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The Coalition Report
Wednesday, January 12, 2022

Coalition Actions

Thank you so much for your generosity during our Annual Giving Campaign. We truly appreciate your support and we look forward to another busy and productive year. If you did not have a chance to make a donation during the campaign, you can always donate via our [website](#).

We'd like to thank our outgoing Executive Council members: Brenda Barrett, Sarah Bransom, and Rebecca Harriett. We'd also like to express our deep gratitude to outgoing Chair Phil Francis and Vice Chair Maria Burks for all of their hard work and dedication in leading the organization throughout their terms.

We would also like to welcome our new Executive Council members: Linda Mazzu, Cheryl Schreier, Bill Shaddox, Terri Thomas, and Clara Wooden. And we are happy to announce our new Executive Council leadership team: Mike Murray and Don Hellmann, our former Issues Committee leads, are now serving as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. More information about our Executive Council and staff can be found [here](#).

In the tradition of the [Lane Letter](#), the Coalition sent a letter to Director Chuck Sams after he was ceremoniously sworn in as the 19th Director of the NPS: <https://protectnps.org/2021/12/20/coalition-sends-welcome-to-director-sams-in-the-tradition-of-the-lane-letter/>

We issued a statement in response to the Biden Administration's *America the Beautiful* progress report, applauding the progress that has been made so far but urging them to push hard to meet the goals laid in 30 x 30: <https://protectnps.org/2021/12>

[/20/coalition-comments-on-america-the-beautiful-progress-report/](#)

Outgoing Coalition Chair Phil Francis sat down with *National Parks Traveler* to discuss the big news in the national park system in 2021:

<https://protectnps.org/2021/12/27/national-parks-traveler-2021s-major-news-stories-from-the-parks/>

National/Regional NPS Updates

A summary of news pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the national park system and its programs, or intersecting with the parks on a more regional basis.

- *DOI seeks members for renaming advisory committee* - The Department of the Interior announced on January 7 that it is seeking nominations for members of the new Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names, which will identify geographic and federal land names that are considered derogatory and solicit proposals on replacement names. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)
- *NPS Director interviewed about Tribal relationships with NPS* - *Underscore*, a media outlet focused on telling untold stories in Oregon, including Indigenous stories, conducted an interview with new NPS Director Chuck Sams, asking him about a variety of issues related to Indigenous people and the parks, including how he might affect the NPS' telling of Indigenous stories and improve consultation and outreach with Native Americans. Source: [Underscore](#)
- *National parks with most SAR incidents* - A media outlet called *Travel Awaits* compiled a list of the national parks (only those with the name "national park," not all NPS units) with the most search and rescue incidents from 2018-2020. The top three were Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Sequoia/Kings Canyon. Source: [Travel Awaits](#)
- *Adjusting to the new normal of wildfires* - *The New York Times Magazine* published [a long-form essay](#) called "This Isn't the California I Married," which is about how society will need to adapt to wildfire, both managerially and psychologically.

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - The Assateague Island Alliance hosted its annual raffle to name new foals born on the island. Sheila Navarra, a campground host at the park, won and has chosen "Starlight" for the newest foal's name. The fundraiser raised \$3,350 for the organization's advocacy programs on behalf of the park. Source: [The Dispatch](#)
- *Big Cypress National Preserve* - Florida Agricultural Commissioner Nicole Fried wrote [an official letter](#) asking Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to halt Burnett Oil

Company's oil exploration and production in the park due to environmental damage sustained by its exploratory activities in 2017 and 2018 and the lack of required remediation. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Channel Islands National Park* - *Alta Journal* published [an article](#) about the controversy of wildlife translocation/assisted migration in the name of protecting species from climate change and other threats. The piece highlights an effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to translocate a new breeding colony of black-footed albatross to the Channel Islands, which has never had the species nest there before. Glacier National Park is also mentioned as an example of a place where translocation of native bull trout has taken place. Source: *Alta Journal*
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - *The Reporter Newspapers & Atlanta Intown* ran [an article](#) outlining Superintendent Ann Honious' goal to complete a comprehensive trails management plan for the park. A draft is expected this spring. Source: *The Reporter Newspapers & Atlanta Intown*
- *Coronado National Memorial* - The park has temporarily reopened the Yaqui Ridge Trail to the international border with Mexico. The trail had been closed since July 2020 due to border wall construction and subsequent clean-up and safety measures. Further work by contractors will begin anew in three to six months. Source: [Coronado National Memorial](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - The park will begin upgrading the restroom at Brandywine Falls this month, with completion expected in September. Source: [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#)
- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - A 6,000-square-foot historic mule barn at Fort Hancock will be converted into a bar and restaurant this year. This is part of a greater strategy to restore and lease several historic buildings at the fort and Sandy Hook. Source: [New Jersey 101.5](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - The park's Comprehensive Telecommunications Plan has been approved after a Finding of No Significant Impact for the environmental assessment was signed on December 13. The plan will allow the park to upgrade to newer technologies to support park operations. Source: [Hi-Line Today](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - *Daily Inter Lake* published [an article](#) outlining the challenges and opportunities the park will face in 2022. Source: *Daily Inter Lake*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - *National Public Radio* ran [a story](#) on the megadrought, the dropping lake levels of Lake Powell, its effects on the local economy, and what it would look like to abandon Lake Powell in favor of keeping Lake Mead viable. Source: *National Public Radio*

- *Grand Teton National Park - Cowboy State Daily* ran a "Way-Back Wednesday" feature [article](#) about the history and impact of John D. Rockefeller's philanthropy on the park. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey's weekly feature, "Volcano Watch", ran [an article](#) about Alexander Lancaster, aka "Pele's Grandson", a Black and Cherokee man who guided both tourists and scientists through Hawai'i Volcanoes in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He was hired as the first park ranger when Hawaii National Park was established (later renamed Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park). Source: U.S. Geological Survey
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - A number of state and federal water agencies agreed to the "[500+ Plan](#)" to add half a million acre-feet of water to Lake Mead each of the next two years to keep it from descending to critically low elevations. This conserved water may come through a number of reductions or efficiency fixes, some with potential associated compensation. Source: [KJZZ](#)
- *Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail* - The trail has won a first-place media award in the book category from the National Association for Interpretation for its Junior Ranger program. Source: [Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail](#)
- *Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, Quindaro National Commemorative Site* - Grants from the Mid-America Regional Council and the Unified Government will allow the Groundwork Northeast Revitalization Group to create the Northeast Kansas City, Kansas, Heritage Trail. The trail will connect Kaw Point Park, part of Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the site of the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers, and Quindaro Townsite, which was an important part of the Underground Railroad. Source: [The Kansas City Star](#)
- *Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site* - The park will host an online Civil Rights Educator Institute in July. This is a free professional development course for educators, community organizers, and cultural activists. Requests to participate are open through March 1 or until all openings are filled. Source: [Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site](#)
- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - The Resource Renewal Institute, Center for Biological Diversity, and Western Watersheds Project have filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California claiming that the National Park Service has prioritized the commercial needs of ranchers over the protection of the natural environment and the public's use and enjoyment of the park under its recently-approved General Management Plan. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - A group of people concerned about the seasonal reservation system for the park met with Superintendent Darla Sidles and other staff to discuss their position that the reservation system blocks public access to

the park. The group is trying to get the reservation system rescinded. Source:

[Loveland Reporter-Herald/Estes Park Trail-Gazette](#)

- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - A new study led by the University of California, Los Angeles and supported by the NPS and the University of California, Davis has shown that inbreeding among the bottlenecked populations of mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains and nearby Santa Ana Mountains has created a 93% abnormal sperm rate. Source: [Spectrum News 1](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - Friends of Virgin Islands National Park is collaborating with Ocean Safari and the NPS to provide "Turtle Talks at Sea," which focus on behavior and various threats to local turtles. Source: [The St. Thomas Source](#)
- *Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts* - The park has completed the Environmental Assessment for amendments to the General Management Plan, which will allow them to update amenities, improve traffic flow, improve accessibility, add signage, and other general upgrades. Some changes will begin to be implemented this summer. Source: [Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - On December 13, the park issued letters stating that residents of the El Portal Trailer Park will have to remove or surrender their homes in 90 days due to the extremely poor condition of the electrical system, and the need for a construction staging area for park projects, as well as the upcoming 2024 conversion of the site to a campground. Between 12-20 residents live there currently. Source: [Fresno Bee](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* - Carmen Chapin was selected as the new superintendent. She has over 17 years of NPS experience, most recently as the chief of natural resources for Region 1 and acting superintendent at New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. She will begin her new role on January 16. Source: [Carlsbad Current Argus](#)
- *Pacific West Region (Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, 12)* - Frank Lands was selected as the new regional director. He has over 20 years of experience managing natural and cultural resource programs with the U.S. Army, most recently as the deputy garrison commander at Fort Bliss in Texas. He begins his new role on January 16. Source: [Saipan Tribune](#)
- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - Craig Hansen has been selected as the new superintendent. He has 19 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Grand Portage National Monument. He will begin his new role in February. Source: [Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway](#)

- *Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve* - Kristin Hase was selected as the new superintendent. She has 16 years of NPS experience, most recently as the resources manager at Tallgrass Prairie. She will begin her new role on January 16. Source: [Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- Dean Clark Einwalter, 81, passed away on December 10. Dean was the superintendent of Grand Portage National Monument from 1987-1998, and also worked at Curecanti National Recreation Area and Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Source: [Cook County News Herald](#)
- Garreth "Scott" Lechner, 49, passed away on December 26. Scott worked for the NPS at Yellowstone and Everglades. Source: [Journal-News](#)
- Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, 80, passed away on December 25. He was a renowned conservationist and served on the National Parks Conservation Association's Science Advisory Council for many years. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)
- Harry Reid, 82, passed away on December 28. He was a United States Senator from Nevada, and authored and passed a bill that established Great Basin National Park as Nevada's first national park. Source: [The Nevada Independent](#)
- John R. "Jack" Winchell, 89, passed away on December 13. He worked as a park ranger at Whitman Mission National Historic Site for 30 years. Source: [Union-Bulletin](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on backcountry and designated Wilderness management in the two parks. [Comments](#) are open until January 21. Source: [Fox 21 News](#)
- *Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on the development of a General Management Plan. [Comments](#) are open until February 15. Source: [The Valley Breeze](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - Public comment is now open on a right-of-way permit for Dominion Energy North Carolina to construct, operate, and maintain a natural gas pipeline that would cross beneath the Parkway near Milepost 393.3. [Comments](#) are

- open until February 5. Source: [Mountain Xpress](#)
- *Catoctin Mountain Park* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment to improve the trail system at the park. [Comments](#) are open until February 3. Source: [The Frederick News-Post](#)
 - *Haleakalā National Park* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment to suppress non-native mosquito populations due to their effects on endangered native birds. [Comments](#) are open until January 20. Source: [Haleakalā National Park](#)
 - *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - Public comment is now open on proposed amendments to special regulations for motorized vehicles. [Comments](#) are open until March 7. Source: [Ozark Radio News](#)
 - *Southeast Regional Office* - Public comment will soon open on an integrity and condition study of the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District. [Comments](#) will be open from January 18 to March 4. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
 - *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on interim infrastructure improvements to the Valle Grande District, and a proposed reestablishment of a park fee collection program to support these improvements. [Comments](#) are open until January 14. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
 - *Wupatki National Monument* - Public comment is now open on a draft backcountry management plan. [Comments](#) are open until January 16. Source: [KNAU](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *DOI seeks comment on new conservation atlas tool* - The Department of the Interior, in coordination with the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce and the Council on Environmental Quality, is inviting public comment on its new American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas, a tool to document baseline information on lands and waters that are conserved and restored. [Comments](#) are open until March 7. 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

December 27, 2021 – The president signed into law H.R. 1664, to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of

Columbia and its environs. (Public Law 117–80).

December 27, 2021 – The president signed into law S. 1605, to designate the National Pulse Memorial located at 1912 South Orange Avenue in Orlando, Florida. (Public Law 117–81). The House and Senate struck the language of the previously passed Senate bill to designate this memorial and used S. 1605 as a vehicle to pass the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act.

The law includes two provisions relevant to the National Park Service: Section 641 authorizes Gold Star families and veterans to receive a lifetime pass under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act; and Section 6605 authorizes the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial to be located in the Reserve on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., despite the Reserve being designated by Congress in 1986 to be a completed work of civic art where no new memorials would be authorized.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Big Bend National Park Petroglyphs vandalized

On December 26, it came to the attention of the NPS that petroglyphs in the Indian Head area of the park had been vandalized. The park is seeking any information the public might have. Source: [Beaumont Enterprise](#)

Death Valley National Park Motorcyclist killed in accident

On January 8, a 63-year-old motorcyclist drifted off the side of SR-190 near Stovepipe Wells. The victim crashed into a dirt and rock embankment and was ejected from the motorcycle. While being transported to Las Vegas University Hospital via Mercy Air helicopter, the victim succumbed to injuries. The crash is under investigation by California Highway Patrol from Bishop. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Haleakalā National Park Two nēnē killed by motorists

On January 7, a nēnē (an endangered Hawaiian goose) was struck by a vehicle. A previous nēnē fatality due to vehicle collision took place on December 23. Visitors have been urged to slow down to protect the species. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Visitor dies from fall

On January 3, a 75-year-old visitor was reported missing by family members. The victim's

body was found by NPS staff and Hawai'i County firefighters after dark 100 feet below the crater rim, west of the Uēkahuna viewing area at the summit of Kīlauea volcano. The body was recovered by helicopter the next morning and an investigation is currently underway. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

Shenandoah National Park

Missing hiker found alive

A 32-year-old visitor was reported missing, last seen on December 24 backpacking north on the Appalachian Trail from McCormick Gap. A ranger located the backpacker on January 5 and reported her safe. No more details about the incident have been released.

Source: [WJLA](#), [Shenandoah National Park Facebook page](#)

Yellowstone National Park

20 wolves killed

Twenty of the park's gray wolves have been shot (legally) by hunters while roaming outside the park in recent months. Park officials are concerned that the deaths are a large setback to the species' long-term viability. The Phantom Lake Pack is now considered "eliminated" due to the hunts, and there are several more months left in the season. Superintendent Cam Sholly has asked Montana Governor Greg Gianforte to shut down hunting and trapping in the area for the rest of the season. Several environmental groups have asked Interior Secretary Deb Haaland to issue an emergency listing of wolves under the Endangered Species Act. Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#), [Cody Enterprise](#)

Zion National Park

Backpacker rescued after stuck in snow

On January 10, a backpacker became stuck in two to three feet of snow at the top of Hop Valley. The hiker used a SPOT satellite messenger device to request help and mark the location. Later messages stated that her legs were numb and she was going in and out of consciousness. Washington County Sheriff's Search and Rescue and staff from the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service responded to the incident via snowmobiles, snow bikes, and on foot. The patient was treated for hypothermia and a Utah Department of Public Safety helicopter was able to respond and take her to the hospital in Cedar City for further treatment. Source: [St. George News](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Pearl Harbor National Memorial* - On January 5, the shoreside dock was delivered and reinstalled after undergoing off-site repairs by Navy Facilities. Tours are currently running every 30 minutes rather than every 15 minutes. Ongoing temporary repairs may disrupt future tours. Fabrication of a new shoreside dock has begun off-site and installation is set to occur later in the year. Source: Pearl Harbor National Memorial ([1/5](#), [1/7](#))

- *Olympic National Park* - The suspect who allegedly warned people about a revolution, ran around carrying many guns, set a fire, and assaulted his partner at the Deer Park campground on August 29, 2021 has had his federal indictment delayed by a U.S. magistrate judge for a second time due to ongoing treatment at an in-patient facility. The suspect has been at the facility since being released from a federal detention center for the charges. The new deadline is April 4. Source: [Peninsula Daily News](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Roads between Hospital Rock and Giant Forest are closed until at least January 14 due to high snow loads and lots of debris hazards due to the 2021 KNP Complex Fire. Source: [KMPH](#)

Acknowledgments

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- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- Issue Contributors: Cassie Thomas, Norm Hellmers, Bill Walters

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

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

To receive a copy of this free publication, [join or support the Coalition](#). Any current, retired, or former-salaried (GS, Wage System, Seasonal, Temporary, or SES) National Park Service employee or volunteer who served under a signed volunteer agreement can join the Coalition. Coalition supporters who do not qualify under those criteria [may also join](#) and receive the newsletter.

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