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The Coalition Report

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Editor Note: You might have noticed this Coalition Report is a couple days early. Our editor is spending some time in the backcountry of Canyonlands National Park this week, celebrating her 40th revolution around the sun. Look for the next Report on our regular schedule on Wednesday, October 5. Thanks for your understanding.

Coalition Actions

The Coalition issued [a press release](#) commending Interior Secretary Deb Haaland's visit to Avi Kwa Ame and encouraging her to support its designation as a national monument.

We joined with 34 other organizations on [a letter](#) about the Federal Railroad Administration's re-evaluation of the Brightline West High-Speed Rail Project, supporting the inclusion of three wildlife overpasses.

The Coalition also signed on to a [letter](#) to President Joe Biden, urging him to use the Antiquities Act to establish the Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument in Colorado.

We also joined a [letter](#) to the Department of the Interior requesting the Final Environmental Impact Statement modify its preferred alternative to the James River Transmission line to include decommissioning and removing the existing transmission line within 20 years. If this alternative is rejected, the letter requests the Department file a predecisional referral with the Council on Environmental Quality.

Coalition Chair Mike Murray co-authored an [op-ed](#) in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*

advocating for reforms to the leasing system of public lands for oil and gas exploration. Additionally, the op-ed supports efforts to enhance protections for Chaco Canyon National Historical Park.

Mike Murray also [spoke](#) with *National Parks Traveler* on increased efforts of the Department of the Interior to increase Tribal involvement with stewardship of federal lands.

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.

- *National Public Lands Day* - This Saturday, September 24, is National Public Lands Day. Many NPS units are hosting events. Source: Many
- *Secretary Order formalizes Tribal involvement in NPS management* - On September 12, NPS Director Chuck Sams signed [Policy Memorandum 22-03](#), which provides NPS guidance to how the agency should implement Secretary's Order No. 3403, the Joint Secretarial Order on Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters. The guidance includes incorporating Indigenous knowledge and expertise into decision-making, co-management opportunities, funding agreements, and access to and protection of sacred sites. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)
- *10,245 Indigenous remains at U of Alabama* - A Notice of Inventory Completion published by the NPS in the Federal Register on August 30 recorded 10,245 sets of Native American human remains and 1,500 burial items stored by the University of Alabama. This is the largest amount ever recorded in a Notice. The remains and objects were primarily from Moundville, a site owned by the university. The Muscogee Nation, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation, Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Seminole Tribe of Florida have been trying to secure the return of the remains for over a decade, and the university has maintained that it cannot establish a cultural link between the Tribes and those remains and objects. The Tribes filed a 117-page joint petition to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Review Committee, who found "overwhelming evidence" of their affiliation in November 2021. Filing this Notice is the first step in repatriating those remains and objects. Source: [Native News Online](#)
- *DOI announces final removal of the name "Sq****"* - On September 8, the Department of the Interior announced that the Board on Geographic Names voted on the final replacement names for almost 650 features on federal land that included the word, "Sq***." The replacement names are effective immediately. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *\$24.25 million in preservation grants* - On September 9, the NPS, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services, announced \$24.25 million in Save America's Treasures grants to fund 80 projects in 32 states and the District of Columbia. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *\$2.75 million for 9/11 memorial* - On September 15, the NPS awarded \$2.75 million in funding from the 9/11 Memorial Act grant program to the National September 11 Memorial and Memorial Plaza (a privately-operated memorial). Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *\$1.7 million to partner orgs* - On September 12, the National Park Foundation announced \$1.7 million in funding to support 41 park partner organizations across the country through its Strong Parks, Strong Communities program. Source: [Cision PR Newswire/National Park Foundation](#)
- *"The most clever national park social media accounts"* - *Outside* ran [an article](#) giving their favorite NPS social media accounts, including the overall NPS account, Zion, Katmai, Bryce Canyon, and Redwood National Parks. Source: *Outside*
- *"Only park rangers can ace this U.S. national park trivia quiz"* - This was the headline for [a quiz](#) published to the *Matador Network*, a travel media site, on September 13. Good luck! Source: *Matador Network*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial* - *The Washington Post* published [an op-ed](#) in support of a joint resolution recently introduced in Congress to rename the site to "Arlington House National Historic Site" in honor of the diverse and complex stories encapsulated by the site's history. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - On September 15, the park began a replacement and raising of the bulkhead at Old Ferry Landing, as well as repairs to boardwalks and the parking area. The area will remain closed throughout construction, which is expected to be complete by the end of the year. The project was funded by park entrance and pass fees. Source: [Assateague Island National Seashore](#)
- *Badlands National Park* - On September 12, the Federal Highway Administration began repair work on the southbound lane of Cedar Pass, which experienced "significant failure." The road will remain open with traffic controls, and the work is expected to be complete in early November. Source: [Badlands National Park](#)
- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - The park has completed the

repair and rehabilitation of Yahoo Falls Picnic Area, including fresh gravel pads, new picnic tables and cooking grills, resurfaced trails, repaired parking, and repairs and paint for the pavilion. Source: [Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area](#)

- *Biscayne National Park* - The Wilderness Society published [a 30-second animated film](#) about Sir Lancelot Jones' role in establishing the park. The film spotlight promotes the organization's educational resource, the *Public Lands Curriculum*, which seeks to tell more authentic and complete stories about public lands. Source: The Wilderness Society
- *Boston National Historical Park* - On September 14, the park announced the completion of a multi-year, \$2 million infrastructure improvement project at Bunker Hill Monument, Lodge, and surrounding grounds. The Lodge will reopen on October 7. Source: [Boston National Historical Park](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - The park is enacting renovations to its curatorial storage space so that they can grow the museum collection. The museum closed on September 12 and will remain closed until construction is complete (no timeline listed). Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)
- *Denali National Park* - Three individuals received the Department of the Interior's Citizen's Award for Bravery for their work helping to save an individual who fell into a crevasse on the West Buttress of Denali in June 2017. Source: [Durango Herald](#)
- *Denali National Park, Glacier Bay National Park, Kenai Fjords National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park* - *Alaska Beacon* published [an article](#) about the effects of receding glaciers on visitation patterns and challenges and opportunities for managing resources around them. Source: *Alaska Beacon*
- *Federal Lands to Parks Program* - On September 7, the Marina City Council (CA) approved a concessionaire agreement with Chaparral County Corporation of Woodside to provide recreation facilities and programs to the public at Marina Equestrian Center Park, a property conveyed by quitclaim deed under the Federal Lands to Parks Program in 1998. The decision comes after a July 2022 notification from the NPS that the land was in non-compliance under the agreement of the program due to the long-term boarding of horses by the current concession, Marina Equestrian Association. Long-term boarding was deemed to not be of public use or meeting the public recreation purpose of the conveyance. The NPS offered several solutions, with the city council ultimately deciding to end the current month-to-month lease by Marina Equestrian Association and award it to Chaparral County Corporation. Source: [Monterey Herald](#)
- *Flight 93 National Memorial* - On September 11, the 21st anniversary of the 2000 terrorist attacks on U.S. flights, First Lady Jill Biden attended and spoke at the Service of Remembrance. Source: [Centre Daily Times](#)

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - The park is working to remove invasive smallmouth bass and green sunfish from the Colorado River below the Glen Canyon Dam. Both fish are non-native and were recently found breeding in areas they had not been observed before, and are considered a threat to the endangered humpback chub. From September 17-18, the park began utilizing rotenone, a fish piscicide. Depending on effectiveness, the park may do a second treatment within two months. There will be a closure along the banks around river mile 12 during that time, though the river will remain open. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - 58 bison were removed from the Kaibab Plateau adjacent to the North Rim and given to the InterTribal Buffalo Council for transport to Tribes in Oklahoma and South Dakota. The bison were examined by a veterinarian to ensure they were healthy enough to make the interstate trailer trip. The park seeks to keep the regional herd to 200 individuals to protect park resources. Source: [AZCentral](#)
- *Great Sand Dunes National Park* - The park is about to begin remodeling its visitor center, including renovation to the public restrooms, lobby, and interior exhibit space. The park will begin operating a temporary visitor center trailer on September 29. The project is being funded by visitor fees. Source: [Great Sand Dunes National Park](#)
- *Guadalupe Mountains National Park* - On September 30, the park will start utilizing [recreation.gov](#) for visitors to reserve the park's ten hike-in wilderness campgrounds. Source: [Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The park has confirmed that the Hemenway Harbor boat launch ramp will remain open and functional through Spring 2023 with a new extension to accommodate continued dropping lake levels. The boat launch is the only approved and NPS-maintained launch on the lake currently due to the low lake levels. Source: [8NewsNow](#)
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - An additional six miles of cave have been mapped and documented by the Cave Research Foundation, bringing the total length of the cave to 426 miles. The announcement comes just as the park celebrates the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the Flint-Ridge-Mammoth Cave connection, which earned the cave the title of longest cave in the world. Source: [Mammoth Cave National Park](#)
- *Natchez National Historical Park* - The National Parks Conservation Association published [a piece](#) about Forks of the Road, the site of the United States' largest slave market, and its role in telling important and difficult stories about American history. Source: National Parks Conservation Association

- *Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park* - On September 17, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Shannon Estenoz visited the park for its 30th annual Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration. Source: [Indian Gaming](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On September 14, the park completed a three-month improvement project at Ruby Beach. The project included improvements to accessibility, roads, pedestrian pathways, bathrooms, and drainage systems, as well as new signs and bike racks. The work was contracted to 2Grade Excavation and Development, LLC of Port Angeles, Washington. Ruby Beach was closed throughout the project and has now reopened. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program* - The *Gasconade County Republican* published [an article](#) about the capacity building assistance that the NPS and Missouri State Parks were able to give to plan new trailheads and trail surfacing on the Rock Island Trail. Source: *Gasconade County Republican*
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - On September 12, the park celebrated the donation of a 40-acre parcel to the park. Former astronaut Vance Brand donated the land to the Rocky Mountain Conservancy in 2019, and in January 2021, Congress authorized the inclusion of the parcel in the park. The property is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the park near three popular trails: Estes Cone, Storm Pass, and Eugenia Mine Trails. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - *AppleTV+* has published a podcast series called "Missed Fortune," about the hunt for Forrest Fenn's treasure, which was searched for for over a decade, and found hidden in Yellowstone. Source: [Pod Sauce](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail* - Jeri DeYoung was selected as the new superintendent. Jeri has 32 years of federal public service, most recently as the manager of cultural and natural resources, planning, compliance, and lands programs for Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. She began her new role on September 11. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- Kenneth Shigeo Kitajima, 91, passed away on September 5. Kenneth volunteered supporting the efforts to get Amache National Historic Site established as a part of

the National Park System (which took place in March 2022). Source:

[Legacy/Mercury News](#)

- Ronald "Ron" D. Shook, 77, passed away on September 8. Ron worked for over 20 years at Steamtown National Historic Site, retiring in 2019. Source: [The Citizens' Voice](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Badlands National Park* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration are seeking public comments on an air tour management plan. [Comments](#) are open until October 6. Source: [Badlands National Park](#)
- *Big Cypress National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on an updated Backcountry Access Plan and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. [Comments](#) are open until September 26. Source: [Big Cypress National Preserve](#)
- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve* - The Bureau of Land Management will open 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](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The NPS has issued a Request for Expression of Interest for creative ideas for re-envisioning the use of facilities adjacent to the Washington Sailing Marina on Daingerfield Island. The facility is 13,662 square feet and includes seating and a snack bar. Concept ideas may be [submitted](#) until September 19. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to increase overnight camping fees at Brooks Campground, starting in 2023. [Comments](#) are open until September 30. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - Public comment is now open on a Design Concept Plan for the Manzanita Lake Area, including improvements to visitor facilities and rehabilitation of historic structures amidst growing visitation. [Comments](#) are open until September 26. Source: [Lassen Volcanic National Park](#)
- *Lincoln Home National Historic Site* - The NPS has announced a Request for Expressions of Interest for creative use of the Henson Robinson House for the future. Site visits will run through September 30 and [proposals](#) are open until November 3. Source: [Lincoln Home National Historic Site](#)

- *Mount Rushmore National Memorial* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration are seeking public comments on an air tour management plan. [Comments](#) are open until October 6. Source: [Mount Rushmore National Memorial](#)
- *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a Development Concept Plan for the Kingsley Plantation site. [Comments](#) are open until October 14. Source: [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open on an environmental assessment for a proposed land exchange between the park and the U.S. Virgin Islands government on St. John Island. The swap would trade the NPS-owned Catherineberg Estate for the territory-owned Whistling Cay in order to allow the local community an opportunity to construct the first public K-12 school on St. John. [Comments](#) are open until September 22. Source: [St. Thomas Source](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open on a Draft Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis Report Addendum for the Cannel Bay Resort site at the park. The addendum supplements the report completed in 2021 to address data gaps. [Comments](#) are open until October 12. Source: [Virgin Islands National Park](#)
- *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](#)
- *President Street Station (Special Resource Study)* - The NPS is beginning a special resource study about President Street Station in Baltimore, which is associated with the history of the American railroad, Frederick Douglass' escape from slavery, a failed assassination attempt on President Lincoln, and the 1861 Baltimore Riot. It will evaluate its eligibility to be included in the National Park System. [Comments](#) are open until September 30. Source: [National Park Service Region 1](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Wildland fire commission meets for first time* - On September 14, members of the Department of the Interior's first Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission met for the first time, to begin crafting federal policy recommendations and strategies for preventing, managing, suppressing, and recovering from wildfires. Future meeting will take place monthly. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Secretary Haaland visits Avi Kwa Ame* - On September 7, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, U.S. Representative Susie Lee (D-NV), Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Laura Daniel-Davis, and Bureau of Land Management Nevada State Director Jon Raby met with members of the Fort Mojave Tribal Council to tour the area known as Avi Kwa Ame, or Spirit Mountain, which is considered the place of origin for the ten Yuman-speaking Tribes. Source:

Department of the Interior

- *Offshore wind efforts* - On September 15, the Department of the Interior announced efforts at developing new floating offshore wind platforms, including a goal of deploying 30 gigawatts by 2030. 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.

House Actions

Sept. 14 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "The Role of Public Relations Firms in Preventing Action on Climate Change." Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

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

- H.R. 8108, the "Advancing Tribal Parity on Public Land Act";
- H.R. 8109, the "Tribal Cultural Areas Protection Act"; and
- H.R. 8719, the "Great Bend of the Gila Conservation Act".

Testimony was heard from Chair Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ); Brian Newland, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

Sept. 14 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States held a hearing on several bills including:

- H.R. 7581, the "Yurok Lands Act of 2022." This bill would address some lands for the Yurok tribe within the boundary of Redwood National Park.
- H.R. 8286, to take certain federal land in the state of Washington into trust for the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. This bill would transfer 1,081 acres of Olympic National Park to be held in trust for the Tribe.

Testimony was heard from Chair Derek Kilmer (D-WA), and Representatives Jesus Garcia (D-IL), Jared Huffman (D-CA), Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), and Newhouse (R-WA); Wizipan Garriott, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

Sept. 15 – The House passed H.R. 302, to impose limits on excepting competitive service positions from the competitive service, by a vote of 225 yeas to 204 nays. This bill would prohibit the implementation of something similar to the so-called Schedule F that the President Donald Trump administration tried to establish at the end of its term, whereby a number of career positions would have been placed within the new Schedule F and would have removed a number of current civil service protections for individuals in those

positions.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Acadia National Park

High surf drags visitor into ocean

On September 10, a 20-year-old was sitting on a rocky ledge near Thunder Hole when a large wave hit and dragged the individual into the water. The waves had been particularly large due to Hurricane Earl. The Coast Guard was notified immediately, and they were able to locate the individual and rescue them from the water. The individual was transported to Bar Harbor to be checked by emergency medical staff, and was found to be uninjured in the incident. Source: [Bangor Daily News](#)

Bryce Canyon National Park

Visitor missing

An 80-year-old was reported missing while visiting the park on September 1. The individual was last seen exiting a shuttle bus at Bryce Point and no one knows what the individual's plans were. The search is ongoing and the park is looking for any information anyone might have. Source: [St. George News](#)

Chattahoochee National Recreation Area

Rising car break-ins

The park has begun using license plate reading cameras to crack down on car break-ins. The park has had 63 reported cases of theft this year, compared to 13 in 2021 and 28 in 2020. NPS staff think the number may be higher because some do not report, while others report the incident to local authorities, especially if they don't notice that anything has been stolen. Four arrests related to car break-ins have already been made. Source: [Sandy Springs Police](#)

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

Conflict between cyclist and construction crew

On July 12, a 69-year-old rode a bicycle around posted and signed barricades into a construction zone on Glenn-Kelly Road. Construction workers wearing reflective vests attempted to stop the suspect by yelling and signaling. The cyclist allegedly rode into one of the workers, causing the bike to fall over. The cyclist then stood up and peppers sprayed the construction worker's face and lunged at them with a stun gun. Park rangers arrived on scene and collected the two weapons, reviewed cell phone video, and interviewed three witnesses. The individual was charged with simple battery and booked into the Catoosa County Jail. There have been several federal and state citations for bicycling in construction zones during park construction this summer. Source:

[Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park](#)

Colorado National Monument

Vehicle accident

On September 12, a vehicle left Rim Rock Drive near Coke Ovens Overlook. Two 28-year-old individuals were in the vehicle. Staff from the NPS, Colorado State Patrol, Lower Valley Fire Department, Mesa County Sheriff's Office, Mesa County Sheriff's Technical Rescue Team, CareFlight, and the Mesa County Coroner responded. One was found deceased at the scene, and the other was transported to St. Mary's Hospital. The cause of the accident is under investigation. Source: [Colorado National Monument](#)

Curecanti National Recreation Area

Toxic algae

On September 16, the park announced that it has found the presence of cyanotoxins in the Iola Basin section of Blue Mesa Reservoir, exceeding safe exposure levels. The area is now closed to full-body contact, and visitors are advised to use caution and avoid unnecessary exposure if fishing or boating in the lake, including keeping dogs away from the water. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)

Death Valley National Park

More flooding

On September 13, the park experienced another round of storms that impacted roads across the park. This follows the 1,000-year flood event of August 2022 that had already damaged many of the park roads. As of September 14, the only road open in the park was a section of California Highway 190 from the east to Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes. The park is concentrating road clearing efforts on the Badwater Road next, which is estimated to open by September 24. Work on the Beatty Cutoff road by a contractor will begin on September 23 and is expected to be open by mid-October, with some sections left unpaved. There are no estimated dates for other roads at this point. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Delaware Gap National Recreation Area

Beaches closed due to bacteria

On September 9, the park announced closures to swimming beaches along the Delaware River due to high bacteria levels in the water. Boating, picnicking, and hiking are still open in the park. Source: [Pocono Record](#)

Fort Dupont Park

NPS found guilty of civil rights violation

A Black employee was hired as a temporary maintenance worker at the park in 2019 for

a one-year term with the possibility of a contract renewal for a second year. That year, the agency informed the individual and others that a reorganization would result in some employees being reassigned to other facilities. The individual was unhappy about their reassignment because they felt Fort Dupont offered the better career prospects due to visibility with management. The individual expressed a concern that white employees were being promoted while Black employees were not. The NPS disciplined the individual for the comment, but rescinded that action after the Union filed a grievance. The NPS decided not to renew the individual's contract. An Arbitrator found that the NPS used the individual's comments about race, which are a protected activity, in its determination about the renewal, essentially as a retaliatory motive. The Arbitrator concluded that the individual was owed compensation for the non-renewed year of wages, which the NPS filed exceptions to in February 2022. On September 7, 2022, the Federal Labor Relations Authority affirmed this ruling, denying the exceptions and mandating the backpay to the individual. Source: [Federal Labor Relations Authority](#)

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Civil penalty for illegal excavation

On March 16, 2021, an off-duty Virginia State Police Senior Trooper observed an individual digging in the Chancellorsville Battlefield and reported it to park officials. Rangers responded and found a person matching the description, multiple unauthorized excavation sites, and damage to archaeological resources. The individual was utilizing a metal detector. On September 9, 2022, the park reported that, following a multi-year investigation, the individual agreed to pay a civil penalty of \$15,557.25. Source: [Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park](#)

Grand Canyon National Park Motorboat flip causes fatality

On September 10, a motorized boat from a commercial outfitter flipped in Bedrock Rapid on the Colorado River when it came up against a rock. A 67-year-old passenger was pulled out of the water and found to be unresponsive. Other members of the group began CPR and park rangers flew to the location by helicopter, but the individual could not be resuscitated. Four other passengers were also treated by emergency medical personnel for non-critical injuries, and were transported to the South Rim. An investigation is being conducted by the NPS and the Coconino County Medical Examiner. Source: [The Journal/The Associated Press](#)

Grand Canyon National Park Further water restrictions

On September 11, the park enacted further water restrictions and conservation measures due to a series of breaks in the Transcanyon Waterline. Camper services operated by Delaware North and concessions and lodging at Phantom Ranch have been closed, water spigots at Mather Campground and Desert View Campground have been turned off, and

other water conservation measures are in place for visitors and residents. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Motorcycle fatality

On September 9, an 85-year-old driving a trike motorcycle on Newfound Gap Road lost control between Chimney Tops Trailhead and Alum Cave Trailhead, crossing the centerline and hitting an oncoming vehicle. NPS staff and Gatlinburg Fire Department emergency responders came to the scene. The motorcycle driver passed away, and a passenger on the motorcycle was flown to the University of Tennessee Medical Center. No one in the other vehicle was injured. Source: [Citizen Times](#)

Isle Royale National Park Park ferry closes

On September 9, the Isle Royale Queen IV, the main ferry to the park, was shut down due to a cracked hull that is in noncompliance with United States Coast Guard restrictions. It will be closed for the rest of the season. The NPS assisted visitors who were stranded on the island via sea plane or the Ranger III, a 165-foot boat belonging to the NPS. Source: [Isle Royale National Park](#)

Kenai Fjords National Park Vehicle accident

On September 10, early in the morning, a motor vehicle accident was reported along the Herman-Leirer Road near the Exit Glacier Parking lot. NPS staff, Alaska State Troopers, the Seward Police Department, the Bear Creek Fire Department, and the Seward Volunteer Ambulance Corps responded. Two people were found outside the heavily damaged vehicle and transported to Providence Seward Medical Center. An investigation by the NPS and Alaska State Troopers is ongoing, and the press release says that "speed is believed to have been a factor leading to the accident." Source: [Kenai Fjords National Park](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area Unapproved boat ramp constructed

On August 16, it was discovered that private individuals brought heavy equipment to grade an undisturbed area to create an unapproved boat ramp and parking area at Echo Bay. Park staff have installed multiple dirt and concrete berms to close down the unapproved structure, and increased patrolling in the area. The former official Echo Bay launch, as well as four other NPS boat launches on the lake, have been closed due to dropping lake levels. Only one is currently open at Hemenway Harbor. There is also an approved privately maintained boat launch at South Cove. Source: [8NewsNow](#) ([8/30](#), [9/2](#))

Mount Rainier National Park

Claim of open vent debunked

On September 7, people in the greater Seattle area observed and filmed what looked like venting on Mount Rainier, which quickly spread around social media. After looking at data from the U.S. Geological Survey seismic network, as well as in-person observation and videos from other angles, the park announced that the video showed lenticular clouds, not volcanic activity. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)

Natchez Trace Parkway

Checkpoint results in 10 arrests

Over Labor Day weekend, NPS and local law enforcement agencies conducted a series of traffic safety checkpoints, resulting in ten arrests for impaired driving, one felony charge for possession of controlled substances, as well as 26 citations and 42 warnings. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Trail closed for bear activity

On September 12, the park closed the 12- and 13-mile sections of the Nugget Creek Trail off of the McCarthy Road due to a bear-cached moose carcass on the trail. The trail will reopen when it is confirmed that the carcass has been consumed and the bear is no longer utilizing the area. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

Yosemite National Park

New lightning fires

Between September 5-10, lightning strikes in the park caused several fires, all less than 1/10th of an acre. All were contained or are being suppressed, including the Chiquito, Turner, Empire, Lukens, Wolf, Obselisk, Ranch, and Alder Fires. As of September 16, other wildfires (reported in previous *Coalition Reports*) in the park are as follows: The Rodgers Fire is 2,785 acres with 15 personnel assigned. The Red Fire is 8,364 acres with 197 personnel assigned. The Aspen Fire is 26 acres, has been fully suppressed, and is in patrol status. Source: [Yosemite National Park](#), *Inciweb* ([Rodgers](#), [Red](#))

Yellowstone National Park

Front loader removed by Chinook

On September 9, the Montana Army National Guard utilized a CH-47 Chinook helicopter to remove a front loader that had gotten stranded in an inaccessible part of Gardiner Canyon during the June flood event. They transported the machinery about 0.75 miles to a safer, more accessible location. Source: [Weather.com](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Battery smoke causes closure

On September 6, Northwestern Energy staff observed smoke coming out of a small building that houses a solar battery energy storage system at West Thumb Geyser Basin. NPS fire crews were dispatched to the location. They did not see flames, but they did observe smoke. The exterior of the building was not damaged. To ensure visitor and employee safety, the West Thumb Geyser Basin is closed until the batteries have fully discharged and all fumes have dissipated from the area. It will reopen when the area is safe. As of September 17, it was still closed. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Big Bend National Park* - Parts of the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive and the Lost Mine Trail reopened on September 9. They had been closed since September 3 due to heavy storms and flooding ([9/7/22 Coalition Report](#)). The road crew has made temporary repairs to the road and trail, and they are working to survey and complete repairs on roads and the trail. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - As of September 17, several of the fires in the Chilliwack Complex had merged, and the fires continue to burn in steep and rugged terrain. It is 7,388 acres with 31 personnel assigned. Source: [Inciweb](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - The mountain lion struck and killed by a car on June 17, 2022 ([6/29/22 Coalition Report](#)), sometimes known as P-54, had a necropsy performed by the California Animal Health and Food Safety Lab in San Bernadino. The individual was pregnant with four kittens and all five tested positive for multiple anticoagulant rodenticides (rat poison).

Acknowledgments

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