Tennessee Beach. The dam was originally constructed to create duck hunting habitat prior to the park becoming an NPS property, but now has created a flood zone that blocks trail access in the winter. Public comment is expected to begin in October 2022. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
- *Great Basin National Park* - *The Nevada Independent* ran [an article](#) about the ecology of the park, particularly about bristlecone pines and cave environments, based on an interview with NPS ecologist Gretchen Baker. Source: *The Nevada Independent*
- *Kenai Fjords National Park* - A new study published in *The Journal of Glaciology* measured the retreat and advance of many glaciers inside of the park. Unsurprisingly, due to global climate change, most are retreating, some quite quickly. However, two glaciers have actually advanced. The data is expected to support ongoing monitoring efforts by the park. Source: [University of Washington News](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - U.S. Senator Jackie Rosen (D-NV) has sent an official letter to NPS Director Chuck Sams asking for the NPS to publicly address what is being done, if anything, to reopen the five boat ramps currently closed to the public due to dropping lake levels. The senator expressed concern for local businesses and recreationists. Source: [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#)

- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - One of the park's partners, the Cave Research Foundation, was awarded the 2021 George and Helen Hartzog Regional Group Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service from the NPS' Volunteers-in-Parks program. CRF has mapped and conducted research of Mammoth Cave since 1957. Source: [Mammoth Cave National Park](#)
- *Mount Rushmore National Memorial* - On July 27, 2022, the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem's request to reconsider the July 2021 decision that the NPS used appropriate discretion when it denied a 2021 permit request for a July 4 fireworks show, and that the State of South Dakota lacked standing to challenge the permitting regime. Source: [Reuters](#)
- *Redwood National and State Parks* - The area around "Hyperion," the coast redwood known for being the tallest tree in the world, has now been closed indefinitely due to damage caused by visitors traveling off-trail and destroying the habitat around the base of the tree. Source: [SF Gate](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - The Sam Schneider Legacy Foundation has donated an all-terrain wheelchair to Rocky Mountain Conservancy, which is now available to reserve and use, free of cost, from the Estes Park Mountain Shop. Source: [Estes Park Trail Gazette](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - LAist ran [an interview](#) with Seth Riley, an NPS wildlife ecologist at the park, about the 20-year-long study on mountain lions. Source: *LAist*
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - The *Tahoe Daily Tribune* published [an article](#) about the search by a handful of researchers to locate several of the tallest giant sequoias in the world, utilizing LiDAR technology. Source: *Tahoe Daily Tribune*
- *Wilson's Creek National Battlefield* - On August 10, the park will commemorate the 161st anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek, including the opening of a new temporary exhibit featuring a recently-acquired collection of objects belonging previously to Colonel Franz Sigel. The collection was recently purchased by the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Foundation and is being donated to the park. Source: [Wilson's Creek National Battlefield](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Post Register* ran [an article](#) about the struggles of gateway communities adjacent to flood-related road closures. Source: *Post Register*
- *Yosemite National Park* - The *Los Angeles Times* ran [an article](#) about the differences in two recent fires that had drastically different outcomes: the Washburn Fire in the park, and the Oak Fire, in the nearby gateway communities of Mariposa County.

Source: *Los Angeles Times*

- *Zion National Park* - *The Salt Lake Tribune* published [an article](#) considering whether or not the new permit system on Angels Landing is likely to decrease risk and/or deaths on the trail. Source: *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Personnel Changes

- *Region 8,9,10,12 (Pacific West Region)* - William "Billy" Shott has been selected as the new deputy regional director. He has 27 years of NPS experience, most recently as the superintendent at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area for 7 years. He will start his new role in mid-August. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Region 11 (Alaska Region)* - David Alberg was selected as the new deputy regional director. He spent 15 years with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as superintendent of the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, and most recently served as the head of the resource management and compliance division at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, as well as the acting deputy regional director in Alaska. He will start his new role in October. Source: [Region 11](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- John Clair Elder Amspacher, 73, passed away on July 22. He was a volunteer guide at the Brandywine Battlefield Historic Site (a National Historical Landmark operated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission) and Valley Forge National Historical Park. Source: [Evening Sun](#)
- Jane Beau, 69, passed away on July 24. She was a grant specialist for the NPS who retired in 2014. Source: [Legacy/The Daily Nonpareil](#)
- Jose Aguilar Cisneros, 83, passed away on July 26. Jose worked for the NPS for many years, including as superintendent of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, as well as stints at Bandelier National Monument, Gettysburg National Military Park, and Big Bend National Park. Source: Jerry Rogers, [Legacy/Santa Fe New Mexican](#)
- William "Bill" F. Locke, 85, passed away on August 3. Bill worked for the NPS for over 40 years, finishing his career as a regional budget director. Source: Bill Walters, [Legacy/Legacy Remembers](#)
- Richard "Rick" Early Merryman, 74, passed away on July 30. Rick worked for the NPS for 42 years, finishing his career as the chief of special events for the National

Capital Region. Source: Randy Myers, [W.J. Smith & Son Funeral Home](#)

- Robert "Bob" Allen Miller, 86, passed away on May 6. He was a volunteer at DeSoto National Memorial. Source: [The Herald Bulletin](#)

Retired

- Konyak, a 7-year-old Belgian Malinois patrol and narcotics K9, has retired after six years at Hot Springs National Park. The dog helped with nearly 50 arrests by surrender. Konyak has been adopted and two new dogs have joined the force. Source: [KATV](#)

In the News

- Tom Haraden was interviewed for *Insider's* [article](#), "9 mistakes you're making when visiting national parks, according to a former park ranger of 37 years." Tom worked in nine national parks over his career. Source: *Insider*
- Eric Valencia has been selected as the new monument manager for the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument (a Bureau of Land Management unit). He spent over six years as the chief of interpretation and visitor services for Fort Laramie National Historic Site and 11 years as a ranger at Pecos National Historical Park. Source: [Bureau of Land Management](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on a proposed no wake zone adjacent to Motts Creek and Oregon Inlet. [Comments](#) are open until September 1. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Crater Lake National Park, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Lava Beds National Monument, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to implement an annual pass that will give visitor access to all four parks. It would be implemented starting on January 1, 2023. [Comments](#) are open until August 21. Source: [Lava Beds National Monument](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - Public comment is now open on a Community Access Plan to enhance the visitor experience. [Comments](#) are open until September 16. Source: [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The NPS has issued a Request for Expression of Interest for creative ideas for re-envisioning the use of facilities adjacent to the Washington Sailing Marina on Daingerfield Island. The facility is 13,662 square feet and includes seating and a snack bar. Concept ideas may be [submitted](#) until September 19. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)

- *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is now open for a marine management planning process, including consideration to changes in vessel quotas and operating requirements. [Comments](#) are open until September 9. Source: [Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Lincoln Home National Historic Site* - The NPS has announced a Request for Expressions of Interest for creative use of the Henson Robinson House for the future. Site visits will run through September 30 and [proposals](#) are open until November 3. Source: [Lincoln Home National Historic Site](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS and Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation, in cooperation with the National Capital Planning Commission, have opened public comment on a proposed Peace Corps Commemorative Park one block north of the U.S. Capitol grounds. [Comments](#) are open until September 16. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Public comment is now open on a KNP Complex Wildfire Tree Hazard Mitigation Environmental Assessment. [Comments](#) are open until August 21. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)
- *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument* - Public comment is now open for the development of a park General Management Plan. [Comments](#) are open until August 19. Source: [Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument](#)
- *1908 Springfield Race Riot (Special Resource Study)* - The NPS is beginning a special resource study of the sites associated with the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, which would evaluate their eligibility to be considered for inclusion in the National Park System. [Comments](#) are open until September 3. Source: [The State Journal-Register](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Stay of litigation supports Columbia River fisheries* - On August 4, the Department of the Interior announced an extension to a stay in litigation as it relates to 14 federal dams and their effects on salmon fisheries in the Columbia River Basin. The litigation is a long-standing dispute between the federal government, State of Oregon, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Spokane Tribe of Indians, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and a coalition of plaintiffs led by the National Wildlife Federation. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$725 million for legacy pollution* - On August 3, the Department of the Interior released a Notice of Funding Opportunity for \$725 million available to 22 states and the Navajo Nation to reclaim abandoned mine lands. The funding is available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Advisory Committee announced for reconciliation of place names* - On August 9,

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced the 17 members of the public and four ex-officio members of the federal government who will sit on the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names to identify and recommend changes to derogatory terms. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *New Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs* - On August 4, Carmen G. Cantor was sworn in as the new Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs for the Department of the Interior. She has served in a number of roles for the Department of State, most recently as U.S. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Federated States of Micronesia. 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.

New Public Laws

Aug. 3 – The president signed into law:

- H.R. 1057, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC., P.L. 117–162.
- H.R. 1842, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth, P.L. 117–163.

See Senate action of July 27, below, for further details about both laws.

Senate Actions

July 27 – The Senate passed the following:

- H.R. 1057, amended, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. All surcharges received from the sale of such coins shall be paid to the Friends of the National World War II Memorial to support the National Park Service in maintaining and repairing the memorial, and for educational and commemorative programs.
- H.R. 1842, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth. All surcharges received by Treasury from the sale of such coins must be paid equally to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and The Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. in Auburn, New York, for the purpose of accomplishing and advancing their missions.

The bills then went to the president to sign into law.

July 28 – The Senate passed H.R. 7776, amended, to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, by a vote of 93 yeas to 1 nay. This is the biennial bill for

water projects throughout the country that could impact various national park units due to their location within or along the waterways affected by a specific project.

Aug. 4 – The Senate passed S.J. Res. 55, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Council on Environmental Quality relating to "National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations Revisions," by a vote of 50 yeas to 47 nays.

House Actions

July 26 – The House passed the following:

- H.R. 1842, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the Bicentennial of Harriet Tubman's birth. All surcharges received by Treasury from the sale of such coins must be paid equally to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and The Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. in Auburn, New York, for the purpose of accomplishing and advancing their missions.
- H.R. 1057, amended, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. All surcharges received from the sale of such coins shall be paid to the Friends of the National World War II Memorial to support the National Park Service in maintaining and repairing the memorial, and for educational and commemorative programs.

July 27 – The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on H.R. 2021, to restore, reaffirm, and reconcile environmental justice and civil rights, and for other purposes, also known as the "Environmental Justice For All Act." H.R. 2021 was ordered reported, as amended. Among a range of provisions that amend various civil rights and environmental laws to ensure no disparate impact on the basis of income, race, color, or national origin, the bill would do the following:

- Sec. 8 creates a White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council that would include the Secretary of the Interior.
- Sec. 9 requires each agency participating in the council to ensure their activities are carried out in a manner to avoid disparate impacts on individuals based on their race, color, national origin, or income level and establish an environmental justice strategy.
- Sec. 11 establishes the Outdoor Legacy Partnership matching grant program in the Department of the Interior to allow for the acquisition of lands and to develop opportunities for outdoor recreation and public land volunteerism. These grants would be paid for by using 5 percent of the funds allocated under the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GOMESA).
- Sec. 12 establishes in the Department of Transportation a Transit to Trails Grant program, through which eligible groups would be able to obtain grants for the development of transportation connectors or routes between underserved communities and federal and non-federal public lands, waters, parkland, and monuments.

- Sec. 13 repeals the sunset date of March 12, 2026, for the Every Kid Outdoors program.
- Sec. 14 establishes additional requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act to ensure that any federal agency taking an action that could impact local communities prepares a community impact report of the proposed action.
- Sec. 15 requires training in environmental justice of federal employees in the Department of the Interior within one year of enactment.
- Sec. 28 increases fees on oil, natural gas, and coal leasing to pay for the costs of this act.

July 29 – The House passed H.R. 5118, to direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to prioritize the completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, and for other purposes, by a yea-and-nay vote of 218 yeas to 199 nays. As passed by the House, this bill was stripped of the provisions affecting the trail and was used instead as a vehicle to move several other pending bills, including those to increase pay for federal wildland and structural firefighters; to authorize programs for wildfire ecosystem protection, community preparedness, and recovery activities; drought response and climate resilience; tribal water rights; and the environmental justice bill, H.R. 2021, approved by the House Natural Resources Committee on July 27 as noted above.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Assateague Island National Seashore Unexploded military ordinance

On July 31, the park closed the "normal" lifeguarded area of North Beach swimming area at the Maryland unit due to the discovery of at least seven pieces of military munitions debris on the beach. There are pits of munition debris that were buried in the 1940s and recent storms may have uncovered one of these pits. Most of the fragments are just metal, but some may contain explosive residue or propellant. The Ocean City Bomb Squad, Dover Air Force Base Explosive Ordinance Disposal team, and Worcester County Fire Marshal assisted the park in removing all the material from the park. The closure lasted until August 4, at which point the park reopened the beach to normal use. Source: [Assateague Island National Seashore, WBOC](#)

Bandelier National Monument Vandalism

The week of July 24, NPS staff discovered damage at Cave Kiva, a popular and highly visited location on the Pueblo Loop Trail. Public access to the space has been revoked and the ladder to the location has been removed. The cave will remain closed while preservationists and archaeologists assess and record the damage. The park is looking for any information the public may have about the incident. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#)

Death Valley National Park

"1,000 year flood"

On August 5, severe flooding occurred in the park. Furnace Creek received 1.46 inches of rain in three hours. All roads in the park were closed and about 500 visitors and 500 staff were stranded inside the park. Around 60 cars were buried in debris. 600 feet of the main line in the Cow Creek water system washed away. Cow Creek supports many park residences and administrative buildings, including the primary emergency operations building and maintenance yard. Hundreds of miles of road experienced damage, some quite severe. Law enforcement escorts assisted people in leaving the park. A Naval Weapons Station China Lake helicopter crew was able to do aerial surveys and locate vehicles in remote areas of the park. Rangers were able to contact those visitors to ensure everyone was okay. Highway 190 was expected to reopen between Furnace Creek and Pahrump on August 9, but has been delayed until at least August 17 due to extensive debris removal. All other roads also remain closed while damage is assessed and recovery takes place. Source: *News3LV* ([8/5](#), [8/6](#)), *Death Valley National Park* ([8/7](#), [8/8](#))

Gateway National Recreation Area

Destruction of bird eggs

On July 6, near the Breezy Point Co-Operative, at least one American oystercatcher egg was found to have been intentionally destroyed. The incident may or may not be related to a string of other intentionally destroyed egg incidents between mid-May and late June in the region, including those of piping plovers and American oystercatchers. Both birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and piping plovers are also a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. A reward of up to \$5,000 has been offered by the NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for information leading to conviction of the perpetrator(s). Source: [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)

Glacier Bay National Park

Bear obtains food

On July 30, a brown bear obtained food from campers at the Scidmore Cut area of the West Arm of Glacier Bay. No injuries or property damage were reported. A 30-day closure to foot traffic in the area has been implemented. Source: [Glacier Bay National Park](#)

Glacier National Park

2 mountain accidents leave 3 deceased

On July 21, two 67-year-olds started a trip to climb Dusty Star Mountain, expecting to hike out on July 22. They were reported missing on July 24, and rangers located their vehicle at the trailhead. The two individuals were well-known in the local climbing community and a colleague said they were exploring a new route on the mountain. Two Bear Air and Minuteman Aviation conducted air searches. Spotters were able to locate the

two deceased climbers and recover their bodies on July 25.

On July 25, a 79-year-old was hiking off-trail on Rising Wolf Mountain with a group of friends, when the individual took a fall on a steep slope. The friends called 911, and campers at Two Medicine Campground below the mountain heard shouts for help. Two Bear Air was able to transport the patient, who was unconscious, to Two Medicine Ranger Station, where EMS staff from ALERT were on standby. ALERT personnel pronounced the individual deceased. Source: [Smithsonian Magazine](#), Glacier National Park ([Dusty Star incident](#), [Rising Wolf incident](#))

Grand Canyon National Park

Vandalism

On July 27, two individuals at Moran Point observed two other individuals scratching words onto a rock. They took photos of the individuals and yelled at the the suspects to stop. They did not stop, and the observers reported the incident to the NPS tip line. The NPS has asked the public for help identifying the individuals. Source: [Fox 10 Phoenix](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Visitor fall results in death

On August 1, a 34-year-old private river trip participant was at Ledges Camp when they took a fall of about 20 feet. Members of the group found the individual unresponsive, called for help, and began CPR. Due to darkness, the NPS requested helicopter assistance from the Arizona Department of Public Safety. Upon arrival, staff from ADPS pronounced the individual deceased. An investigation is being conducted by the NPS and Coconino County Medical Examiner. Source: [ABC4](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Tree fall results in deceased child

On July 27 at approximately 12:30am, a red maple, two feet in diameter, fell on a tent in the Elkmont Campground, resulting in the death of a seven-year-old. The other family members in the tent, consisting of a parent and two siblings of the individual, were uninjured. Emergency responders from the NPS, and Gatlinburg Fire Department and Police Department responded to the site. The campsite and adjacent sites are currently closed. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Hiker found deceased

A 23-year-old traveling from Knoxville, Tennessee, to University of North Carolina-Charlotte for a summer internship was reported missing. They had last been seen on July 31. NPS staff found the individual's car at Balsam Mountain Trailhead on August 4. They began a search and found the individual deceased the following day, about 20 yards off

the trail and 1.5 miles away from the parking lot. Source: [ABC11](#)

Gulf Islands National Seashore **2 convicted for stolen identity**

On February 4, 2021, an NPS ranger conducted a traffic stop. The driver, a 37-year-old, provided a stolen name, social security number, date of birth, and other information, as well as a stolen identity card. The officer, not knowing of the false information, issued misdemeanor citations for the traffic stop. The individual with the stolen identity received notice in the mail of the citations and contacted the government to alert them that their personal information had been stolen, as they were not involved in the traffic stop. The Federal Bureau of Investigations and NPS investigated the incident, finding body-cam evidence from the traffic stop, as well as a separate stop by the Biloxi Police Department that involved the same stolen ID card. On August 3, 2022, the individual pled guilty to the federal felony of unauthorized possession of an identity document with intent to defraud the United States. They will face sentencing on November 15, 2022, with a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison. The 31-year-old passenger previously pled guilty and was sentenced for the related offense of misprision of felony in connection with a material misrepresentation to a National Park Service Law Enforcement Ranger, and was sentenced to “time served” (effectively five months and one day), as well as to pay a \$1,500 fine and to serve one year of supervised release. Source: [The United States Attorney's Office: Southern District of Mississippi](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park **Growing fractures in lava tube**

On August 1, the park closed Nāhuku lava tube after a crackmeter measured a fracture that has narrowed 2.47mm over the course of two days. The fracture is near a large overhanging rock slab at the apex of the lava tube, creating potentially dangerous conditions for visitors. The park is monitoring the lava tube and will consider reopening when it is considered safe to do so. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

Joshua Tree National Park **Severe floods**

On August 8, monsoon storms caused severe flooding in the southern part of the park, resulting in the closure of the south boundary road, as well as a five-mile stretch of Pinto Basin Road between Porcupine Wash and Turkey Flats. Park staff evacuated all visitors from the area. As of August 9, the park was still assessing the conditions to determine the work needed to reopen them. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area **Kayaker found deceased**

On July 27, a 31-year-old kayaker near SCUBA Beach was seen struggling to retrieve an

inflatable kayak that was blown away due to high winds. The individual was not wearing a personal flotation device and was not seen emerging from the water. NPS staff searched the area by boat and snorkeling, but the search had to be suspended due to severe weather throughout the evening. The next morning, NPS staff and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police found the individual deceased. Source: [KVVU](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

3rd and 4th sets of human remains found in receding lake

On July 25, NPS staff responded to a report of human remains found in the Swim Beach area. On August 6, another set was found at Swim Beach. The Clark County Office of the Coroner/Medical Examiner is assisting with determining the cause of death in both cases. They are the third and fourth sets of remains found this year as the lake drops to record low levels. Source: [ABC 30](#), [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

Mojave National Preserve

Monsoons damage roads

On July 31, the park received heavy monsoonal rain, which damaged many paved roads. Kelbaker Road, Cima Road, Essex Road, Zzyzx Road, and Morning Star Road are all currently closed. One section of Kelbaker Road washed away entirely. Source: [Mojave National Preserve](#)

Shenandoah National Park

Visitor falls 30 feet

On August 5, a visitor fell thirty feet down a cliff "from the back of a campsite" on Skyline Drive. Rockingham County Fire and Rescue responded and was able to rescue the individual utilizing technical rope rescue techniques. The individual was flown to University of Virginia Health for trauma care. Source: [WRIC](#)

Washington Monument

Food trucks create traffic issues

The NPS has placed fencing along 14th Street Northwest in response to food trucks blocking traffic and viewsheds at the park and creating noise issues for neighbors. ABC7 had recently publicized that the District of Columbia collects thousands of dollars in parking fines for food vendor-related incidents as vendors vie for best placement. Source: [WJLA](#)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Plane crash

On August 7, the Personal Locator Beacon for a Cessna 172 aircraft was activated, alerting the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center of a plane crash. The pilot and a

passenger (who is a minor) were attempting to take off from a mesa above Ptarmigan Lake when they experienced turbulent winds, causing the left wing of the plane to stall and contact the ground, causing the plane to roll and land 200 yards downslope from the top of the mesa. Alaska State Troopers and the NPS dispatched aircraft to the scene and verified that both the pilot and passenger were uninjured, but needed helicopter rescue. The Alaska Air National Guard dispatched a HH-60G Black Hawk helicopter to the site and brought them to the Palmer Airport. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Motorcyclist hits moose

On August 8, a driver and a 48-year-old passenger were riding a motorcycle westbound on U.S. 121 near the Wyoming-Montana border in the park when a moose ran into the highway, causing a collision. Neither rider was wearing a helmet and the passenger died of injuries sustained in the crash. The driver had severe injuries, but survived the crash. Source: [Wyoming News](#)

Zion National Park

Mountain biker falls 60 feet

On August 3, a 19-year-old fell nearly 60 feet while illegally mountain biking off-trail on slickrock in the eastern part of the park. The individual suffered multiple compound fractures. Park staff were able to move the individual to a nearby road, and a life flight helicopter took them to a hospital in St. George. Source: [ABC4](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Guadalupe Mountains National Park* - The park reopened the Dog Canyon area on August 1. It had been closed due to fire danger since mid-April. Source: [Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The park opened the road corridor from Tower Junction to Slough Creek for reservation-based use, starting on August 3. It has been closed to vehicle traffic since the June floods. Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - As of July 30, the Washburn Fire was considered 100% contained at 4,886 acres. Wawona and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias reopened, though the Wawona Campground remains closed. The park is asking the public for any information they might have about ignition of the fire, which has been deemed to have been human caused. Source: [Inciweb](#)

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- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann
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If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to report@protectnps.org.

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

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