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## **The Coalition Report**

### **Wednesday, December 14, 2022**

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#### **Coalition Actions**

The Coalition joined a [letter](#) to the Army Corps of Engineers requesting a meeting before the issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the James River Transmission Line to discuss continued concerns with the project.

We issued a [press release](#) thanking President Biden for his pledge to protect Avi Kwa Ame as a national monument (more in "Other Department of the Interior News" below).

Coalition Chair Mike Murray was quoted in an [article](#) on the Great Smoky Mountains Air Tour Management Plan in *Citizen Times*. He expressed concern about the process used to develop this plan, as well as the effects of "mechanical intrusions" within the park.

Coalition Vice Chair Don Hellmann joined a [letter](#) to George Washington Memorial Parkway detailing concerns over the proposed leasing plans for the Clara Barton National Historic Site.

#### **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.*

- *House subcommittee discusses park overcrowding* - On December 6, the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hosted a 90-minute hearing on how to better manage overcrowded parks. Testimony was given by Zion Superintendent Jeff Bradybaugh, the policy director

for the Property and Environment Research Center Hannah Downey, and the CEO and President of the Yosemite Conservancy and Friends Alliance Chair Frank Dean. The hearing included discussion of camping reservation difficulties, staffing shortages, maintenance backlogs, *recreation.gov* challenges, the importance of working with gateway communities, and the use of technology. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Increased co-stewardship of federal lands* - During the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce outlined a series of new steps they are taking to increase and strengthen Tribal participation in the management of public lands, including many new co-stewardship agreements and efforts to track and support implementation of these agreements. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New coating developed to protect monuments* - *The Blade* published [an article](#) about a new coating system developed by Bowling Green State University researchers that is designed to protect surfaces subject to high levels of erosion, such as national monuments, statues, and historic structures. The research has won several awards and was funded by an NPS grant from its National Center for Preservation Technology and Training. Source: *The Blade*
- *New WWII Heritage Cities* - On December 5, the National Park Service announced the designation of 18 new communities across the U.S. as American World War II Heritage Cities. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Indigenous guides reclaim ties to national parks* - *Condé Nast Traveler* published [an article](#) about how Indigenous people are reclaiming their ancestral ties to national park lands around the world through tour operating businesses. The article includes Sun Tours, a Blackfeet Nation-owned and -staffed business operating tours in Glacier National Park. Source: *Condé Nast Traveler*
- *"Which Presidents Have Created the Most National Monuments?"* - The National Parks Conservation Association posted [a blog](#) with this headline, listing the top 10. Former President Barack Obama topped the list with 29 national monuments. Source: National Parks Conservation Association

### **Around the Parks**

*Park reports are in alphabetical order.*

- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - The Old Ferry Landing construction project has been completed and the area is now open. The project raised the bulkhead two feet and replaced deteriorating boardwalks. The park will continue to improve amenities and signage at the site this year. The project was funded by park entrance and pass fees. Source: [Assateague Island National Seashore](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The parkway has approved an application by Dominion

Energy to put a natural gas pipeline under a road segment at Milepost 393.3 in Buncombe County and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. Construction is expected to begin in early 2023 and be completed by June, and it will be constructed without using trenches and with no surface construction or vegetation clearing on NPS lands. Source: [Citizen Times](#)

- *Booker T. Washington National Monument* - A crew from the NPS' Historic Preservation Training Center is currently stabilizing the tobacco barn on the Jack-O-Lantern Branch Trail. The barn is the oldest remaining structure in the park. Work is expected to continue through the spring. Source: [smithmountainlake.com](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - Jasmine Reinhardt and Annie Little, the park's chief of interpretation and education and supervisory natural resource manager, respectively, were interviewed by *Xinhua* about the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (taking place currently in Montreal, Canada) and the park's shifting priorities around habitat restoration. Source: [Global Times](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to remove Channel Islands Bedstraw and Santa Cruz Island Dudleya from the Endangered Species List due to strong recovery after sheep grazing and feral pigs were removed from the islands. Source: [KCLU](#)
- *City of Rocks National Reserve* - The park announced that it acquired about 105 acres of land adjacent to the previous park boundary. The property is known as Graham Creek Canyon. It includes 5 acres of access easement that will allow for construction of a new public access road in Summer 2023. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation will also soon be purchasing 260 acres adjacent to the Graham Creek Canyon property from the Conservation Fund. Source: [The Spokesman-Review](#)
- *Congaree National Park* - The park will increase the fee for nightly frontcountry camping, starting on January 1. The increased fees will support the park's use of [recreation.gov](#) and help support future amenities. Source: [Congaree National Park](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - New research published in *Geophysical Research Letters* found that pyroclastic surge deposits from Ubehebe Crater extend to nine kilometers, which is three kilometers farther than previously thought. The research updates volcanologists' understanding of phreatomagmatic eruptions, such as the ones that occurred in Pompeii in 79 C.E. and on the island of Java in 1979. Source: [Nature World News](#)
- *Denver Service Center* (NPS planning and project management office) - Ray Todd, the center's director, has received the 2022 Presidential Rank Award, Meritorious Executive Award, the only NPS employee to receive the award this year. Ray has been an employee of the NPS for 40 years, and is honored for exceptional project

and program management. Source: *Green and Grey Report* (12/5/22), [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve* - The park has announced that it will transition from diesel generation to primarily hydroelectric power, after signing an agreement with Alaska Power and Telephone and the City of Gustavus to integrate the park's electric facilities into the community system. Source: [Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) about the record-low levels of Lake Powell, including the ramifications for further drought to local ecosystems, economies, and power generation, as well as proposed actions to mitigate these effects. *Tucson.com* also published [a series of photos](#) depicting current water levels in various places across Lake Powell. The National Parks Conservation Association also ran [an article](#) about low lake levels at Lake Powell and Lake Mead, and the challenges to maintaining both hydroelectric power and favorable conditions for native species. Source: *The Washington Post*, *Tucson.com*, National Parks Conservation Association
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - *Alta Magazine* awarded the park with one of its "Rosebud Awards" in Design for the Presidio Tunnel Tops project, which opened in Summer 2022. Source: [Alta](#)
- *Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* - A large number of elk have taken refuge in the western section of the park, where hunting is not allowed, and this is starting to create adverse impacts on sensitive vegetation communities and species that depend on them, such as bison. A large part of the surrounding area, including the preserve part of the park, allows elk hunting. Thus, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, in coordination with the NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, opened up applications for citizen volunteers to help cull and disperse elk from the park. More than 2,000 individuals applied within 24 hours, at which point the applications were closed. The elk management efforts will take place this winter through February 2023. Source: [CBS News](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park has finalized its Air Tour Management Plan, which will allow up to 946 air tours annually on six routes over the park. 946 was the average number of annual tours between 2017 and 2019. Source: [AP News](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The NPS Denver Service Center is soliciting proposals for the rehabilitation of the park's headquarters and a variety of structures and utilities in the Sugarlands area. The project will open for bid on December 15, with construction beginning in September 2023. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)

- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - *Hawai'i Public Radio* interviewed Jessica Ferracane, the park's public affairs specialist, about Mauna Loa's current volcanic eruption, its first since 1984. Source: [Hawai'i Public Radio \(KHPR\)](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - A nest of the endangered 'akē'akē, also known as the band-rumped storm petrel, was found in the park for the first time in September. The discovery was made by a dog trained to detect wildlife. It was found buried underground in a lava rock field on Mauna Loa volcano. In October, a chick was photographed by a wildlife camera fledging out of the nest toward the sea. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - On December 12, the park released a Finding of No Significant Impact for its Disaster Recovery Project plan to repair or replace infrastructure lost in the 2018 eruption and summit collapse of Kīlauea volcano. Efforts toward the recovery will begin as soon as Spring 2023. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve* - On December 8, the park began its next phase of efforts to backfill 12.75 miles of canals and their spoil deposits within the Barataria Preserve to restore natural hydrology. The construction will continue through May 2023. Funding is being provided from penalties related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill through the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council. Previous phases of this work took place in 2001 and 2010. Source: [Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - The park signed a stewardship agreement with the Twenty Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians to involve the Tribe in park management and development. The first project the two groups will collaborate on is a trail extension from the Tortoise Rock Casino into the park. It is the first co-stewardship agreement the park has signed with a Tribe. Source: [Backpacker](#)
- *Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail* - Interpretive Specialist Caitlin Campbell was given the Freeman Tilden Award for her work on the trail's junior ranger program. In addition to robust activities in the booklet, the program includes audio-described read-along videos, a Native words online guide, and tactile maps. Source: [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On December 8, the park recorded its first-ever moose sighting. It is also the first-ever moose sighting in southwestern Washington. Source: [Seattle Times](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On November 29, the park announced that access to Paradise would only be open on weekends this winter due to staffing vacancies. As a result, a group of people has started an online petition asking the park to

reconsider this decision. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - In 2023, the Trust for the National Mall, in partnership with the NPS, National Capitol Planning Commission and Monument Lab, is launching an artistic effort called "Beyond Granite," which will include performances, installations, and artwork meant to re-think "commemoration" in the U.S. Source: [The Art Newspaper](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - The park has awarded a \$10.8 million construction contract to upgrade the Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge, including interior and exterior repairs that will bring the building up to code. The lodge is expected to be closed from April 2023 to May 2024, with temporary facilities available to serve visitors. Funding for the project comes from the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - The *Seattle Times* published [an article](#) about the potential for legislation to pass through the current Senate that would designate areas of the park's neighboring national forest land as federal Wilderness and several watersheds that run through the park as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Source: *Seattle Times*
- *Rock Creek Park* - The park is planning to restore the Carter Barron Amphitheatre, which has been closed since 2017 when the stage was determined to be unsafe. Preliminary designs are underway, as well as efforts to secure funding, with hopes to reopen by 2026. Source: [NBC Washington](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - *The Atlantic* ran [an article](#) interviewing NPS wildlife biologists Jeff Sikich about tracking mountain lions and the recent attack by P-22 (reported in the [11/30/22 Coalition Report](#), updated information below in "Incidents"). Source: *The Atlantic*
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - On December 6, the park announced that the mountain lion known as P-99 delivered a litter of four healthy female kittens last July: P-109, P-110, P-111, and P-112. The kittens were captured while the mother was away from the den so they could be examined and tagged by biologists. The park also announced that they have added two new female adult cougars, P-105 and P-106, to their ongoing study. Source: [Daily Press](#)
- *Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail* - The trail has acquired six properties near Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge, making up 0.65 acres. The site will allow for the construction of an interpretive education center. The National Park Foundation purchased the land from the Alabama Department of Transportation, with assistance from the City of Selma and the Federal Highway Administration. Construction of the \$10 million education center is scheduled to begin in early 2023 and wrap up by March 2025. Source: [Bama Buzz](#)

- *Shenandoah National Park* - The park is analyzing data from its recently-completed pilot permit program for hikes on the Old Rag trail. The park intends to use this data to inform a public comment process about future permitting actions. Source: [WHSV](#)
- *Stonewall National Monument* - The National Parks Conservation Association published [an article](#) called "Why Stonewall Matters Now More Than Ever," chronicling the rise in violence and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and the park's status as the first national park site dedicated to LGBTQ+ history. Source: National Parks Conservation Association
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - The park has begun repairs and improvements to the Cruz Bay visitor center, bulkhead, pier, and a portion of Cruz Bay Creek. The work will continue through August 2023 and the visitor center will remain open for most of that time. The pier and bulkhead will remain closed from January until August. The facilities were damaged by Hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017. Funding for the project comes from the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, recreation fees, and other NPS funding sources. Source: [Virgin Islands National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A new study published in *Communications Biology* shows that gray wolves in the park that have been affected by the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii* take riskier behaviors, such as being more likely to leave the group of wolves they were born into or to become a pack leader. Source: [WVTM/CNN](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A new study published in *Science* utilized a process called "full waveform inversion" to better understand the level of liquid magma in the Yellowstone supervolcano, a key measurement to predict eruptions. The research revealed that there is more magma under the greater Yellowstone area than previously thought, though an imminent eruption is not thought to be any more likely. Source: [Science Alert](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park* - On November 29, a state district court judge declined to extend temporary restrictions on Montana's wolf hunting and trapping season. The lawsuit by WildEarth Guardians and Project Coyote against Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks alleged that their 2002 wolf management plan used outdated modeling, gave inadequate public review, and didn't give enough of a buffer around national parks. The judge wrote that the research used to create the management plan was sound and public-informed. All regulations passed by the state commission in August have now been restored. Source: [Independent Record](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - The park will implement reservations for the last three weekends in February 2023 due to the popularity of photographing Horsetail Falls when winter light causes it to glow orange ("a firefall"). Reservations will go on sale

on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) on January 13, 2023. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)

## **Personnel Changes**

- *Manhattan Project National Historical Park* - Wendy Berhman has been selected as the new superintendent. Wendy has over 30 years of NPS experience, most recently as program planner for the NPS Washington Office for 11 years. She started her new role on December 5. Source: [Manhattan Project National Historical Park](#)

## **Park People**

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

### **Deceased**

- Leonard "Len" V. Bobinchock, 72, passed away on December 5. He worked for the NPS for 43 years, with the last 25 years as the deputy superintendent at Acadia National Park, retiring in 2014. Len also worked at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, and Fire Island National Seashore. Source: David Manski, Sheridan Steele, [Burns Funeral Homes and Cremation Service](#)
- Clark Dixon, passed away on December 7. Clark worked for the NPS for 33 years, including as superintendent at Arkansas Post National Memorial and at Morristown National Historical Park, as well as the program manager for the Southeast Region. He also served on the board of directors for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Shenandoah National Park Association, among others. Source: [Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#)
- Jerry Hammond passed away in August. He worked many assignments in the National Park Service, including as chief ranger in Everglades National Park. Source: Jack Stark/Rick Smith
- William "Bill" Edward Lutz, III, passed away on December 8. Bill worked for the NPS for 32 years, including at Gettysburg National Military Park. Source: Kurt Topham/Bill Wade, [Legacy](#)
- Charles Allen Murphy, 80, passed away on November 23. He worked in Zion National Park for many years. Source: [St. George News](#)
- Robert Peterson passed away recently. He worked many assignments in the National Park Service, including in Alaska and as chief ranger in Everglades National Park. Source: Jack Stark/Rick Smith
- LaVern "Vern" Wesley Stoker, 87, passed away on November 17. He worked as the



head of maintenance at Bryce and Zion National Parks, with other NPS stints at Grand Canyon National Park and Death Valley National Park. Source: [Daily Jefferson County Union](#)

- Lynette Ballance Waller, 67, passed away on November 28. She worked at Cape Hatteras National Seashore for a time. Source: [Island Free Press](#)

### **Retired**

- Eric Lisnik, chief ranger at Delaware Gap National Recreation Area, will retire at the end of the year. Eric worked for the NPS for 25 years, including stints at Mesa Verde National Park, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and for the Pacific West Region's Special Events and Tactical Team. Source: [The County](#)
- Bill Wright, the superintendent of Chickasaw National Recreation Area, will retire at the end of the year. A public reception is scheduled for December 19 to honor his career. Bill has 40 years of NPS experience, including at Statue of Liberty National Memorial, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Buffalo National River, Big Bend National Park, Everglades National Park, and Grand Canyon National Park. Source: [Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)

### **In the News**

- Sherri Lisius was selected as the Bishop Field Manager for the Bureau of Land Management Bishop Field Office. She was previously an NPS employee in Yosemite National Park and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Source: [Bureau of Land Management](#)

### **Open for Comment**

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

- *Acadia National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to increase the entrance fees at the park. [Comments](#) are open until December 29. Source: [Acadia National Park](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposed special use permit from a commercial enterprise to build a communication tower in the Panther Junction area. [Comments](#) are open until January 15. Source: [Big Bend National Park](#)
- *Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park* - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District is hosting a virtual listening session for the Western Everglades Restoration Project on January 17. The meeting will focus on the Wingate Mill Stormwater Treatment Area. Source: [Big Cypress National Preserve](#)

- *Colonial National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a wetland and floodplain statement of findings for repairs and stabilization on a portion of the York River shoreline, which were approved through an Environmental Assessment in 2012. [Comments](#) are open through December 20. Source: [Colonial National Historical Park](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on a visitor use management plan. [Comments](#) have been extended through December 30. Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - Public comment will open on December 6 on a plan to improve safety and conduct maintenance along the southern end of the parkway and the Mount Vernon Trail. [Comments](#) are open until January 4. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to authorize bicycle use on the Stud Horse Trail network. [Comments](#) are open until December 16. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Public comment is now open on a Wetland Statement of Findings for the Transcanyon Water Distribution Pipeline project, which will relocate potable water intake from Roaring Springs to an area on Bright Angel Creek near Phantom Ranch. The pipeline project was approved after public comment in 2019, and this plan acknowledges that the proposed project will impact 0.68 acres of wetland resources, with restoration mitigation nearby. [Comments](#) are open until December 23. Source: [Williams-Grand Canyon News](#)
- *Great Basin National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to conduct fuel thinning on 22 acres in Can Young Canyon, in partnership with the Nevada Department of Wildlife. [Comments](#) are open until December 16. Source: [Great Basin National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Public comment is now open on the proposed Laurel Falls Trail Management Plan, including rehabilitation of the trail, construction of trailside rest areas, parking improvements, and a viewing platform at the falls. [Comments](#) are open until January 6. Source: [The Mountain Press](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park* - Public comment is now open on plan to suppress invasive mosquitos in order to reduce transmission of avian malaria to threatened and endangered birds. [Comments](#) are open until January 23. Source: [Hawaii News Now](#)
- *Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a draft Environmental Assessment for a proposed demolition and rebuilding of 29 structures and 2.63 miles of the Entergy Louisiana LLC Golden Meadow-Barataria

electrical transmission line. [Comments](#) are open until December 31. Source: [Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve](#)

- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on management options on how to maintain launch ramp access to the lake and other visitor services amid record low lake levels that continue to drop. [Comments](#) are open until December 23. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - The NPS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have opened public comment on an Environmental Impact Statement process to evaluate options for restoring and managing grizzly bears to the North Cascades. [Comments](#) are open until December 14. Source: [The Spokesman-Review](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment will open on December 12 on a Day Use Visitor Access Strategy. [Comments](#) will be open until February 1. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Public comment is now open on a Visitor Experience and Access planning process. [Comments](#) are open until January 17. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Yosemite National Park* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has opened public comment on an expanded geographic region of critical habitat for the southern Sierra Nevada fisher, which is listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The expanded acreage includes zones within Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite. [Comments](#) are open until December 20. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - Public comment has opened on a Livestock Plan. [Comments](#) are open until January 31. Source: [Theodore Roosevelt National Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - Public comment has opened on a Visitor Access Management Plan. [Comments](#) are open until February 3. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)
- *Chesapeake National Recreation Area (proposed)* - A draft bill was introduced by Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and U.S. Representative John Sarbanes (D-MD) that would unite regional sites and partner parks into the Chesapeake National Recreation Area. The lawmakers have established a 90-day public comment period to help finalize the legislation. [Comments](#) are open until February 12, 2023. Source: [Bay Journal](#)

### **Other Department of the Interior News**

- *Protections pledged for Avi Kwa Ame* - On November 30, at the White House Tribal

Nations Summit, President Joe Biden pledged to ensure protections for the area known as Avi Kwa Ame, but he stopped shy of mentioning the efforts to proclaim it as an official national monument through the Antiquities Act (though some news outlets reported that his pledge indicated he would use the Antiquities Act). Source: [New York Times](#)

- *DOI advances solar plans* - The Department of the Interior announced plans to support new solar development in the western United States through an updated Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The new plan would update a plan enacted in 2012 to consider adding more states, adjust exclusion criteria, and support improved technology and clean energy goals. [Public comment](#) will soon be open. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *DOI urges denial of mining near Okefenokee* - Interior Secretary Deb Haaland wrote a letter to the State of Georgia asking them to deny state permits for a proposed titanium dioxide mine near the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Source: [The Current](#)
- *4 water projects in Klamath Basin* - On December 8, the Department of the Interior announced \$5.8 million in Bureau of Reclamation funding for four Tribal water projects in the Klamath River Basin through the Native American Affairs Technical Assistance to Tribes Program. The projects will monitor salmon, assess ecological flow, develop restoration plans and infrastructure, and fix human impacts in associated watersheds. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Tribal protection from mining* - During the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit, the Department of the Interior announced efforts to protect Native people from negative consequences associated with mining, including earlier communication about lease notices, more Tribal consultation, and appropriate compensation. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *CA offshore wind lease auction* - On December 7, the Department of the Interior announced the winners of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's wind energy auction for five leases off the shore of California. The bids totaled \$757.1 million. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Voluntary relocation of Tribes due to climate change* - The Department of the Interior established a new Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation program to assist Tribal communities severely impacted by climate-related environmental threats. \$115 million has been made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act to allow 11 Tribes to advance relocation efforts and adaptation planning. Additional support will be provided by the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the Denali Commission. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

## **Congressional Actions**

*Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.*

### **Senate Actions**

**November 29** - The Senate passed H.R. 2930, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage.

**December 1** – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources concluded a hearing to examine several bills, including the following:

- S. 4732, to authorize the Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project and Tour to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.
- S. 4995, to require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to prioritize the completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail.
- S. 5129, to modify the boundary of the Mammoth Cave National Park in the state of Kentucky.
- S.J. Res. 62, approving the location of a memorial to commemorate the commitment of the United States to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause.

Testimony was provided by several witnesses including Nada Wolff Culver, Principal Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior.

### **House Actions**

**December 6** – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "Lessons from the Field: Overcrowding in National Parks." Testimony was heard from Jeff Bradybaugh, Superintendent, Zion National Park, U.S. National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses. (See "National/Regional Updates" above.)

**December 8** – The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 1512, providing for the concurrence by the House in the Senate amendment to H.R. 7776, with an amendment, by a vote of 350 yeas to 80 nays. H.R. 7776 is the vehicle the House and Senate decided to use to pass the conference report for the James N. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, as well as the biennial Water Resources Development Act and several other matters. The bill now goes back to the Senate for a vote on the conference report.

Among the provisions in the bill of interest to the National Park Service are the following:

Division H includes the biennial Water Resources Development Act 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. Additionally, Sec. 8501(b) of Title LXXXV amends the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to establish within the Environmental Protection Agency the Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office. It also establishes the Puget Sound Federal Leadership Task Force among federal agencies to coordinate and implement activities toward the recovery. The Secretary of the Interior is required to appoint a representative of the National Park Service to serve on this task force.

Division J of the Act reauthorizes the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2002, with the National Park Service as one of the agencies authorized to undertake various activities related to the conservation of our nation's coral reefs.

Division K of the Act is the annual Coast Guard Reauthorization Act, which includes among other provisions:

- Sec. 11305 of Subtitle A of Title CXIII that requires the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to maintain and expand an ocean soundscape development program that would award grants to collect and analyze trends in the underwater soundscape to protect and manage marine life. This program is required to coordinate with the National Park Service.
- Sec. 11327 of Subtitle D of Title CXIII adds the National Park Service to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

**December 8** – The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on several bills, including the following:

- H.R. 6611, to authorize the Embassy of France in Washington, DC, to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to honor the extraordinary contributions of Jean Monnet to restoring peace between European nations and establishing the European Union.
- H.R. 6720, to authorize the Thomas Paine Memorial Association to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.
- H.R. 7615, the "LODGE Act," which would provide additional authorities to the National Park Service to provide housing for employees at the parks.
- H.R. 7952, the "Valley Forge Park Realignment Permit and Promise Act," which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue a right-of-way permit with respect to a natural gas distribution pipeline within Valley Forge National Historical Park.
- H.R. 8115, the "Recreation and Public Purposes Tribal Parity Act," which would authorize the Department of the Interior to sell or lease public lands to federally recognized Indian tribes for recreational or public purposes.

H.R. 6611, H.R. 7615, and H.R. 7952 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 6720, H.R. 7952, and H.R. 8115, were ordered reported, without amendment.

## **Incidents**

*Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.*

### **Blue Ridge Parkway**

#### **Rockslide**

On December 9, boulders and soil fell onto the parkway near the Montvale Overlook. The NPS has closed a 14-mile section between Virginia 43 (Bearwallow Gap) at Buchanan to U.S. 360 east of Roanoke for cleanup and assessment. It is unclear when the road will reopen. Source: [The Roanoke Times](#)

### **Cape Cod National Seashore**

#### **Coyote put down for habituation**

After being repeatedly fed by visitors over time, a coyote began displaying aggressive behavior toward people and pets near Herring Cove Beach parking lot. Park staff attempted to haze the coyote over several days to get it to stop engaging in feeding behaviors. However, it stalked a visitor with a dog and began snatching items from people. NPS staff euthanized the animal through use a firearm. Source: [CapeCod.com](#)

### **Death Valley National Park**

#### **Canyoneering accident**

In early December, a campground host reported a tent in a campsite past the checkout date. Rangers left a note on the tent and then returned the following day. While packing up the abandoned property, they found a package with a name and address on it. The rangers recalled seeing a car at the Mosaic Canyon trailhead for several days, so they ran its plates and found it matched the name on the package. A search was conducted and the 54-year-old individual was found deceased on December 3 in the West Fork route of Mosaic Canyon. The individual appeared to have rappelled on a rope that was too short, then attempted to extend the rappel with webbing. Something appeared to have gone wrong while passing the knot between the rope and webbing. Rangers estimate the individual fell 30 feet. The search and recovery were conducted by the National Park Service, Inyo County Search and Rescue, Inyo County Sheriff's Office, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake's VX-31 rescue helicopter, and California Highway Patrol's H-82 helicopter. The cause of death is under investigation by the Inyo County Coroner's Office. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

### **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area**

#### **Water system issue closes visitor center**

On December 2, the park announced that the Carl Hayden Visitor Center would be temporarily closed until further notice due to an issue with the building's water system.

The Bureau of Reclamation and City of Page worked quickly to resolve the issue. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)

### **Mesa Verde National Park Contractor trailer stolen**

On November 26, a 20-foot double axle pull-behind trailer was stolen from the main park roadway near the entrance. It belonged to Rocky Mountain Sprayliners, the contracting company that was clearing hazardous rocks from the road. A black pickup truck was captured on camera entering the park at 2:48am, then leaving the park with the trailer at 3:25am. The park announced it was looking for any information the public could provide, and several tips came in that helped law enforcement locate the trailer on Highway 491 south of Cortez on December 1. The contents of the trailer, consisting of two Honda generators and other equipment valued around \$40,000, were missing. The landowner knew the trailer was there, but did not know it was stolen and is not considered a suspect. Law enforcement have stated that the the investigation is ongoing and the suspect is being sought. The trailer was returned to the contractor. [The Journal](#), [Durango Herald](#)

### **Olympic National Park Rivers closed to fishing**

On December 1, the park announced that the Quinault River within the park will be closed to sport fishing due to chronic low abundances of wild steelhead. Closures on the Queets and Salmon have been ongoing through the fall and will also continue. Source: [Radio Pacific, Inc./MyClallamCounty.com](#)

### **Pecos National Historical Park Celebration canceled**

On December 2, the park announced there would be no Las Posadas celebration. The Saint Anthony's pastoral council voted to cancel it due to increasing COVID-19 cases in San Miguel County. Source: [Pecos National Historical Park](#)

### **Point Reyes National Seashore Kayakers swept out to sea**

On November 26, two adults and two children who were kayaking became stranded on the west shore of Tomales Bay after being swept out to sea in "rough surf." A Sonoma Sheriff's Department helicopter located them and picked them up, then flew them to Lawson's Landing. Source: [Centre Daily](#)

### **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Small wildfire**

On November 24, a small fire broke out in an area near Sandstone Peak. Ventura County



Fire sent out a dozen ground crews and helicopters and the brush fire was put out at only 0.5 acres in size. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Source: [Ventura County Star](#)

### **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area** **Sexual assault suspect at large**

On November 21 around noon, an individual was sexually assaulted while hiking along the Upper Canyonback Trail in "a secluded area." The suspect was reported to have a knife, though the knife was not used "during the commission of the crime." The Los Angeles Police Department is still searching for the individual and have advised hikers in the area to hike in pairs and carry a cellphone. Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

### **Yosemite National Park** **Unhoused individual charged for squatting**

On December 1, a federal grand jury returned a six-count indictment against a 28-year-old individual. The person, a previously convicted felon on parole, is accused of breaking into a private residence in Wawona and residing there for several months in Summer 2021. Property was damaged and stolen, and a firearm with ammunition belonging to the individual (illegally due to previous convictions) was found inside the residence. The individual is also accused of giving false statements to law enforcement about taking up residence in the structure. The case was investigated by Yosemite National Park with assistance from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the California Department of Justice's Bureau of Forensic Services, and the Madera County Sheriff's Office. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office Eastern District of California](#)

### **Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents**

- *Arches National Park* - A trial against the NPS began on December 5 for a 25-year-old visitor who was killed when an unsecured park gate blew into their vehicle in 2020. The trial concluded on December 12 and a verdict is pending. The plaintiffs are seeking \$140 million in damages. Source: [KNAU](#), [KSL](#)
- *Cape Canaveral National Seashore* - The park is working on storm cleanup from the impacts of Hurricane Nicole. The Playalinda District remains closed to use, and the park began demolition and repair of boardwalks on December 12. They are also working to move sand off of roadways and parking lots and ensure habitat restoration. Source: [Cape Canaveral National Seashore](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - On November 23, the park reopened Cottonwood Canyon and Marble Canyon roads, which had been damaged and closed by record flashfloods over the summer. Free permits are now required to camp along these roads in designated sites and to backpack along the Cottonwood-Marble Canyon Loop. On December 7, the park reopened Badwater Road, CA-178, Harry

Wade, Owls Hole, West Side, Trail Canyon, Hanaupah Canyon, Johnson Canyon, Queen of Sheba Mine, and Galena Canyon Roads. Source: Death Valley National Park ([12/1](#), [12/8](#))

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The social media influencer who was caught hitting a golf ball into the canyon and then throwing the club afterward on October 26 was fined \$285 for citations of disorderly conduct and throwing items into the canyon. Source: [AZ Central/Arizona Republic](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - On December 8, the park announced that P-22, the famous mountain lion that killed a small dog on leash on November 9 (see the [11/30/22 Coalition Report](#)), was to be captured and evaluated by the NPS and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Though the animal was at first deemed to not be harmful to humans due to resuming normal behaviors after the attack, they have now observed it near human dwellings on a regular basis. On December 12, P-22 was tracked to an urban area south of his normal range and humanely captured so that park and state biologists and veterinarians can conduct health evaluations and determine next best steps. As of December 13, the health evaluation was still underway and no new announcements had been made. Source: [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#), [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)

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