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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Coalition Actions

The Coalition signed on to comments submitted by Southern Environmental Law Center in support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to revise the regulations governing the reintroduction of experimental populations of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act: <https://protectnps.org/2022/08/09/coalition-comments-on-experimental-population-regulations/>

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.

- *\$7 million for 250th anniversary of U.S.* - On August 10, the NPS awarded its first round of funding for the Semiquincentennial Grant Program, which commemorates the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. This fund was created by Congress in 2020 and is being funded through the Historic Preservation Fund. The first round awarded \$7 million for 17 cultural resource preservation projects across 12 states. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *\$1.2 million for battlefield protection* - On August 23, the American Battlefield Protection Program awarded \$1,198,380 in Preservation Planning Grants to 14 partners in 10 states. The grants are used to conduct site surveys, interpretive planning, oral history interviews, and other documentation for sites of armed conflict. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Guidance for Indigenous site management on federal lands* - The Social Science Research Network recently published [a paper](#) by Coalition Member Frank Buono that compiles decades of federal court decisions governing the management of Indigenous sacred sites on federal lands. The paper is meant to support land managers, particularly those from the National Park Service. Source: Frank Buono, *Social Science Research Network*
- *"Finding solutions to National Park Service housing challenges"* - On August 11, *The Hill* published [an op-ed](#) by Margaret Everson, previous acting director of the NPS, arguing for provisions in current Congressional bills that would increase safe and affordable housing through public-private partnerships and cooperative management agreements, as well as the revision of Director's Order 36. Source: *The Hill*
- *PEER objects to use of potent greenhouse gas* - Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility has sent a letter to the director of the National Science Foundation, asking it to stop funding projects on federal lands that use sulphur hexafluoride (SF6), a greenhouse gas that is roughly 24,000 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. It is often used in tracking how quickly gasses move from water to air. Though each test uses a tiny amount, one particular NSF-funded ecological study across the U.S. on public lands has released 108 pounds of the gas, equivalent to more than a million pounds of coal burning. Source: [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#)
- *Groups to sue NPS over water park* - On August 17, 2022, the Center for Biological Diversity, Bat Conservation International, the North American Butterfly Association, and the Tropical Audubon Society gave [notice](#) that they intend to sue the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to consult or take proper actions regarding impacts to endangered species in their approval of the Miami Wilds water park. The park, as reported in the [January 26, 2022 Coalition Report](#), was given land use permissions by the NPS to move forward through The Federal Lands to Parks Program. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#)
- *"How Japanese American Incarceration Was Entangled With Indigenous Dispossession"* - KCET ran [an article](#) chronicling the intersection of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and the removal of Indigenous people from many of those sites, including several that are national park units today. Source: *KCET*
- *Argument against old-growth inventorying* - On August 10, *The Hill* published an [op-ed](#) by the executive director of Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities, Nick Smith, arguing against an executive order that asks federal agencies to define and inventory old-growth and mature forests. The op-ed says that this bureaucratic step will be ineffective and stalls real progress to adapt to climate change via active forest management. Source: *The Hill*

- *New national park mini-series* - On August 29, *National Geographic* will air a new five-part series called "America's National Parks," which is produced and narrated by country musician Garth Brooks. The episodes are also introduced by First Lady Jill Biden. It will also be available on *Disney+* starting on August 30. Source: [Travel Awaits](#)
- *1,600 people still missing on public lands* - *Outside* ran [an article](#) about people who have gone missing on public lands and were never found and what becomes of the search in the aftermath. Source: *Outside*
- *Apple donates to NPF* - On August 22, the corporation Apple announced that it is donating \$10 to the National Park Foundation for every Apple Pay purchase on their website, app, or in their stores through August 28. They are also offering special national park content and collections through Apple Maps, Apple Podcasts, and others. Source: [9to5mac.com](#)

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Acadia National Park* - The Friends of Acadia has purchased a wheelchair accessible carriage for tours on the historic carriage roads in the park. The purchase was made possible through a donation from the Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Arches National Park* - *The Salt Lake Tribune* ran [an article](#) posing the question, "Is [the] new reservation system working?" The park instituted its first timed-entry visitor reservation program in April. The article looked at reviews on *Recreation.gov* and interviewed staff at the park. Source: *The Salt Lake Tribune*
- *Bering Land Bridge National Preserve* - The National Park Foundation and The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust have granted over \$4.4 million to renovate the visitor center, in collaboration with the Sitnasuak Native Corporation and affiliated Tribes. Source: [PRNewswire](#)
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - *The Provincetown Independent* published [an article](#) about the park's efforts to remove invasive reeds using herbicides and the resulting concerns from local residents. Source: *The Provincetown Independent*
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Valerie Streiff, a former law enforcement ranger at the park, received the U.S. Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal for her lifesaving efforts during an incident on October 18, 2020. An adult and their 10-year-old child were swept out to sea by a rip current. Valerie was patrolling the beach in a vehicle, heard their screams, then put on a personal flotation device, and entered the ocean with a float cushion. Valerie was able to swim 60 yards to reach the pair, gave them the float cushion, then spent 30 minutes swimming through the

- dangerous conditions to tow the pair to shore. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - The Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project have recognized the park as a documented arrival location of enslaved Africans in the 18th century. The park held a dedication ceremony at Shell Point on August 20. Source: [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#)
 - *Death Valley National Park* - The park finalized its Air Tour Management Plan, authorizing up to two air tours per year over a specific route. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)
 - *Glacier National Park* - *University of Montana News* published [a profile](#) on alumnus Dave Roemer, the new superintendent of Glacier National Park. Source: *University of Montana News*
 - *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - The park will receive \$35 million in Great American Outdoors Act funding to repair and seismically strengthen the wharf on Alcatraz Island. The project will also include improvements to the Finger Pier, which is being partially funded by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
 - *Grand Canyon National Park* - Matthew Snider has been awarded the 2021 NPS Excellence in Natural Resource Stewardship through Maintenance Award. Matthew is the lead for the Grand Canyon National Park Compost Crew, which removes human waste from backcountry composting toilets year-round in extreme conditions. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
 - *Grand Canyon National Park* - *Smithsonian Magazine* ran [an article](#) about the 100-year anniversary of Phantom Ranch. Source: *Smithsonian Magazine*
 - *Grand Portage National Monument* - Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland met with leaders from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and visited the park the week of August 7 to learn about the park's co-management agreement with the Tribe, which was signed in 1999. While there, he highlighted efforts by the Biden-Harris administration to strengthen the role of Tribal communities in federal land management. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
 - *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park has asked for the public's support in identifying and documenting former homesite locations in the park. About 70% of the 2,400 former homesites in the park have been identified thus far, but many of the pre-20th century homesites are not documented. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park has approved its plan to create the first parking fees within the park, as well as an increase in camping fees. Source: [WATE](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - Friends of Indiana Dunes are giving annual passes to the park to individuals and families in Lake, Porter, and La Porte Counties through their Hardship Help Fund. The park recently started charging use fees for the first time, and they want to ensure the park remains accessible to local residents. Source: [Chesterton Tribune](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On August 16, the Bureau of Reclamation released the "Colorado River Basin August 2022 24-Month Study," which sets the annual operations for both reservoirs. Lake Powell will operate in the "Lower Elevation Balancing Tier", with predictions that the water surface elevation on January 1, 2023 will be 178 feet below full pool and 32 feet above minimum power pool. Lake Mead will operate in a first-ever "Level 2a Shortage Condition," which will severely limit the allotments to the Lower Basin States and Mexico. California will not be required to give a water savings contribution at Level 2a. Projections and their associated management techniques will be re-evaluated in April 2023. The Bureau of Reclamation has also released a "Protection Volume Analysis," which details the range of actions that will be needed to stabilize both reservoirs over the next four years. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - The park published a Finding of No Significant Impact for the proposed project to drill a well to supply water to the Lost Creek Campground and Volcano Adventure Camp. Construction is expected to begin in Fall 2022 or Spring 2023. Source: [Lassen Volcanic National Park](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - NBC Bay Area's program, "OpenRoad with Doug McConnell" aired [an episode](#) about the Dixie Fire and the subsequent restoration of the park and local communities. Source: *NBC Bay Area*
- *Lincoln Memorial* - A Freedom of Information Act records request has turned up emails that detail the last-minute "scramble," as well as the public health rationale for a *Fox News* "virtual town hall event" with then-President Donald Trump in May 2020 at the memorial. The memorial is not usually available for events, but was granted for use by then-Interior Secretary David Bernhardt. Nearly \$147,000 in emergency funds were needed to make the event secure. Source: [E&E News](#)
- *Mesa Verde National Park* - *The Durango Herald* published [an article](#) about author Willa Cather, and the influence Mesa Verde had on her writing. Source: *The Durango Herald*
- *Muir Woods National Monument* - NPS staff have publicly announced they recently

completed designs and environmental studies for a new bridge across Redwood Creek on the Dipsea Trail. A bridge at the site was destroyed by flooding in 1982, and ever since then, the creek crossing has been closed during the wet months and bridged with a plank of wood during the dry months. The new bridge will be wheelchair-accessible and allow for passage of native salmon during the wet season. The Dipsea Race Committee intends to take the lead on fundraising \$1.9 million for the bridge. Source: [Marin Independent Journal](#)

- *Natchez National Historical Park* - The park recently acquired its third parcel of land associated with Forks of the Road, one of the largest sites in the U.S. where enslaved people were trafficked during the antebellum era. It is the historic O'Ferrall House property, and was acquired with support from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, National Park Foundation, Trust for Public Land, and the Archaeological Conservancy. Source: [The Natchez Democrat](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - The Federal Highway Administration announced that \$54.3 million will be provided to the parkway to repair 83 miles of road through its Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Project program. Source: [U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration](#)
- *President's Park (White House)* - The NPS is hosting a temporary photo exhibit called "Experiencing National Parks Through the Lens of Youth" from August 27 to September 10. The show exhibits images from local high school students at a variety of national park units across the region. A photo contest winner will be announced at the unveiling of the exhibit on August 27. Source: [President's Park \(White House\)](#)
- *Prince William Forest Park* - Reservations for the Chopawamsic Backcountry Area will be available online for the first time starting on September 27. Source: [Prince William Forest Park](#)
- *Redwood National and State Parks* - The *Los Angeles Times* published an [op-ed](#) arguing that the park's recent policy of closing the area around Hyperion, the tallest known tree in the world, is misguided and the park should instead conduct more education or engage permitted guiding in the area. Source: *Los Angeles Times*
- *Rock Creek Park* - U.S. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) has publicly announced her request for a joint meeting with the NPS and the Architect of the Capitol to discuss the removal of the Capitol Stones, which were part of the original Capitol building. The NPS recently requested the removal of the stones for safety and preservation and some are currently being stored in an Architect of the Capitol facility with no public access. Rep. Holmes stated that they should remain in place where people can access them. Source: [Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton House.gov page](#)

- *Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park - Hour Detroit* ran [an interview](#) with Betty Reid Soskin, who recently retired as the oldest national park ranger. It highlights her efforts to continue telling her story even in her retirement as a 101-year-old. Source: *Hour Detroit*
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - The park has acquired 45 acres of land adjacent to the Backbone Trail and in the viewshed of the Circle X Ranch and Sandstone Peak Trail. The land was purchased utilizing funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - The park will release a prospectus for a concession opportunity providing lodging, food and beverage, retail, marina, and other services at Kettle Falls. Site visits will be available in early October and the prospectus will be released shortly thereafter. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - Ranger Harlan Kredit recently celebrated his fiftieth year working for the National Park Service. It is believed to be a record. A large party was held in his honor at Yellowstone Lake and he was honored with the Superintendent's Outstanding Achievement award and the Superintendent's Medal. Source: [Lynden Tribune](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - From August 17-28, the park will commemorate its 150th anniversary in an event called "Yellowstone Revealed," which will be co-hosted by Mountain Time Arts and several associated Tribes. The event will focus on the Indigenous connection to the park, including a series of interpretive hikes, demonstrations, and storytelling. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)
- *Sawtooth National Recreation Area (U.S. Forest Service) - Boise State Public Radio* published [an article](#) about why the Sawtooths were designated a National Recreation Area (administered by the U.S. Forest Service) rather than a National Park. This year is the 50th year of the designation as an NRA. Source: *Boise State Public Radio*

Personnel Changes

- *Badlands National Park* - Eric Veach was selected as the new superintendent. He has over 20 years of experience with the NPS and U.S. Forest Service, most recently as the Forest Supervisor of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. He will start his new role this fall. Source: [Badlands National Park](#)
- *Congaree National Park* - Gregory Hauburger was selected as the new superintendent. He has seven years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent of President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home National Historic Site. He will begin his new role in October. Source: [Congaree National Park](#)

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

- Dr. Dave Graber, 74, passed away on August 21. He was previously on the Coalition's Executive Committee and received our [2020 George Hartzog Award](#). He worked for the NPS for over 40 years, retiring as the chief scientist for the Pacific West Region. Source: Emily Thompson
- Paul Haertel, 81, passed away on June 5. He worked for the National Park Service for 41 years, including several superintendencies and as associate regional director in Alaska. Source: David Manski, [Mount Desert Islander](#)
- James Douglas Matney, 78, passed away on August 16. He volunteered for many years for the National Park Service. Source: [The Chattanooga](#)
- Jerry Edwin McWhorter, 87, passed away on August 9. He worked many seasons at Yellowstone National Park in the "Engineering Department" working on roads. Source: [Knox News](#)
- Joseph "Joe" A. Salvatore, 53, passed away on July 26. At the time of his death, he was the superintendent of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River. He worked previously as the chief of facilities at the National Mall and Memorial Parks and as the deputy chief for the Washington Parks Facility Management Division. Source: [Pocono Record](#), [Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River](#)
- Allen Francis Simonds, 87, passed away on June 22. He worked for the NPS for over 26 years, almost entirely at Rocky Mountain National Park. He retired in 1991 as the Rocky Mountain West Unit Supervisory Ranger. In his retirement, he volunteered over 7,500 hours in the park. Source: [Sky-Hi News](#)
- Jan van Wagdentonk passed away on July 15. Jan was a longtime fire ecologist at Yosemite National Park and the U.S. Geological Survey. He was one of the authors of the first federal fire policy in 1995, including early advocacy for the use of prescribed fire in managing forests. He is also credited with studying and creating the trailhead quota system used in backcountry management at Yosemite. Source: [AP News](#)

In the News

- David Vela, former acting director of the National Park Service, recently gave a talk at the Jesup Memorial Library in Bar Harbor, Maine about his book, *Hola Ranger: My Journey Through the National Parks*. He was in town to attend a National Park Foundation board meeting, as a member of its National Council. He is also on the

board of the Teddy Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation and Eastern National.
Source: [Mount Desert Islander](#)

- The *Independent Record* published [a profile](#) about the career of Lee Whittlesey, who worked in Yellowstone National Park for 45 years, 27 of those as the park's archivist and historian. He retired in 2018 and has also written several books about Yellowstone, including a recent book about stagecoaches. Source: *Independent Record*

Open for Comment

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

- *Big Cypress National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on an updated Backcountry Access Plan and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. [Comments](#) are open until September 26. Source: [Big Cypress National Preserve](#)
- *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](#)
- *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](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - Public comment is now open on a plan to replace the Upper McDonald Creek Bridge and formalize parking at its trailhead. [Comments](#) are open until August 30. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)
- *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 proposal to increase fees at 14 frontcountry campgrounds, starting in 2023 and 2024. [Comments](#) are open until September 14. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - Public comment is now open on a Facility Revitalization Plan and Environmental Assessment. [Comments](#) are open until September 14. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *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](#)
- *President Street Station (Special Resource Study)* - THE NPS is beginning a special resource study about President Street Station in Baltimore, which is associated with the history of the American railroad, Frederick Douglass' escape from slavery, a failed assassination attempt on President Lincoln, and the 1861 Baltimore Riot. It will evaluate its eligibility to be included in the National Park System. [Comments](#) are open until September 30. Source: [National Park Service Region 1](#)

[Other Department of the Interior News](#)

- *New USGS Director* - On August 15, David Applegate was sworn in as the new Director of the U.S. Geological Survey. David has 18 years of USGS experience, most recently as the Associate Director for Natural Hazards, exercising the delegated authority of the Director since January 2021. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New land opened to Alaska Native Vietnam-era veterans* - On August 11, the Department of the Interior announced that it has issued a Public Land Order opening up 27 million acres of public lands for new 160 acre allotments for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who did not have access to land allotments while serving in the Vietnam War. Previously, there were only 1.2 million acres of federal lands open to these allotments. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New wind energy in Maine* - On August 18, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management released a Request for Interest and a Request for Competitive Interest for commercial wind energy leases on 13 million acres in the Gulf of Maine. The State of Maine has already requested a research lease for 12 floating off-shore

turbines about 20 miles off the coastline. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *\$311 million toward water reuse projects* - On August 18, the Department of the Interior announced \$309.8 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds and \$1 million in appropriated funding to plan, design, and construct water reuse projects in six western states. 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. 16 – The president signed into law H.R. 5376, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to Title II of S. Con. Res. 14 (Public Law 117-169). See Senate action on the bill on August 6, below, for a list of the provisions that affect the NPS.

Senate Actions

Aug. 6 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 750, celebrating the United States-Republic of Korea alliance and the dedication of the Wall of Remembrance at the Korean War Veterans Memorial on July 27, 2022.

Aug. 6 – The Senate passed H.R. 5376, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 14, by a vote of 51 yeas to 50 nays, with the Vice President voting yea. As passed by the Senate, the bill includes the following amounts for the National Park Service, which are in addition to amounts already available to the NPS for Fiscal Year 2022 (note also the varying dates for how long the NPS has to expend these funds):

- Sec. 50221. \$250 million in appropriations for Fiscal Year 2022, to remain available through Sept. 30, 2031, to carry out projects for the conservation, protection, and resiliency of lands and resources administered by NPS and Bureau of Land Management.
- Sec. 50222. \$250 million in appropriations for Fiscal Year 2022, to remain available through Sept. 30, 2031, to carry out projects for conservation, ecosystem and habitat restoration projects on lands and resources administered by NPS and BLM.
- Sec. 50223. \$500 million in appropriations for Fiscal Year 2022, to remain available through Sept. 30, 2030, to hire employees to serve in units of the National Park System or national historic or national scenic trails administered by NPS.
- Sec. 50224. \$200 million to remain available for Fiscal Year 2022, to remain available through September 30, 2026, to carry out priority deferred maintenance projects within the boundaries of the National Park System.
- Sec. 50303. \$150 million for Fiscal Year 2022, to remain available through September 30, 2026, to provide for the hiring and training of personnel, the development of programmatic environmental documents, the procurement of technical or scientific services for environmental views, the development of

environmental data or information systems, stakeholder and community engagement and the purchase of new equipment for environmental analysis to facilitate timely and efficient environmental reviews and authorizations by NPS, BLM, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, BSEE, and Office of Site Remediation Enforcement.

There are additional amounts of funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support endangered species recovery efforts; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to restore and protect coastal communities and marine habitats, and to prepare coastal communities to prepare for extreme weather events; the U.S. Forest Service to conduct hazardous fuels reduction, and maintain forests to reduce wildfires; along with funds for the Environmental Protection Agency to address various aspects of climate change. National parks across the country could see benefits from this funding expended by its sister agencies.

July 28 – The Senate Appropriations Committee released the Chairman’s recommendation for each of the 12 annual appropriations bills to fund all federal agencies, including the National Park Service through the FY2023 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The Senate committee had not approved these recommendations by the time the Senate began its annual August recess.

In several recent fiscal years, the Senate has not passed an Interior appropriations bill, so the chairmen’s recommendations have been used as the Senate position on funding levels when the House and Senate met in conference to resolve the differences between the two chambers’ funding levels before taking the conference agreement to the House and Senate for final approval.

The following is being provided to advise readers of where NPS appropriations are headed as the Senate continues work on the legislation. The House passed its version of the Interior appropriations bill, H.R. 8294, on July 20.

The Senate recommends \$3.578 billion for the National Park Service in discretionary appropriations for FY2023, which is an increase of \$313 million from the FY2022 level and \$33 million less than the president’s budget recommendation (the House approved \$3.6 billion, which is an increase of \$378 million from the FY2022 level). The Senate recommendation would allow the hiring of over 1,500 new employees across the NPS to restore staff capacity lost over the past decade.

In addition to this discretionary appropriations total, the Senate bill recommends \$1.3 billion in mandatory appropriations as provided by the Great American Outdoors Act to address deferred maintenance projects through the Legacy Restoration Fund (the House approved the same amount), as well as \$457.1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (the House approved \$456.7 billion). See below for further information about the breakdown of the LWCF funding.

Within the total funding provided to the NPS as noted above, the Senate recommends the following funding levels for FY2023 within the various NPS accounts:

- Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) – The Senate recommends \$3.044 billion, which is \$277 million more than the FY2022 level, but \$45 million less than the president’s request (the House approved \$3.089 billion, which is \$322.8 million more than FY2022 and consistent with the president’s budget request). The Senate amount includes funding increases to advance racial justice and tell the full story of underserved communities. Of note is \$5.38 million for the African American Civil Rights Network; \$5.7 million to establish a program to coordinate nation-to-nation Tribal liaisons; increases for several parks established to commemorate civil rights and Native American stories; and increases for established parks with new responsibilities. The Senate also recommends \$10 million to the National Park Foundation to be used for matching grants for projects to benefit the National Park System. The bill also increases funding to help address the housing shortage for NPS employees.
- National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) – The Senate recommends \$85.4 million, which is \$1.5 million more than FY2022, and \$10.8 million more than the president’s request (the House approved \$88.2 million, which is \$4.3 million more than FY2022 and \$13.6 million more than the president’s budget request). Within the Senate amount, the bill provides \$3 million for the Chesapeake Gateways and Trails program; \$11.5 million for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program; \$2 million for American Indian and Native Hawaiian Art and Culture Grants; \$2.4 million for Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Grants; \$3.66 million for Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants; and \$27.1 million for the National Heritage Area Partnership Program.
- Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) – The Senate recommends \$191.9 million, which is \$18.8 million more than FY2022 and \$40 million more than the president’s request (the House approved \$170.8 million, which is \$2 million less than the amount provided in FY2022 and \$19 million more than the president’s budget request). Within the Senate amount is \$11 million for preservation grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities; \$5 million for History of Equal Rights grants; \$1.25 million in grants for underrepresented communities; \$24 million for African American civil rights grants; and \$12.5 million for the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant program to revitalize historic properties of national, State, and local significance in order to restore, protect, and foster economic development of rural villages and downtown areas. The Save America’s Treasures grant program is provided funding of \$26.5 million.
- Construction – The Senate recommends \$241.2 million, which is \$15.2 million more than FY2022, and \$38.1 million less than the president’s budget request (the House approved \$279 million, which is \$53.3 million above the amount provided in FY2022 and is consistent with the president’s budget request).

- Centennial Challenge – The Senate recommends \$15 million for the Centennial Challenge matching grant program, which is the same as the amount provided in FY2022 and is consistent with the president’s budget request (the House approved the same amount).
- Great American Outdoors Act – As noted above, the Senate recommends a list of projects that will receive the \$1.3 billion in annual mandatory appropriations for deferred maintenance projects funded by the Legacy Restoration Fund of the Great American Outdoors Act (the House approved the same amount).

In addition, the Senate recommends \$457.1 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (the House approved \$456.7 million) to the NPS to be allocated as follows:

- \$61.1 million for federal land acquisition in parks (the House approved \$66.8 million);
- \$200 million for state conservation assistance grants (the House approved \$190.9 million);
- \$125 million for Outdoor Recreation Legacy grants (the House approved the same amount);
- \$11 million for state conservation grants administration (the House approved \$10.4 million);
- \$20 million for American Battlefield Protection Program grants (the House approved the same amount);
- \$14.5 million for acquisition administration (the House approved the same amount);
- \$10 million for recreational access (the House approved \$14.5 million);
- \$4.1 million for emergencies, hardships, relocations and deficiencies (the House approved \$3.9 million);
- \$11.3 million for inholdings, donations, and exchanges (the House approved \$7 million).

Along with these funding levels, the Senate recommends the following authorizations:

- Sec. 117 – Authorizes Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to continue to charge fees for certain truck traffic in the park through 2023.
- Sec. 118 – Increases grant ceiling amounts for ten national heritage areas or extends the time period for their authorization to be eligible for grant funds.
- Sec. 122 – Authorizes the National Park Service to use up to 7 percent of state conservation grant funds for its indirect costs of administering the grants.
- Sec. 123 – Removes the land acquisition funding ceiling for the Lowell National Historical Park.
- Sec. 124 – Extends the Visitor Experience Improvement concessions authority of the National Park Service for an additional two years.
- Sec. 421 – Extends the fee authority of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act through October 1, 2024.

Title V of the Senate Chairman’s recommendation includes \$1.67 billion as an emergency

appropriation to address various flooding, drought, landslides, wildfire, and other natural disasters at Yellowstone National Park, Denali National Park and Preserve, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area (the House bill did not appropriate separate funds to address these disasters as not all the funding requests were completed by the time the House approved its bill).

House Actions

Aug. 12 – The House agreed to the motion to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 5376, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, by a vote of 220 yeas to 207 nays. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law. See Senate action on H.R. 5876 on Aug. 6, above, for a list of the provisions that affect the NPS.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Acadia National Park

Cyclist passes away

On August 11, a visitor came upon a deceased person in their 40s on one of the park's carriage roads. The individual was believed to have died of a medical event while riding a bicycle. The state medical examiner's office is investigating the cause of death. Source:

[Bangor Daily News](#)

Acadia National Park

1st suspected homicide in 35 years

On June 27, a 35-year-old was hit and killed by a vehicle on the campus of the Schoodic Education and Research Center. After a month-long search by law enforcement, a 35-year-old suspect was arrested in Cancun, Mexico on July 20 by Mexican authorities and the U.S. Marshals Service Mexico Foreign Field Office. On July 27, the individual made their first court appearance, but was not required to enter a plea yet. The individual remains in custody until a bail date can be set. It is the first suspected homicide in the park in 35 years and only the fourth since the park was established in 1916. Source:

[WMTW](#), [New York Post](#), [WABI](#), [Bangor Daily News](#)

African Burial Ground National Monument

Safety concerns close memorial

On August 12, the park closed the Ancestral Chamber due to safety concerns. The memorial has several hairline fractures along the foundation and some materials have shifted. A structural engineer assessed it on August 16, though no more news has been announced publicly. Source: [African Burial Ground National Monument](#)

Big Bend National Park

Campground closes due to bear activity

On August 12, the NPS closed the Chisos Basin Campground and Group Campground. The area is rich in mesquite beans, which are a natural food source for bears. Due to the large abundance of mesquite beans right now, bears have become territorial and shown signs of aggression. The campgrounds will remain closed until the bears move onto other natural food sources, so as to protect both bears and visitors. Source: [Big Bend National Park](#)

Bryce Canyon National Park

Visitor caught on camera jumping railing

A visitor took a video of a person jumping from an overlook railing, then slipping several feet before coming to a stop on the edge of a cliff. The video gained traction on social media, and the park's visitor and resource protection division is now reviewing the video. Source: [KSL](#)

Canyonlands National Park

Flood washes out access road

After multiple storms around August 11, Utah State Route 211 was heavily damaged. The road is closed at its junction with US-191. It is the main access road to the Needles District of the park, but visitors are being advised that they can enter via Harts Draw Road in Monticello, which adds ~30 miles to a visitor's trip. Source: [ABC4](#), [Canyonlands National Park](#)

Carlsbad Caverns National Park

Flash flooding

On August 20, about 160 people had to shelter in place at the park's visitor center due to flash flooding on park roads. The park received 0.6 inches of rain. The park was able to evacuate the visitors about nine hours after the lock-down began, and the park remained closed on August 21 while maintenance crews assessed and cleaned debris off the roadway. The main road is now open, though the Walnut Canyon Desert Drive remains closed due to poor road conditions and continued threats of flash flooding. Source: [CNN](#), [Carlsbad Caverns National Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

GPS-followers stranded

Due to the extensive flooding in Death Valley (see [8/10/22 Coalition Report](#)), all roads in the park were closed (see below for an update on current openings). As a result, some navigational apps have re-routed travelers onto primitive backcountry dirt roads, resulting in multiple stranded motorists, including one with all four tires flat. The park has responded and added additional closure signs. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Delaware Gap National Recreation Area

Vehicle break-ins

The park has had a series of vehicle break-ins at multiple trailheads, resulting in stolen credit cards that have been used for fraudulent purchases. The NPS' Investigative Services Branch has set up an anonymous tip line for the public to come forward with any information they might have. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)

Glacier National Park

Backcountry Wildfire

On August 16, a new wildfire was detected by the Cyclone Lookout. The Quartz Fire is burning in the Quartz Creek drainage below Vulture Peak, west of the Continental Divide and five miles northeast of the Quartz Lake Patrol Cabin. As of August 23, it was 1,678 acres with 30 personnel assigned. Firefighters are stationed at the foot of Quartz Lake to provide protection for the Quartz Lake Patrol Cabin, Quartz Lake Wilderness Campground, and a footbridge at the foot of Quartz Lake. Roads, trails, and campgrounds in the area are currently closed. Source: [NBC Montana](#), [KPAX](#), [KTVH](#), [Inciweb](#)

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Plane crash

On August 15, an airplane tour carrying a pilot and seven passengers crashed into Lake Powell near Face Canyon. The pilot had reported an engine issue just before the plane went down. The pilot and several witnesses were able to rescue four passengers via boat. Of the five patients (including the pilot), three were transported with serious injuries to St. George Regional Hospital via Classic Aviation helicopters, and two were transported by boat to Antelope Marina and then via vehicle to Page Hospital. The Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation was able to utilize an underwater remotely operated vehicle to access the plane, which was 120 feet below the surface, and the camera confirmed the other two passengers were still inside and deceased. The Utah Department of Public Safety and the Kane County Sheriffs Office will retrieve the bodies of the two victims, and the Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board will investigate the plane crash. Source: [KSL TV](#)

Grand Teton National Park

3 helicopter evacuations in 24 hours

On August 8, the NPS was made aware of a 21-year-old at Surprise Lake who was "disoriented." NPS staff were flown via the Teton Interagency helicopter and transported the patient via short-haul to Lupine Meadows, and then transferred the patient to an ambulance that brought them to St. Johns Health.

Later that afternoon, a 22-year-old sustained a back injury after jumping into Phelps Lake from a rock known as "Jump Rock." Other members of their party called for help. NPS staff were flown to the location via the Teton Interagency helicopter, and the patient was transported via short-haul to White Grass Ranch. The patient declined further medical transport from there.

The following morning, a 24-year-old climber took a several-hundred-foot un-roped fall on the traverse between Teewinot Mountain and Mount Owen. The other member of the party reported the incident, saying that the individual had a severe head injury and possibly broken bones in the extremities. NPS staff were flown to the location via the Teton Interagency helicopter. The patient was treated and flown to Lupine Meadows, where they received further medical treatment. They were then transported via Air Idaho Rescue to Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)

Isle Royale National Park

Wildfire

On August 13, visitors noticed a wildfire start in the Mount Franklin area. A number of trails and campgrounds were temporarily closed and several hikers and campers were evacuated from the area. As of August 23, the fire was 100% contained. Some closures were lifted, while others remained in place. The cause of the fire is unknown and still under investigation and the NPS, and they are looking for any information the public may have related to an illegal fire and associated camp on the Mount Franklin Trail from August 12-13. Source: [Minnesota Public Radio](#), [Isle Royale National Park](#), [Upper Michigan's Source](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Further flooding

On August 16, the park experienced another heavy storm in the southern end of the park (see follow-ups below for information on first storm). As a result, several sections of Pinto Basin Road, the Geology Tour Road, Big Horn Pass Complex, and Cottonwood Campground were closed to assess and repair damage. As of August 23, Pinto Basin Road had reopened, but the other roads remained closed. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

Flooding closes trail

On August 13, the Taiya River reached "moderate flood stage", submerging the Chilkoot Trail under several feet of fast-moving water. The trail was temporarily closed to assess its condition and has since reopened. Source: [Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park](#)

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Wildfire

On August 10, a wildfire started off Route 212 to the east of the park boundary. Fire crews from Bighorn County Fire, Crow Agency BIA, Padlock Ranch, Rocky Mountain Region BIA helicopter team, Michigan Agency BIA, Minnesota Agency BIA, Midwest Region BIA, and the BIA Police responded to the incident. They were able to contain it at 39 acres, all just outside the park boundary. The cause of the fire has not yet been identified. Source: [Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument](#)

Natchez Trace Parkway Graffiti suspect apprehended

On August 23, a park employee observed a 20-year-old spray painting the Tennessee 96 bridge on the Parkway and reported it to law enforcement. Williamson County sheriff deputies arrived on scene and detained the individual until an NPS law enforcement officer arrived. The individual was issued citations for multiple violations, including trespassing and vandalism. The park will clean up the graffiti and bill the individual for the costs. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)

National Park of American Samoa Earthquakes

Park staff and local residents have observed earthquakes since July 26. The earthquakes have been "generally short, sharp jolts" and are probably related to the Ta'ū or Vailulu'u volcanoes. There is limited monitoring equipment in the area and scientists are investigating the reports. It is unknown whether the quakes portend an eventual eruption or not. Source: [U.S. Geological Survey](#)

North Cascades National Park Person suspected of killing sibling

On August 8 around 4:45am, law enforcement responded to a report of gunshots in an area near Newhalem. They talked with a 40-year-old individual sitting in a vehicle who said they did not hear any shots. While investigating, rangers noticed a large quantity of blood and bullet holes along the guardrail nearby the vehicle. When they looked down the adjacent embankment, they found a deceased 69-year-old. The 40-year-old was detained and an AR-15-style rifle was discovered in the vehicle. The individual was interviewed by detectives and confessed to intentionally shooting the 69-year-old, who was their sibling. The individual was arrested for first-degree murder and domestic violence, and two counts of unlawful possession of a firearm as a convicted felon. Source: [Fox 13](#)

North Cascades National Park Wildfire

On August 11, a lightning storm passed through the park, igniting the small McGregor Mountain Fire. Firefighters from the NPS and North Cascades Smokejumpers were able to

contain the fire at about about one-quarter of an acre on August 13. Source: [North Cascades National Park, KPUG](#)

Petersburg National Battlefield

Trail closed due to erosion

On August 19, the park announced that they permanently closed the Poor Creek Trail due to ongoing safety concerns. The trail has eroded significantly from heavy rain and the steep slope is a hazard to visitors. Source: [Petersburg National Battlefield](#)

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area

Car accident causes wildfire

On August 18, a car accident on Highway 299 resulted in a fatality, as well as a wildfire that precipitated the evacuation and closure of the eastern side of the park. Multiple agencies responded and were able to contain the Kennedy Fire on August 20 at 45 acres. Source: [Whiskeytown National Recreation Area](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Part of foot found in thermal pool

On August 16, a park employee noticed part of a foot inside of a shoe floating in Abyss Pool. The park temporarily closed the West Thumb Geyser Basin to investigate, and it has since reopened. Based on evidence available, investigators believe an incident occurred the morning of July 31. Foul play is not suspected. The park has not given any other information about the investigation. Source: [Seattle Times](#), [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Fuel truck rolls over

On August 19, a fuel tanker truck lost control and rolled over near mile marker 16 on U.S. Highway 191 in the western part of the park adjacent to Greyling Creek. An estimated 4,800 gallons of unleaded fuel spilled out, and it is unclear whether any entered the creek. Staff from Hebgen Basin Fire and EMS units, cleanup and mitigation contractors, and NPS staff responded. One lane of traffic is still open with traffic control in place to facilitate drivers from both directions and the cleanup is ongoing. There were no injuries associated with the incident. The cause of the incident is under investigation. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yosemite National Park

Assault on trail

On August 4, the NPS responded to a reported assault between two individuals near the start of the Mist Trail. A suspect was arrested and the park is now looking for anyone who may have witnessed or have information related to the incident. Source:

myMotherLode.com

On August 18, a federal grand jury returned a one-count indictment of domestic violence charged to a 59-year-old. On August 4, the suspect was witnessed in a verbal confrontation in which they grabbed their spouse by the wrist, and both fell to the ground. The suspect allegedly threatened to kill their spouse and then kill themselves. Other visitors intervened in the incident. *[Editor note: It is not clear from news reports whether this incident and the incident outlined above are the same one, but the likelihood is high.]*

Source: [The United States Attorney's Office: Eastern District of California](#)

Yosemite National Park

Two backcountry wildfires

Two lightning-caused wildfires are burning in the backcountry, and are being monitored by staff. The Red Fire was discovered on August 4 between Red Creek and Illillouette Creek. As of August 22, the Red Fire was 760 acres. The Rodgers Fire was discovered on August 8, northwest of Rodgers Canyon and southwest of Pleasant Valley. As of August 22, the Rodgers Fire was 230 acres. A section of trail between Pate Valley and the Pacific Crest Trail is currently closed. Neither fire is threatening structures. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#), [Yosemite National Park](#), [Inciweb](#) ([Red](#), [Rodgers](#))

Zion National Park

Visitor missing after flash flood

On August 19, a 29-year-old was reported overdue from a hike in the Narrows. Multiple hikers were affected by flash flooding in the Narrows that day. One visitor was swept downstream several hundred yards and had injuries. Other visitors were isolated on high ground. NPS staff responded and helped evacuate those hikers. Afterward, the individual's sibling reported them missing and noted that they do not know how to swim. NPS staff and Search and Rescue members from Washington County are continuing a search for the individual, both inside and outside the park along the Virgin River. The Riverside Walk and Narrows are currently closed. Source: [USA Today](#), [Zion National Park](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Death Valley National Park* - The western end of State Route 190 from the park boundary to Panamint Valley reopened on August 10, with a full opening of the route through the park on August 20. Most other roads remain closed for further assessment and repairs from the "1,000-year flood event" on August 5. The Dantes View road and Badwater Road were both delayed in opening due to smaller storms on August 16 and 18 that brought further debris across roads. The park received \$11.7 million in "quick release" emergency relief funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation to repair infrastructure. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#) ([8/10](#), [8/18](#), [8/19](#)), [U.S. Department of Transportation](#)

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On August 15, the park lifted its mandatory water conservation measures, which were implemented after damage to the water pipeline in July. Some rest houses in the canyon still will be without water until repairs can be completed. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - The Nāhuku lava tube was reopened on August 17. It had been closed since July 30, when scientists utilizing a crackmeter found that a fracture was moving quickly and could trigger a rockfall. Since then, the movement in the fracture has returned to previous levels and the site has been inspected. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - On August 10, the park reopened all roads that were affected by flash flooding on August 8. Source: [AP News](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The media had previously reported that two sets of human remains had been found at Swim Beach: one on July 25 and one on August 6. However, since that time, the Clark County coroner's office has said that both sets of remains may be from the same person. On August 16, more remains were found at Swim Beach, and it is also unclear whether the remains are from the same person. The area was cordoned off and a dive team from Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department supported the recovery efforts. The investigation is ongoing. Source: [AP News](#), [New York Post](#)
- *Mojave National Preserve* - The park reopened Cima, Kelso-Cima, South Kelbaker, Morning Star, Ivanpah, Essex, Black Canyon, and Lanfair roads on August 12. Some of these roads are currently passable only with 4WD, high clearance vehicles. The roads were closed due to flash floods on July 31. North Kelbaker and Zzyzx Road will remain closed due to significant damage and may take months to repair. On August 17, the park released [a press release](#) warning of more predicted monsoons and the potential for more damage (as well as resource benefits). Source: [Mojave National Preserve](#)

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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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