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The Coalition Report
Wednesday, June 29, 2022

Coalition Actions

The Park Institute of America is looking for its next Director. [PIA](#) was established in 2016 with the mission to champion parks and protected areas by increasing understanding through education, enhancing the exchange of ideas, and building momentum through partnerships. PIA is the result of a collaboration between the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks and Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment. Job Announcement [here](#).

The Coalition signed on to a comment letter on California's Regional Haze State Implementation Plan for the Second Implementation Period:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/06/13/coalition-comments-on-californias-proposed-state-implementation-plan-regional-haze-round-two/>

We submitted a statement for the record prior to a hearing by the House subcommittee on various national park-related bills. We offered comments on H.R. 7615, the Lodging Options Developed for Government Employees Act; H.R. 7693, the National Park Foundation Reauthorization Act of 2022; and H.R. 6442, the Partnerships Agreements Creating Tangible Savings Act: <https://protectnps.org/2022/06/14/coalition-submits-testimony-on-various-national-parks-bills/>

The Coalition also led an effort in support of additional FY23 funding for our national parks, helping to draft and coordinate a sign-on letter sent to Congressional appropriators:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/06/14/coalition-leads-effort-in-support-of-additional-fy23->

[nps-funding/](#)

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.

- *\$103 million for wildfire mitigation and resilience* - On June 17, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced the allocation of \$103 million in FY22 for wildfire risk reduction efforts and the establishment of an interagency wildland firefighter health and wellbeing program. The announcement came while Secretary Haaland visited the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Pay increases and new job series for federal wildland firefighters* - On June 21, the White House announced temporary pay increases for federal firefighters under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The increase will begin on July 3, and will be \$20,000 a year or 50% of base salary, whichever is less. The Biden Administration has said they are committed to finding long-term solutions, as well. Furthermore, there is a new "GS-0456 Wildland Firefighter series," which is a reboot of a job series that existed in the 1970s, then called "Fire Control Aids." This will replace the current "Forestry/Range Technician" job series, and will allow for better job mobility and advancement opportunities. Source: [Wildfire Today](#)
- *NPS visitors contributed \$42.5 billion to economy in 2021* - On June 23, the Department of the Interior announced that visitor spending in communities adjacent to national park sites in 2021 resulted in \$14.6 billion in labor income and \$24.3 billion in value added, in addition to 322,600 jobs. The details are outlined in the NPS' [2021 National Park Visitor Spending Effects](#). An interactive tool in this report allows individuals to search by various criteria. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$3.4 million for WWII Japanese American incarceration sites* - On June 21, the NPS announced \$3.4 million in Japanese American Confinement Sites grants for 19 projects across the country. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Interview with Chuck Sams* - *The New York Times* published [an interview](#) with NPS Director Chuck Sams. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Flood recovery efforts in national parks* - The Oregonian ran [an article](#) chronicling various flood recovery efforts in parks over the years, including the opportunities and challenges after the recent floods in Yellowstone (discussed in *Parks* below). Source: *The Oregonian*
- *White supremacy movement recruits youth through public lands events* - *Vice* ran

[an article](#) about a growing movement of far-right extremists holding events on public lands as a way of connecting youth to the land and nationalistic ideologies. The article chronicles a history of the intertwining of conservation and white supremacy groups and action, including the founding of the national parks. Source: *Vice*

[Around the Parks](#)

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Channel Islands National Park* - The NPS has opened up commercial proposals for a 10-year contract to provide year-round boat service from Ventura, CA to the park. Source: [Santa Barbara Independent](#)
- *First State National Historical Park* - The American Association for State and Local History gave an Award of Excellence to the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs for their project "Search, Discovery, and Interpretation of the African Burial Ground at the John Dickinson Plantation." The John Dickinson Plantation is a partner site of First State National Historical Park. Source: [Delaware.gov](#)
- *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* - The NPS is working with a team of students and professional archaeologists from Portland State University and Washington State University to excavate the Fort Vancouver school site from July 1-30. The public is invited to visit and talk with the team. The school was hosted by the Hudson's Bay Company for fur trade families. The site also housed the Owhyhee Church for Native Hawaiian workers and hosted the first Roman Catholic mass in the Pacific Northwest. Source: [Fort Vancouver National Historic Site](#)
- *George Washington Carver National Monument* - The park recently began rehabilitating the rock wall around the Carver Family Cemetery. The \$272,000 project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and carried out by masons from the NPS Historic Preservation Training Center and Youth Historic Stewards from Conservation Legacy. Work is expected to be complete in late July. Source: [George Washington Carver National Monument](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - The park is collaborating with Gettysburg Borough Storm Water Authority to restore wetland habitat in Culp Run to abate pollutants that enter the Chesapeake Bay through storm water. The drainage was heavily impacted by cattle, which have now been permanently removed from the area. The project is expected to take 10 weeks. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - *KSL* ran [an article](#) about the attempts to protect native and endangered fish on the section of river below Glen Canyon Dam as Lake Powell water levels continue to decline and the threat of invasive fish slipping through the dam's penstocks increases. Source: *KSL*

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The park will pilot a new day-use ticket reservation system for the Tuweep Visitor Use Area, starting July 21. There will be reservations for private vehicles, as well as authorized Commercial Use Authorization permit holders. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The park has announced that it will not continue its volunteer bison killing program this year. New surveys show the bison herd on the North Rim is close to the target of 200 individuals. They also found the volunteer program was not as effective as hoped. The park is working on a long-term plan to manage the herd. Source: [KNAU](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - A planned construction project on the Moose-Wilson Road has been delayed for a month due to supply chain and staffing shortages, as well as "an overwhelmed construction industry locally." Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The North Carolina House of Representatives passed a resolution opposing the park's proposal to enact parking fees for the first time and they asked Congress to block the plan. Source: [Smoky Mountain News](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park* - On June 10, the NPS completed a project to repaint and replace the flooring and dishware at Kapaloa Wilderness Cabin. The improvements are preserving the historic integrity of the building, while making for a more safe experience for visitors. The project was funded by park entrance fees and the Friends of Haleakalā National Park assisted with the painting. Source: [Haleakalā National Park](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - On July 25, the park celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the park's bear webcam. In 2021, 10.9 million viewers watched the bearcams. The NPS operates the cameras with support from *explore.org* and the Katmai Conservancy. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - *Active NorCal* published [an article](#) about "what to expect" while visiting the park in the aftermath of the 2021 Dixie Fire, which burned most of the park. Source: *Active NorCal*
- *Minidoka National Historic Site* - A resource council of the Bureau of Land Management, Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project subcommittee, and community members toured the proposed site for the wind farm lease adjacent to the park. NPS staff spoke with tour participants about the significance of the site and the potential effects of the wind farm on the park. Public comment on an Environmental Impact Statement is likely to be open this summer. Source: [MagicValley.com](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* - On June 18, the NPS and the Washington D.C. Department of

Transportation, celebrated the completion of the newest section of the Metropolitan Branch Trail, a 0.8 mile segment between Brookland and Fort Totten. More than 1,500 pedestrians and bicyclists utilize the trail daily. Design and construction cost \$12.9 million. The next section to be completed will be a segment between Fort Totten and Takoma, with plans to begin construction in 2023. Source: [Government of the District of Columbia, Executive Office of the Mayor](#)

- *San Juan Island National Historical Park* - On June 23, the park opened its brand new American Camp Visitor Center. The new exhibits were made in collaboration with Coast Salish Tribes. Source: [San Juan Island National Historical Park](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - On June 13, the NPS and Santa Monica Mountains Fund held a dedication ceremony for the new Zuma Creek Bridge. The bridge replaces the one destroyed in the 2018 Woolsey Fire. Funding for bridge materials came from the Santa Monica Mountains Fund, REI, the Ventura County Community Foundation, The Fund for People in Parks, and Concerned Off-Road Bicyclist Association. The NPS and Santa Monica Mountains Fund provided the construction. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
- *Stonewall National Monument* - The park and Pride Live, a social advocacy organization for the LGBTQ+ community, announced that it will open the park's first visitor center in Summer 2024. A livestream of the groundbreaking ceremony will take place on June 24. The visitor center is being funded and supported by a number of private entities and individuals. MBB Architects is leading the building design process and Local Projects will lead the exhibit design. Source: [PR Newswire](#)
- *Thomas Edison National Historical Park* - The park partnered with the Library of Congress to digitize a set of home movies that belonged to Thomas Edison's son, Charles. The movies were captured on 16mm film and recently digitally restored. The films are all available [on the park's YouTube channel](#). Source: [TAP Into West Orange](#)
- *Valley Forge National Historical Park* - On June 18 at the annual wreath laying ceremony at the Patriots of African Descent Monument, two new interpretive wayside panels were unveiled, better telling the stories of soldiers of African descent who fought in the American Revolution. A stone patio and bench were also installed. The waysides were designed in collaboration between the NPS and the Sorors of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. Artwork for the signs was done by Everette Brown, an African American digital artist. Funding was provided from the Valley Forge Revolutionary 5-Mile Run, which is directed by the Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board. Source: [Valley Forge National Historical Park](#)
- *Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve* - The Ahtna Cultural Center, C'ek'aedi Hwanax "Legacy House" has reopened due to a partnership between Ahtna,

Incorporated and the park. The center was closed the last three summers. The center provides visitors with park information, as well as opportunities to learn and connect with Alaska Native culture and history. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

- *Yellowstone National Park* - On a visit to the park on June 19, NPS Director Chuck Sams and Superintendent Cam Sholly announced \$50 million in emergency funding to kickstart flood recovery efforts. On June 25, the Federal Highway Administration announced it would release an additional \$15 million in emergency relief funds, bringing the total to \$65 million. The park's southern loop reopened on June 22 and the park's northern loop will open two weeks after or less. Currently, cars are allowed in based on license plate numbers or letters. The emergency funding will be used to restore temporary access to Gardiner and Cooke City, Montana. Road construction crews and materials that were already in the park for a road repair project on the Grand Loop Road will now be diverted to the Old Gardiner Road. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#), [Fox News](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - The Earth Island Institute filed a federal lawsuit on June 13 to try to halt the park from cutting down trees along park roads and trails. The lawsuit states that the project violates the National Environmental Policy Act and the Administrative Procedure Act, as well as going against the NPS' mission. The park has acknowledged the lawsuit, but has not made any public statements about it. The park's website on the project calls it "biomass removal and thinning" to protect habitat and prevent high severity fire by removing conifers less than 20" in diameter, standing dead trees, and dead and down trees from recent drought. Source: [Fresno Bee](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site* - Jill Trebbe was selected as the new site manager for both parks. She has been the Supervisory Archivist at Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site since 1999. Source: [John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - Justin Pattison was selected as the new Deputy Superintendent. He has ten years of NPS experience, most recently as the Chief of Facilities and Acting Deputy Superintendent at Lake Mead. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

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

- Susan Kopczynski, 76, passed away on June 11. She worked for the NPS for many

- years, including at Delaware Gap National Recreation Area as a historian. Source: Randy Turner, [Joseph J. Pula Funeral Home, Inc.](#)
- Robert "Bob" Daniel Staley, 81, passed away on June 21. He worked for the NPS for 40 years, including at the Eisenhower National Historic Site. Source: [Evening Sun](#)
 - Edward "Eddie" Wayne Waddell, 76, passed away on June 14. He was a longtime maintenance employee and recent volunteer at Blue Ridge Parkway. Source: Tracy Swartout, [Badger Funeral Home and Ashelawn Memorial Chapel, Gardens, and Mausoleum](#)
 - Dee Alden Zeller, 90, passed away on June 3. Dee and his wife Betty were presented with the Minerva Hoyt Conservation Award by the Joshua Tree National Park Association, as well as the Bureau of Land Management's "Making a Difference" National Volunteer Award for their work as volunteers and preserve hosts at Thousand Palms Preserve and the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Source: [Desert Sun](#)

In the News

- Coalition member Bill Hafker wrote [a letter to the editor](#) at the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* arguing for personal responsibility and legislation minimizing single-use plastics to protect the Chesapeake Bay (and other waterways). Source: Bill Hafker, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

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 a Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the two parks. [Comments](#) are open until July 21. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
- *Boston National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on an environmental assessment to revitalize Charlestown Navy Yard. [Comments](#) are open until July 7. Source: [Boston National Historical Park](#)
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to repair three segments of a sewer system adjacent to the Clara Barton Parkway between Lock 14 and the Chain Bridge. The NPS is partner with DC Water on the project. [Comments](#) are open until July 3. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Continental Divide National Scenic Trail* (managed by Bureau of Land Management) - Public comment is now open on a proposed acquisition of a 56-mile right-of-way

across New Mexico state land. The NPS is working with the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and Continental Divide Trail Coalition on the relocation of the trail away from county roads and highways to improve safety and enhance solitude for trail users. [Comments](#) are open until July 5. Source: [Desert Exposure](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Cooperative management agreement signed for Bears Ears* - On June 19, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and the Tribes of the Bears Ears Commission (Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, and the Pueblo of Zuni) signed a formal cooperative agreement to manage Bears Ears National Monument. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$25.5 million for water efficiency* - On June 22, the Department of the Interior announced \$25.5 million for WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants. This year, 14 projects in eight western states will be awarded funding. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$9 million for sagebrush ecosystems* - On June 16, the Department of the Interior announced \$9 million for 40 projects in eight western states to promote healthy sagebrush landscapes and communities. Source: [KULR8](#)
- *DOI commits to monarch butterfly protection* - At the first-ever Monarch Butterfly Summit in Washington, D.C., experts shared the latest research and conservation actions being taken to address the population decline of the western monarch butterfly. The Department of the Interior announced it is awarding \$1 million to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund. It was also announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will establish a Pollinator Conservation Center, funded through annual appropriations. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Tribal Advisory Committee launches* - Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland launched the start of the first-ever DOI Tribal Advisory Committee, which is composed of Tribal representatives from each of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Regions. Their role is to have direct and consistent contact and communication with the DOI and across regions, regarding programs, funding, and intergovernmental responsibilities. Source: [Buckrail](#)
- *Fishery management transferred to Nez Perce* - On June 16, the Department of the Interior transferred fish production at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery to the Nez Perce Tribe. Previously, it was jointly managed by the Tribe and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The USFWS will continue to support the hatchery through the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office and Pacific Region Fish Health Program. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to own the facility. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *2 new solar projects in California* - On June 13, the Department of the Interior announced approval of the Arica and Victory Pass solar projects in Riverside County, California. The Bureau of Land Management has given authorization to Clearway Energy Group, LLC to construct the two facilities. Construction was expected to begin immediately. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Justice40 programs announced* - On June 24, the Department of the Interior announced the 65 programs that will be included in President Joe Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which is aimed at delivering 40% of the administration's investments focused on climate and clean energy to communities that are marginalized, overburdened, or underserved. 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

June 13 – The president signed into law H.R. 3525, to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture (Public Law 117–40).

June 16 – The president signed into law S. 66, to require the Interagency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia to develop a plan for reducing, mitigating, and controlling harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in South Florida (Public Law 117–144).

House Actions

June 14 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing on:

- H.R. 1548, to require the Secretary to establish a pilot program in two or more National Park Service regions to promote the use of native plant materials.
- H.R. 4658, to designate the Encinal Trailhead on the Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area as the "Anthony 'Tony' Beilenson Trailhead."
- H.R. 6364, to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to extend the exception to the closure of certain roads within the Recreation Area for local businesses.
- H.R. 6442, to include Tribal Governments and quasi-governmental entities as eligible entities with whom the National Park Service can enter into cooperative management agreements.
- H.R. 7496, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to install a plaque at the peak of Ram Head in the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John, United States Virgin Islands, to commemorate the slave rebellion that began on St. John in 1733.
- H.R. 7615, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into partnerships to

- develop housing.
- H.R. 7693, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the National Park Foundation's matching funding through 2030 and to increase the authorized amount to \$15 million.
- H.R. 7952, to 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.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Cartwright, Lieu, Fulcher, Plaskett, and Moore of Utah; Lena McDowall, Deputy Director, Management and Administration, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Patrice Horstman, Chair, Board of Supervisors, Coconino County, Arizona; and public witnesses.

June 15 – The Committee on Natural Resources concluded a markup on the following, among other bills:

- H.R. 6337, the "Biking on Long-Distance Trails Act." The bill would require the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to identify not fewer than 10 long-distance bike trails; identify not fewer than 10 areas in which there is an opportunity to develop or complete long-distance bike trails; and to coordinate with stakeholders on the feasibility of, and identifying any resources necessary for, completing the development of such trails.
- H.R. 7002, the "Gateway Solidarity Act." The bill would authorize the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri, to be illuminated by blue and yellow lights in support of Ukraine.
- H.R. 7075, the "Ukrainian Independence Park Act of 2022." The bill would designate two National Park Service properties within Washington, D.C. including the portion of such property that contains the Taras Shevchenko Memorial, as the Ukrainian Independence Park.

H.R. 6337 and H.R. 7025, were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 7002 was ordered reported, without amendment.

June 21 – The Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a markup on the FY 2023 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The FY 2023 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill was forwarded to the full Committee, without amendment.

June 23 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing, among other bills, on H.R. 2882, the "Great Basin National Heritage Area and Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area Extension Act." Testimony was heard from Chairman DeFazio, and Representatives Leger Fernandez, Horsford, and Stewart; Mark Lambrecht, Assistant Director, National Conservation Lands and Community Partnerships, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior; Darlene Vigil, Commissioner, District 3, Taos County, New Mexico; Karmolette O'Gilvie, Mayor, Twentynine Palms, California; Jake Garfield, Deputy Director, Public Lands Policy

Coordinating Office, Utah; and a public witness.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore Struggling swimmer passes away on beach

On June 15, a 66-year-old was swimming near Sandy Bay on Hatteras Island when they began to struggle. Bystanders were able to help the individual to shore, but they collapsed on the beach. Bystanders and Dare County Emergency Medical Services attempted resuscitation, but the attempts were unsuccessful. Investigators are calling it a "medical-related incident" rather than a drowning. Source: [Winston-Salem Journal](#)

Capitol Reef National Park Flash flood strands visitors and staff

On June 23, a heavy storm caused flash flooding in the park. As park staff attempted to evacuate visitors on the Grand Wash road and trails, they became stranded themselves. Wayne County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue and the Department of Safety were able to use aircraft to rescue and communicate with people. Only minor injuries, such as lacerations, were incurred. 7-8 cars were carried downstream and damaged or destroyed in the floods. Many roads and trails remain closed. Source: [ABC4](#)

Death Valley National Park Visitor dies while walking to get gas

On June 8, an NPS ranger noticed a lone car at the Zabriskie Point parking lot. The same ranger noticed the car still in the lot three days later. Though the owner of the car, a 67-year-old, had not been reported as missing, the visitor had been cited in the park on May 30 for off-road driving and had mentioned he was low on gas that day. A crumpled note in the car said "Out of gas." The original search was focused on Golden Canyon and Badlands Trails, but the search was hampered by temperatures of 123 degrees. On June 14, the victim's body was found, about 2.5 miles from the car, 30 feet off of Highway 190, obscured by terrain and a tree. The individual appears to have been walking toward Furnace Creek after running out of gas. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Delaware Gap National Recreation Area Missing swimmer found deceased

On June 21, a 23-year-old and two others attempted to swim across the Delaware River near Prices Landing. The individual struggled in the current and was last seen going under water just above the old bridge abutments about a half-mile upstream from the Interstate 80 toll bridge. The other two made it to the shore on the New Jersey side and were later rescued by volunteer rescue members. None of the swimmers wore personal floatation devices. A search and dive team from the NPS, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission,

and volunteers from the Portland Hook and Ladder Company, Knowlton Township Fire and Rescue Company, and Pennsylvania Search and Rescue Recovery Team conducted a multi-day search. On June 25, the individual was found deceased by a park visitor near Kittatinny Point, about 1.5 miles downstream from the last point they were seen. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#), [The Morning Call](#)

Everglades National Park

215-lb python caught

A team of trackers from the Conservancy of Southwest Florida was able to find and catch the largest Burmese python yet found in the park (and in the state of Florida), weighing 215 pounds. The snake had 122 eggs inside of her, also a record. They were able to find the snake by using a "scout snake," a male with a tracking device, looking to find a female to mate with. *The New York Times* [article](#) about the python also outlined the extent of the python issue and various methods officials are using to try to eradicate the invasive species. Source: *The New York Times*

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

Lightning causes wildfire

On June 21, a wildfire was found burning on a ridge east of the North Fork Koyukuk River, between the confluences of the Tinayguk and Glacier Rivers. As of June 22, the fire was 9.5 acres and no structures were at risk. Alaska Fire Service aircraft are monitoring the blaze. Source: [Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve](#)

Glacier National Park

Tour Divide bicyclist rescued

On June 14, a 25-year-old participant in the 2022 Tour Divide long-distance bikepacking race activated a GPS tracking device to signal for help in the North Fork area of the park. The individual had wrecked the bicycle, then got lost trying to backtrack and encountered flood waters in the Kishenehn Drainage. Due to the high water, rangers were unable to reach the location, and a Minuteman Aviation helicopter picked up the rangers and flew to the individual's location. The individual was then transported by Three Rivers Ambulance to the hospital. Other agencies involved included Flathead County dispatch, U.S. Border Patrol, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Fernie Search and Rescue out of British Columbia. Source: [NBC Montana](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

118 cases of norovirus

The park has released a report of 118 cases of gastrointestinal illness between mid-May and mid-June. Several of these tested positive for norovirus, and it is suspected that most of the cases were the same illness. Many were participants on river trips. The National Park Service's Office of Public Health, the Center for Disease Control, and Coconino

County, Arizona Health and Human Services are investigating. Source: [NBC News](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Bear put down after injuring human

Early in the morning on June 12, a family was sleeping in their tent in the Elkmont Campground, when a black bear ripped into the tent, then scratched a 3-year-old and a parent. The other parent was able to scare the bear from the campsite after several attempts. They left a note at the campground office and sought medical attention. Both individuals received superficial lacerations to the head. Park rangers closed the area, interviewed the affected party and other nearby visitors, and set traps in the area. A bear matching the physical description of the involved bear later entered the campsite, exhibiting food-conditioned behavior and lack of fear of humans before entering the trap. The bear was humanely euthanized the following day. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area Drowning

On June 18, a 15-foot tri-hull vessel at South Cove began taking on water over the bow due to high winds, including gusts up to 40 mph. Three people were aboard the vessel, and two were able to make it to shore as the boat sank. However, the third individual drowned. NPS staff worked with Mohave County Sherriffs Office, utilizing side-scan sonar to locate and recover the victim's body. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve Dog rescued

On June 14, a group of NPS staff were conducting trail maintenance on the Southside Trail when one of them heard a dog yelping in the distance. After work, the employee and two other staff returned to the area to try to locate the dog. They found it stuck on a rock inside a small crevasse. They were able to retrieve the dog safely and gave it food and water. The owner's contact information was on the dog's collar and the owner was notified and reunited with the dog. The owner said the dog had been missing for over a week. Source: [New River Gorge National Park and Preserve Facebook page](#)

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Mountain lion killed by vehicle

On June 17, a radio-collared female mountain lion known as P-54 was struck by a car near Piuma Road and Mulholland Highway. It is the 29th mountain lion killed by a vehicle in the NPS' study area since 2002. The individual's mother and one of the individual's offspring were also accidentally killed by vehicles, in 2018 and 2022, respectively. Source: [Los Angeles Daily News](#)

Zion National Park

Toxic algae still present

NPS monitoring has revealed that toxic cyanobacteria continue to exist in the North Fork of the Virgin River. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality has issued a warning advisory for the North Fork, as well as North Creek and LaVerkin Creek. Source: [St. George News](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Bandelier National Monument* - On June 24, Bandelier reopened all campgrounds, wilderness and backcountry areas, and trails, except the Alamo Boundary Trail and the area adjacent to the trail, which were affected by the Cerro Pelado Fire. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#)
- *Pecos National Historical Park* - On June 25, the Pecos Civil War Battlefield Trail reopened. Many parts of the park had been closed due to nearby wildfires. The park is now fully open. Source: [Pecos National Historical Park](#)

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- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- Issue Contributors: Teresa Ford, Bill Hafker, Tracy Swartout, Randy Turner, 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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