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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

Coalition Actions

You are invited to join your fellow Coalition members for a virtual conversation with representatives from the Nevada Conservation League, the Frontera Land Alliance, and The Wilderness Society to discuss national monument advocacy. The webinar will take place on Wednesday, November 16, at 1 p.m. EST. [Online registration](#) is required. We hope you will join us for an engaging conversation on these current national monument advocacy campaigns.

The Coalition has [opened nominations](#) for the annual Hartzog Award. The George Hartzog Award is given to the individual or individuals who demonstrate outstanding support for the mission of the National Park System and/or the National Park Service. Recipients may be current or former NPS employees or members of the general public.

Thanks to Coalition members for joining our sign-on [letter](#) in support of national monuments and the use of the Antiquities Act. The letter will be finalized and sent this week.

Coalition Executive Council Chair Mike Murray and Acting Executive Director Emily Thompson attended the [Association of National Park Rangers'](#) annual Ranger Rendezvous in Tucson, AZ to provide updates on the work of the Coalition. Mike participated in a Partners Panel that also included representatives from the National Parks Conservation Association, the Park Institute of America, and Global 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 and NPCA visit Emmett Till funeral site* - On October 21, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and staff from the National Parks Conservation Association attended a community meeting at Roberts Temple Church of God in Christ in Bronzeville, Illinois, the site of Emmett Till's funeral in 1955. The funeral for the 14-year-old was held open casket, and Emmett's wounds galvanized the Civil Rights Movement. The meeting reaffirmed support for making the location a future National Park Service site. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *4 sites added to Reconstruction network* - On October 31, the NPS announced that four sites, from South Carolina and Virginia, have been added to the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network. This network, created under the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act in 2019, provides opportunities and resources to connect Americans to Reconstruction history. Source: [Reconstruction Era National Historical Park](#)
- *Aircraft owners and pilots against ATMPs* - On October 20, the Airplane Owners and Pilots Association announced its opposition to the way Air Tour Management Plans have been executed. They argue that Congress created the National Parks Overflights Advisory Group to advise and offer recommendations for rulemaking, but they have only been briefed after the ATMP draft process, not consulted as experts during the process. AOPA, in particular, is concerned that flight limitations are inequitable for those with mobility issues and does not take into account future changes in noise pollution, nor the potential to offset ground visitation in crowded parks. Source: [Airplane Owners and Pilots Association](#)
- *USFS employee arrested for controlled burn gone bad* - On October 19, staff from the Malheur National Forest started a prescribed burn that escaped control and burned up a swath of private land. The Grant County Sheriff's Office arrested the burn boss for "reckless burning." The individual was conditionally released and legal action is pending. The U.S. Forest Service will be evaluating the operation, and will determine its level of legal support for the individual, depending on the results of their internal investigation. Source: [The Washington Post](#)
- *"Chuck Sams' Indigenous Approach to the NPS"* - *High Country News* published [an interview](#) with Chuck Sams, particularly the ways in which his Indigenous heritage has influenced his role as the Director of the National Park Service. Source: [High Country News](#)
- *"We need to invest more money in our national parks"* - *Utah Business* published [an op-ed](#) arguing for solutions to overcrowding in national parks, including encouraging and empowering people to get off the beaten path to spread visitation

out, investing in visitor infrastructure, changing pricing structures to incentivize less driving to and inside of parks, improving education of visitors, diversifying the NPS workforce, and increasing services and employees. Source: *Utah Business*

- *National park-inspired music* - *The Etownian* published [an article](#) about composer Jill Haley's national park-inspired music, which she has produced both at home and in artist-in-residency stints in Shenandoah and Acadia. The music was the centerpiece of a concert called "National Park Soundscapes," played on October 10 at Elizabethtown College and scheduled for November 12 at the York Symphony Orchestra. Source: *The Etownian*
- *New NatGeo national parks book* - *National Geographic* has put out its third edition of *Complete National Parks of the United States*. *Northeast Public Radio* published [an interview](#) with their senior editor, Allyson Johnson, about the book. Source: *Northeast Public Radio*

[Around the Parks](#)

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site, Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Flight 93 National Memorial, Friendship Hill National Historic Site, Fort Necessity National Battlefield* - *WJAC* published [an article](#) and aired a segment that highlights the five parks and 33 miles of trail within them that are "underutilized." The parks recently held an event to raise more awareness about those trails. Source: *WJAC*
- *Andersonville National Historic Site, Andrew Johnson National Historic Site* - The NPS, in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration, have added profiles for 20,574 military veterans and service members to the Veterans Legacy Memorial website. The veterans are interred at Anderson National Cemetery and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery. Profiles allow their names to be known and for people to memorialize them through memories, tributes, biographies, photos, etc. Source: [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#)
- *Arches National Park* - On November 17, the Utah Outdoor Recreation Summit is hosting a discussion about visitation patterns at the park as part of its Summit Speaker Series. The talk will include social science data collected by Utah State University researchers during the first season of timed entry at the park. The talk will occur in-person and [virtually](#). Source: *Utah Outdoor Review* (newsletter)
- *Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Natural Bridges National Monument* - Air Tour Management Plans have been finalized by the NPS and FAA for these three parks. Each of the plans grandfathers in the average number of air tours from 2017-2019 over each park: 309, 367, and 73, respectively. Source:

[National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Big Thicket National Preserve* - The park is partnering with the Texas Railroad Commission to develop a work plan to plug and remediate seven orphaned oil and gas wells in the park, utilizing funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Big Thicket National Preserve](#)
- *Blackwell School National Historic Site* - USA Today ran [an article](#) about the newest National Park Service site, its stories, and its journey to being designated. Source: USA Today
- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - The park will make backcountry permit reservations available on *recreation.gov* starting on December 1. Source: [Bryce Canyon National Park](#)
- *Chaco Culture National Historical Park* - The Western Environmental Law Center is suing the Bureau of Land Management and Department of the Interior for its approval of oil and gas leases in northwestern New Mexico in the Greater Chaco area. The BLM has stated publicly that the leases are outside an informal 10-mile buffer zone around the park, which the Department of the Interior has committed to maintaining for at least the next 20 years. Source: [Midland Reporter-Telegram/The Associated Press](#)
- *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park* - The *Chattanooga Times Free Press* published [an article](#) recounting the early history of the park's establishment in 1890, the U.S.'s first military park. Source: *Chattanooga Times Free Press*
- *Colonial National Historical Park* - *Bay Journal* published [an article](#) about the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps across the country, including four Black companies who worked at Colonial, preserving many of the artifacts at Yorktown. Source: *Bay Journal*
- *Colorado National Monument* - In collaboration with the NPS, students from Colorado Mesa University's mass communication program produced a new 20-minute film called "The Heart of Time" that highlights the park's natural and cultural resources and will show in the park visitor center. Source: [CMU Now](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - The Center for a Sustainable Coast has decided to appeal a decision from earlier in 2022 by a U.S. District Court that dismissed their lawsuit against the construction of a private dock at the park in 2015. The court ruled that the dock had already been constructed. The group is arguing that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers failed to comply with NEPA because it did not allow public comment and does not preserve the park's primitive state. Source: [The Brunswick News](#)

- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - The *Akron Beacon Journal* published [an article](#) about efforts to improve the rocky relationship between the park and the gateway community of Peninsula, including a resolution by the Peninsula Village Council recognizing itself officially as a "Cuyahoga Valley National Park Gateway Community." Ongoing concerns include private property rights, and city services that have been overtaxed by visitation. Source: *Akron Beacon Journal*
- *Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area* - The NPS has awarded a \$3 million contract to Puyenpa Services, LLC for trail and stair construction at George W. Childs Park, which was heavily damaged by winter storms in 2018 and has been closed ever since. Work will begin this year and continue through 2023, with the hope to reopen the park in 2024. Source: [Pocono Record](#)
- *Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area* - The park has completed the Waterland Wetlands Restoration project, which removed several dams and ponds, 58 acres of invasive plants, and 4,000 feet of gravel road on Van Campens Brook. Ultimately, 20 acres of wetland was restored, as well as 800 feet of Van Campens Brook, and the floodplain has regained natural function. The restoration took several years of planning in addition to two years of construction. The area will continue to be closed for six to twelve months to allow the restoration to take root. The project was a requirement for adverse environmental effects caused by the nearby Susquehanna-Roseland Transmission Line, and Public Service Electric & Gas (PSE&G) and PPL Electric Utilities (PPL) fully funded it. Source: [Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - The University of Alaska Museum of the North has received a \$500,000 grant from the NPS and Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Save America's Treasures program to preserve Bus 142. The bus was popularized by the book, *Into the Wild*, which chronicled the life of Chris McCandless. Chris passed away from starvation in the bus and it became a pilgrimage spot for many fans, at least two of whom died trying to reach its remote wilderness location in Denali. The park removed it in 2020, and the university took it. The grant will help them stabilize the bus' structure, and it will go on display in an outdoor area some time in 2024. A nonprofit group known as Friends of Bus 142 is raising money for a shelter for its display. The preservation work will be done by BR Howard and Associates and it will be done so that in-person and webcam visitors can watch. Source: [Alaska Public Media](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - *USA Today* ran [an article](#) about the park's sled dog program, including its origins in 1922 and the role and care for them today. Source: *USA Today*
- *Gateway Arch National Park* - From October 9-23, the NPS and University of Missouri-St. Louis' Gateway Writing Project co-hosted the National Writing

Project's Write Out program, a two-week writing marathon for students and the general public. Source: [UMSL Daily](#)

- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - On October 21, Bathhouse Lodge LLC, doing business as CBSK Developers and Brooklyn Bazaar, signed a 50-year lease from the NPS to preserve and restore the 1932 bathhouse in Jacob Riis Park. The \$50 million restoration will revitalize the property to include restaurants, a bar, pool, event spaces, and 28 hotel rooms, with a phased opening starting in 2023. Source: [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)
- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - On October 19, in a public virtual meeting, the Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee met to give the latest updates on the redevelopment of the fort. Stillman Development International showed floor plans for two Officers Row buildings to be converted into apartments. Some members of the public in attendance expressed access concerns. Source: [The Two River Times](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On October 28, the Bureau of Reclamation initiated "an expedited, supplemental process" to revise the current interim operating guidelines for Glen Canyon and Hoover Dams in 2023 and 2024 to address continued low-runoff conditions across the Colorado River Basin. The BOR will publish a Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to include proposed alternatives that would revise the December 2007 Record of Decision associated with the Colorado River Interim Guidelines that determine operating criteria for both reservoirs. This will add in operational flexibility in the dynamic water landscape, including the potential for reducing Glen Canyon and Hoover Dam downstream releases. The SEIS is to be published soon and public comment will be open until December 20. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - *The San Francisco Standard* published [an article](#) commemorating the 50th anniversary of the park, as well as an interview with Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy's CEO, Christine Lehnertz. Source: *The San Francisco Standard*
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - *Arizona Public Media/Cronkite News* published [an article](#) about the park's overhaul and upgrade of the Trans-Canyon Waterline, which is underway and expected to be complete by 2027. The original pipeline was completed in 1970 and has outlived its projected lifespan by 20 years. Source: *Arizona Public Media/Cronkite News*
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Balsam Mountain Campground and Heintooga Picnic Area Water and Wastewater Environmental Assessment, including selection of the preferred Alternative 2. The water and wastewater systems will be replaced when

the area is seasonally closed. Source: [Cherokee One Feather](#)

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On October 21, the National Parks Conservation Association awarded Superintendent Cassius Cash the 2021 Stephen Tyng Mather Award for his work creating the Smokies Hikes for Healing program. The program was designed in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and many other Black Americans. It brings people of different life experiences together to have facilitated conversations about race and discrimination and come away with tools, understanding, and healing. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park* - The park has opened up the Commercial Use Authorization application process for astronomy and hiking tours. They will be valid for 2023-24. Applications are due by November 18. Source: [Maui News](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - On October 22, the park hosted its first "Facelift" event, in collaboration with the Yosemite Climbing Association, Friends of Joshua Tree, and Cliffhanger Guides. The event aims to clean garbage and graffiti across the park with help from volunteers, including many in the rock climbing community. The Yosemite Climbing Association has held an annual event by the same name for many years. Source: [USC Annenberg Media](#)
- *Kettle Creek Battlefield (Affiliated Area)* - On October 20, the site became an affiliated area of the National Park Service. A ribbon cutting was held, including its new sign with an NPS arrowhead logo. It is one of the most significant Revolutionary War sites in the South. Source: [WJBF](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On October 27, the Smithsonian's Board of Regents announced that it has selected two optimal locations for its new congressionally-authorized museums, the National Museum of the American Latino and the American Women's History Museum. Both sites are located on NPS land adjacent to the Washington Monument. The Smithsonian must now get approval from Congress for the locations, which it is required by Congress to do before the end of 2022. Source: [The Washington Post](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - The *BBC* published [an article](#) highlighting the ways in which U.S. coal mining history has often left out the Black Appalachian experience. In the article, the park's African American Heritage Auto Tour is highlighted as an effort to better tell those stories. Source: *British Broadcasting Corporation*
- *President's Park (White House)* - *The Associated Press* published [a profile piece](#) about Dale Haney, the chief White House groundskeeper who has worked at the park for 50 years and through 10 presidencies. President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden surprised Dale by planting an elm tree in his honor on the grounds.

Source: *Spectrum News 1/The Associated Press*

- *Redwood National and State Parks* - On October 26, Superintendent Steve Mietz was honored with the NPS Director's Award as Superintendent of the Year for Natural Resource Stewardship. He was recognized for working with park partners and Tribes in watershed conservation and the California condor restoration program, as well as key roles in preserving old growth redwoods and improved habitat for salmon. Source: [Redwood National and State Parks](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* - U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Ben Cardin (D-MD), and U.S. Representatives Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Jamie Raskin (D-MD) have written to NPS Director Chuck Sams, asking for the removal of the name Francis Griffith Newlands from Chevy Chase Circle. Newlands was a U.S. Senator who argued for the restriction of voting rights for Black Americans and was involved with redlining policies in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Source: [U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - The park is making improvements to the Fall River Entrance. Construction started on October 31 and is expected to be completed by late June. The project will widen the road, add new and better fee kiosks and a new office, construct a fast pass lane, install a new entrance sign with a parking area, improve wastewater and water systems, and upgrade a culvert. A single lane of the entrance will remain open during construction and visitors should expect extended wait times. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - A scientific article published in *Current Biology* found that mountain lions, in the aftermath of the Woolsey Fire in the Santa Monica Mountains, were much more likely to avoid vegetation-sparse burn areas in search of new territories, putting them at higher risk of car accidents and in conflict with other lions' territories. Source: [High Country News](#)
- *Shenandoah National Park* - The park has announced a new real-time visitor alert system with two channels - emergency notifications and campground availability. Subscribers may opt in and out at any time and no subscriber information is retained. Source: [Culpeper Star Exponent](#)
- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - WildEarth Guardians, Western Watersheds Project, and Caldera Action filed a 60-day notice for the intention to sue the NPS for allowing stray cows to wander into the park due to its failure to repair a fence, to remove the cows, and to hold ranchers responsible for transgressions. The lawsuit contends that there are two federally endangered and one threatened species that are at risk due to the NPS' negligence. A spokesperson for the park has stated publicly that the NPS has been working to address the problem, which has been difficult due to a lack of available staff to fix fences and corral stray cattle, as well as jurisdictional difficulties with the U.S. Forest Service. Source: [Santa Fe New](#)

Mexican

- *Wind Cave National Park* - The park will be renovating Route 5 this winter, including four inches of new road base, replacement of three culverts, and the repair of timbers on the Highland Creek bridge. The road closed on October 26 and the work is expected to be complete by the end of February. Source: [Wind Cave National Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - The second season of the *Hulu* show "Wild Crime" focuses on a long-time unsolved homicide in the park. It was released October 24-26 and all four episodes are now available on the network. Source: [ABC News](#), [Hulu](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - On October 28, Sam Baker, 8, became the youngest individual to climb El Capitan. He completed the climb in four days with his father. Source: [KKTU](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Devils Tower National Monument* - Doug Crossen was selected as the new superintendent. Doug has over 30 years of NPS experience, most recently as the acting superintendent at Jewel Cave National Monument. He began his new role on October 11. Source: [Devils Tower National Monument](#)
- *Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site* - The National Archives and Records Administration has announced the selection of William A. Harris as the new director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum (which works closely with the NPS on the same site). Source: [National Archives](#)
- *Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve* - Heather Yates has been selected as the new chief ranger. Heather has 24 years of NPS experience, most recently as the chief ranger at Petrified Forest National Park. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)
- The Park Institute of America hired its first executive director, Tyler Sammis. The organization was established in collaboration with the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks and the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University and is now a distinct organization with its own mission. Source: [Park Institute of America](#)

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

- James E. Anderson, 72, passed away on October 23. In his retirement, he worked at Yellowstone National Park. Source: [Savannah Morning News](#)
- Gerald "Jerry" L. Bateson, Jr. passed away on October 9. He was raised in Yellowstone National Park and went on to co-write a book with his wife called *Growing Up in Yellowstone*. Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)
- Karl Cordova, 52, passed away on October 18. Karl was serving as the superintendent of Pecos National Historical Park when he passed away. He also worked at Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, and Casa Grande. Source: Phil Selleck, [Legacy/Santa Fe New Mexican](#)
- Judith Ann Nordlund Durr, 76, passed away on October 21. She worked for the NPS in Yosemite and for the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, including as manager of the Wawona Hotel. Source: [Mariposa Gazette](#)

In the News

- Jeff Judd, a retired NPS park ranger, gave an hour-long presentation on October 18 at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park about his time working in the park. The presentation was livestreamed by EpicLava on Facebook and the recording is still available there to watch. Source: [EpicLava Facebook page](#), Dwayne Collier

Open for Comment

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

- *Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument* - Public comment is open on a proposed General Management Plan for the park. [Comments](#) are open until November 21. Source: [Alabama Newsletter](#)
- *Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on proposed updates and expansion to the Cedar Creek Battlefield and Belle Grove Plantation National Historic Landmark district. [Comments](#) are open until November 30. Source: [Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open on the park's Fire Management Plan. [Comments](#) are open until November 5. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a revised Development Concept Plan for White's Ferry. [Comments](#) are open until November 12. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on a visitor use management plan. [Comments](#) are open until November 30. Source:

[Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)

- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve* - The Bureau of Land Management opened public comment on September 20 for a proposed Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road, which would cross over 200 miles of lands, including the Western (Kobuk River) Unit of the Gates of the Arctic. [Comments](#) are open until November 4. Source: [Bureau of Land Management](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to remove an earthen dam and restore native habitat in lower Tennessee Valley to improve visitor safety and access. [Comments](#) are open until November 17. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
- *Governors Island National Monument, Statue of Liberty National Monument* - The NPS and the Federal Aviation Administration have opened public comment on a proposed commercial air tour management voluntary agreement for the two parks. [Comments](#) are open until November 21. Source: [Governors Island National Monument](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has opened public comment on a significant amendment to an Aquifer Protection Permit for the Phantom Ranch Water Reclamation Facility. Comments may be made by email or mail until November 12. Source: [Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to increase passenger and freight fees on the NPS ferry to and from the park on the *Ranger III*. [Comments](#) are open until November 25. Source: [Isle Royale National Park](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - Public comment is now open on a wilderness stewardship plan. [Comments](#) are open until November 21. Source: [Keweenaw Report](#)
- *Kalaupapa National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a replacement and upgrade of nine miles of fencing at the park that prevents damage from invasive, non-native animals. [Comments](#) are open until November 10. Source: [Kalaupapa National Historical Park](#)
- *Lincoln Home National Historic Site* - The NPS has announced a Request for Expressions of Interest for creative use of the Henson Robinson House for the future. [Proposals](#) are open until November 3. Source: [Lincoln Home National Historic Site](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - Public comment is now open on the John Coffee Memorial Bridge Replacement or Rehabilitation project. [Comments](#) are open until

November 28. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)

- *National Capital Parks - East* - Public comment is now open on design ideas for a 1.25-acre park known as Parkland, located in Congress Heights. [Comments](#) are open until November 20. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *Pu'uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a plan to remove maintenance facilities at the park. The facility was intended to be temporary and are poorly located, both due to weathering and the presence of cultural resources. The proposal would remove the facility, restore the site, and assign a site for new facilities. [Comments](#) are open until November 27. Source: [Big Island Video News](#)
- *San Juan National Historic Site* - Public comment is now open on a Free-Ranging Cat Management Plan to humanely remove feral cats from the site. [Comments](#) are due November 22. Source: [San Juan National Historic Site](#)
- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a infrastructure improvements in the Valle Grande District, including new parking areas, electric vehicle charging stations, accessibility modifications, new traffic patterns, trailhead upgrades, and interpretive walking trails. [Comments](#) are open until November 9. Source: [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - Public comment is now open on a big wall climbing permitting system. [Comments](#) are open until November 13. Source: [Gear Junkie](#), [Yosemite National Park](#)
- *Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail* - The U.S. Forest Service has opened public comment on its trail-wide comprehensive plan for the Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail, designated by Congress in 2009. The trail goes through seven national forests, as well as Glacier, North Cascades, and Olympic National Parks. [Comments](#) have been extended until November 14. Source: [Lynden Tribune](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *New DOI appointees* - The Department of the Interior has added four appointees to its staff, including Speechwriter Michelle Gullett, Senior Advisor to the Bureau of Reclamation Roque Sánchez, Deputy Director to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Siva Sundaresan, and Special Assistant to the Office of Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management Jayne Wixtead. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New film about Stewart Udall* - On October 22, a new film, "Stewart Udall and the Politics of Beauty," premiered at the Santa Fe International Film Festival. Stewart was the former Secretary of the Interior. It will be screened at other venues around New Mexico. *KUNM* did [an interview](#) with the filmmaker. Source: *KUNM*

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 and House Actions

The Senate and the House conducted no formal business the past two weeks, as they are in recess until after the November elections.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Badlands National Park

Airplane crash

On October 21, an aircraft made a forced landing due to "fuel exhaustion" in the area of Sheep Mountain Table. During an aerial search, the plane and pilot were located in a deep ravine. Rescuers observed the pilot shining a light toward the rescuers, and rescuers shined lights back to acknowledge they had seen the pilot. That evening, rescuers utilized rope rescue techniques to descend 230 feet into the ravine to rescue the individual, who did not sustain any injuries. Source: [KEVN/KOTA](#)

Buffalo National River

Hiker found after 4 day search

On October 27, a 67-year-old individual failed to return from a planned hike on the Hemmed-in-Hollow Trail. The individual was reported missing to the Newton County Sherriff's Office the following night. The Sherriff's Office began a search that evening, and the search over the next few days included support from the NPS, Mennonite Disaster Services, and Arkansas Alliance of Bloodhound Search Specialists, BUFFSAR volunteers, Arkansas State Police, Compton Volunteer Fire Department, County Line Baptist Church, Marion County Search and Rescue, and North Arkansas Regional Medical Center. Search efforts were postponed temporarily on October 29 due to rainy conditions. On November 1, the individual was found near Horseshoe Bend, "in good spirits." Rescue personnel assisted the individual out. Source: [Buffalo National River \(10/29, 11/1\)](#), [KNWA](#), [KATV](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Visitor to be charged for golfing off canyon

On October 26, an individual, who identifies as an influencer, posted a video on *TikTok* of themselves hitting a golfball and then throwing the golf club into the canyon near Mather Point. Members of the public reported the video, and on October 27, law enforcement rangers were able to identify, locate, and contact the individual. Charges and a court

appearance are pending. The park posted the incident on their social media account with the following sentence: "Do we really need to say, 'don't hit golf balls into the Grand Canyon?'" Source: [USA Today/Golfweek](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Fire at El Tovar

On October 26, an electrical fire was reported at the El Tovar Hotel. Firefighters from the NPS, Xanterra Fire and Security, and Tusayan Fire Department responded. They found a circuit breaker in the basement was causing smoke, but not flames. The scene was secured in 30 minutes with no reported injuries. El Tovar Hotel, Kachina Lodge, and Colter Hall were evacuated out of an abundance of caution and due to the loss of electrical service. As of October 27, there was no announced date of reopening for dining or overnight services at El Tovar. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Trail closed due to bears

On October 26, the park closed the Gatlinburg Trail between Gatlinburg and the Sugarlands Visitor Center, as well as the Twin Creeks Trail between Gatlinburg and Twin Creeks Science and Education Center due to a large concentration of bears feeding on acorns to build up winter fat reserves. Source: [WYFF](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Bear killed by car

On October 21, a 220-pound female black bear was hit and killed by a vehicle on the Gatlinburg Bypass. The bear did not have any ear tags and was not suspected to be a bear with a history of habituation. Source: [WVLT](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Earthquakes

On October 28, the Hawai'i County Civil Defense Agency issued a volcano advisory alert after 36 small earthquakes were detected near Mauna Loa over 24 hours. The agency said that there are "no signs of an imminent eruption at this time" and that the earthquakes are likely from a renewed input of magma two to five miles beneath the volcano's summit. Elevated seismic activity has been noted since mid-June. The summit has been closed to all backcountry hikers since mid-September and continues to be closed. The main section of the park remains open. Source: [ABC News 12](#)

Investigative Services Branch

Special agent sentenced for falsification

On October 19, a 46-year-old former Special Agent assigned to the Lake Mead Resident

Office of the National Park Service was sentenced for submitting false information about work experience and education on the job application for the position. The individual received one year of probation, a \$500 fine, and a restriction barring them from future employment as a federal law enforcement officer. The case was investigated by the Department of the Interior's Office of the Inspector General and the National Park Service's Office of Professional Responsibility. Source: [The U.S. Attorney's Office: District of Nevada](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area More human remains found

On October 17, a concession dive operator found a human bone while diving in the Callville Bay Area. They reported it, and the following day, an NPS dive team conducted a full search and confirmed finding human skeletal remains. No foul play is suspected at this point. The Clark County Coroner's Office has been contacted and will confirm the identity of the deceased individual. It is the sixth set of remains found in the lake since May 1. Source: [News4](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area Brain-eating amoeba causes death

On October 19, the Southern Nevada Health District confirmed the death of a juvenile individual from an infection of *Naegleria fowleri*, also known as brain-eating amoeba. The individual may have been exposed to the organism the weekend of September 30 in the Kingman Wash area of the park. It is the first confirmed fatality caused by the organism from possible exposure at the park. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Acadia National Park* - On October 20, a 35-year-old individual entered a not guilty plea in Hancock County Superior Court in connection with a hit-and-run death of the individual's partner outside of the Schoodic Education and Research Center early in the morning on June 19, 2022. Source: [News Center Maine](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - On October 31, a 29-year-old was sentenced to 23 and a half years in federal prison after pleading guilty to attempted second degree murder of a federal officer and brandishing a firearm for an incident that occurred on December 8, 2021. The individual was driving a car when they were pulled over for speeding outside the park. The officer learned the car was stolen during the interaction and the individual was asked to get out of the car. Instead, they drove the car away, toward the park. The park was notified to be on the look out, and when the car arrived at the park's Fall River entrance, a ranger recognized the vehicle and began following them with emergency lights on. The driver attempted to evade the ranger by driving on the side of the road, eventually hitting several boulders and coming to a stop. The ranger approached and ordered the individuals

inside to put their hands in the air. The driver began shooting at the ranger with a semiautomatic handgun, hitting the ranger in the chest multiple times. The ranger's ballistic vest prevented serious injury and the ranger returned fire. The driver eventually surrendered and was arrested. Source: [The U.S. Attorney's Office: District of Colorado](#), Larry Frederick

- *Yellowstone National Park* - The North Entrance and the road between North Entrance and Mammoth Hot Springs will open to regular traffic on November 1, the first time since the historic flooding in June 2022. The route will be on the newly-modernized historic Old Gardiner Road. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - On October 28, a 32-year-old was sentenced to 12 years and four months in prison for several charges related to a sexual assault in April 2020. The individual, an employee of the concessioner, entered a cabin in employee housing, attacking someone who was asleep. During the struggle, the perpetrator attempted to penetrate the victim. The victim was able to call for help and nearby neighbors responded and removed the attacker. The individual was found guilty after a three-day trial in April 2022. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office: Eastern District of California](#)

Acknowledgments

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- Issue Contributors: Dwayne Collier, Larry Frederick, 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."

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