



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Editor note: Due to staff vacation, the next Coalition Report will go out on Friday, August 28, with the following report back on schedule on September 16.

Coalition Actions

The Coalition and Keep Big Bend Wild filed [an amicus brief](#) against the Department of Homeland Security for its construction of border control barriers in Big Bend National Park, asserting that the action is outside its authority. (See more in “Around the Parks” below.)

We submitted [comments](#) to the NPS about its proposal to allow for rock climbing bolts in Wilderness, arguing that power drills should be explicitly prohibited, and that the installation of fixed anchors and equipment should be run through an “appropriate use analysis” framework that already exists in NPS policy.

The Coalition joined 23 other conservation organizations in [comments](#) to the NPS about its wilderness stewardship policy review, arguing for the importance of the policy as it currently stands.

We also submitted [a letter](#) to the deputy associate director of visitor and resource protection, urging the administration to reengage with the public about any proposed changes to wilderness policy rather than relying on the current vague and general policy review.

Our staff and Executive Council continue to provide statements and interviews to the media highlighting challenges to the National Park System. Recent work includes:

- [Trump and Burgum have used millions of national park dollars for D.C. vanity projects](#), press release with Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
- [Can a comedian and a park ranger agree on nature?](#), “The FirePit” episode with Executive

Council member Jeff Mow

- [Chaco buffer provides breathing room for site](#), *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Coalition member op-ed

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.

- *Ruling on micromobility devices* - On August 11, the NPS announced a final rule establishing a “modern framework for managing powered micromobility devices, including e-scooters, hoverboards and Segways.” These were previously classified in the same category as cars and trucks. The rule now gives superintendents the authority to manage the use of these devices in park areas where they are appropriate, including sidewalks and other paths. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *2026 Director’s Awards* - The NPS recently announced the 2026 Director’s Awards for [Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands](#); [Natural and Cultural Resources](#); [Safety, Health, and Wellness Achievement](#); [Management and Administration](#); [Fire Achievement](#); [Cooperating Association Partnership](#); [Excellence in Education](#); [Excellence in Interpretation](#); [Excellence in Volunteerism](#), [Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship](#); and [National Law Enforcement Awards](#).
- *Journalists urge incident reporting* - On August 12, a group of 11 journalism organizations submitted a letter to the Department of the Interior urging it to allow NPS staff to share timely information about deaths and serious injuries in parks, counter to a memo issued in December 2025. The letter argues the omission of information allows for misinformation to spread, potentially putting the public at risk. It also raises concerns about First Amendment rights for public employees. Source: [Society of Professional Journalists](#)
- *Recent wildlife news* - The National Parks Conservation Association published [an article](#) about five recent decisions affecting national park wildlife, including wildlife crossings in North Carolina, a proposal to expand Big Cypress National Preserve, changes to the Endangered Species Act, the removal of protections from marine monuments, and the expansion of hunting and trapping in parks. Source: [KCSR/KBPY](#)
- *Removed signs* - *The Guardian* published [an article](#) about the Save Our Signs initiative to document interpretive materials that have been removed from parks, including visual examples of before and after. Source: *The Guardian*
- *Continued backlash to proposed dismantling of Section 106* - Several outlets have published op-eds against proposed changes to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, including [The New York Times](#) and the [Chicago Tribune](#). Source: *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*

- *New DOI IG nomination* - On August 7, Dennis Kirk was nominated to serve as inspector general for the Interior Department. The position serves as the watchdog for ethics at the agency. He is one of the co-authors of Project 2025, raising questions about conflicts of interest. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *New public land comment app* - A new, free app called “Public Land Comment Hub” was created by the map app company onX. It allows individuals to register comments with the NPS, as well as the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Source: [Wyoming Public Media](#)
- *Profile on Secretary Burgum* - E&E News published [a profile](#) on Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, his approach to running the department, and questionable decisions. Source: *E&E News*
- *Wildfire game* - A new [interactive model/game](#) developed by The Concord Consortium allows viewers to control different factors to run wildfire simulations and then attempt to stop them. Source: *The Concord Consortium*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Arches National Park* - SFGate published [an article](#) about the tension on the Grand County (UT) Commission regarding the pilot shuttle service between Moab and the park. Opponents have raised questions about the project’s timeline, cost, resourcing, liability, and safety. Grand County is responsible for \$500,000 of the \$3 million project, which was originally to be pulled from transient room taxes and will now be primarily pulled from local taxpayer dollars. The contracted bus company, Via, has begun hiring and is expected to run the service through October 31, then again from March 1 through June 30, 2027. Source: *SFGate*
- *Big Bend National Park* - On August 6, contractors for U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) began a border barrier and road construction project in the park. Bulldozers were documented plowing through native vegetation along the Rio Grande River. On August 17, after broad backlash, CBP temporarily halted the project, pending a visit by CBP commissioner Rodney Scott to “do a personal evaluation.” The project has had broad bipartisan opposition across Texas. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#), [The Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), [The New York Times](#)
- *Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument* - On August 19, the NPS opened a temporary visitor center at The Commons meeting space at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. The park’s regular visitor center at the A.G. Gaston Motel has been closed since May 10 for renovations. An exhibit space and coffee shop at the motel remain open during construction. Source: [Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument](#)

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - A new petition with 1,400 signatures opposes the NPS' plan to conduct salvage logging along several sections between Mileposts 280 and 396 that were damaged by Hurricane Helene. Conservationists argue that the type of logging proposed can compact the soil, increase the intrusion of invasive species, increase fire risk, and destroy meaningful habitat for flora and fauna. The project was not open for public comment, as it was cited as an emergency for hazard fuel reduction. Source: [Blue Ridge Public Radio](#)
- *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* - The *Mountain Xpress* published [an interview](#) with new superintendent Ashley Pipkin about her background and vision for the park. Source: *Mountain Xpress*
- *Channel Islands National Park* - The park recently completed a brand new campground at Prisoners Harbor on Santa Cruz Island. The campground includes six campsites, each accommodating four people. Reservations will open on August 18, for stays starting on August 27. Funding for the campground was provided by Toad and Co., The Fund for People in Parks, and Aera Energy of Kern. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - On August 24, the park will begin a rehabilitation project on the Stumpy Basin boardwalk. The Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail between Boston Trailhead and Lock 29 in Peninsula (OH) will experience closures. The project is expected to be complete by November 20. Source: [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On August 15, the lake level dropped to 3,519.91 feet, a record low since the reservoir was filled. The previous low was set in April 2023. This is roughly 30 feet above "power pool," the point at which the Glen Canyon Dam would not be able to generate hydropower through its turbines. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - The *South Bend Tribune* published [an article](#) about the increase in crayfish and other invasive species below the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River due to low river flows and warming water. Source: *South Bend Tribune/Pressreader*
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - *Alta* published [an article](#) about the concessioner lost-and-found program at the South Rim, including a profile of Rose Lowe, who has run the program since 2019. Source: *Alta*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - On August 14, the NPS signed an amendment to the Record of Decision for the Moose-Wilson Corridor Comprehensive Management Plan, allowing for the construction of a multiuse pathway along the corridor, and realigning a segment of Moose-Wilson Road between Sawmill Ponds and Death Canyon Road. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - On August 4, the NPS and the National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation announced the launch of the Isle Royale Heritage Alliance, an effort to maintain

structures within the park, including 90 cabins, 19 fishery buildings, and four lighthouses. The alliance seeks volunteers to take on historic preservation projects within the park.

Source: [Keweenaw Report](#)

- *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve* - The *Wall Street Journal* published [an article](#) about efforts to develop gold mining on a private inholding in the park called the Johnson Tract. The project is fueled by increases in the price of gold. Local environmental groups and a Tribal council sued in 2025 over the venture's Clean Water Act permit, a case that is ongoing. Meanwhile, other Tribal members have argued that the tract, which was granted to the Native-owned corporation Cook Inlet Region, Inc. in a 1976 trade for other lands to allow for the creation of Lake Clark, was always intended to be developed for minerals to benefit the Tribe. Source: *Wall Street Journal*
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On August 7, Lake Mead was measured at 1,040.4 feet above sea level, the lowest water level since it was filled, breaking a record from July 2022. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS has submitted a transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the D.C. Armory site to the District of Columbia. The NPS will retain ownership of the property. The National Capital Planning Commission will consider the proposal on September 3. Source: [DC News Now](#)
- *Prince William Forest Park* - Several new data centers are proposed in the region, including the "Quantico Ridge" project, a 437,000-square-foot facility adjacent to the park. The project has requested rezoning and special use permits thus far. Source: [Prince William Times](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - From August 24-30, the park will begin a second phase of its effort to restore native greenback cutthroat trout in the Cache la Poudre River. Piscicide will be applied to the Grand Ditch system, and all areas and trails in the area will be closed. The project is being supported by the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, and the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)
- *Shenandoah National Park* - The Court Square Theater in Harrisonburg, Virginia, has premiered "Acts of Atonement," a theatrical production meant to serve as a sequel to "Can't Feel at Home," about families that were displaced by the creation of Shenandoah National Park in the 1930s. Bobby Wolfe, the author and one of its producers, is a volunteer at the park. Source: [The Northern Virginia Daily](#)
- *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* - *mLive* published [an article](#) about the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes' Preventive Search and Rescue program, which is staffed primarily by volunteers and has lowered rescues on the dunes. Source: *mLive*
- *Statue of Liberty National Monument* - *NBC News* published [a video clip](#) about interpretive

park ranger Reneel Langdon and his journey to the National Park Service. Source: *NBC News*

- *Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site* - On August 5, the executive director and site superintendent of Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site Foundation, Spencer Morgan, announced that the park was the only site in the National Park System to not receive FY26 funding, stating that the funds had been allocated but not released, threatening the park's ability to pay bills and make payroll. On August 13, the park received its funds. Source: *Buffalo Toronto Public Media* ([8/5](#), [8/13](#))
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - *The St. Thomas Source* published [an op-ed](#) by the Board of the St. John Historical Society, expressing their "deep concern" over the NPS' decision to advance a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of Caneel Bay before completing historic preservation review. They state, "We insist that the NPS be held accountable in their compliance with federal law through the completion of the Phase I archaeological survey before any redevelopment activities proceed." Source: *The St. Thomas Source*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - *Unofficial Networks* published [an article](#) about the Yellowstone's Structural Fire Company, the largest of its kind across the NPS with 11 fire engines across six developed areas. Much of the fire program is staffed by employees with other primary roles in the park. Source: *Unofficial Networks*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - *Unofficial Networks* published [an article](#) about the use of drones in the park for efforts such as search and rescue operations, avalanche forecasting, mapping, scientific research, fire operations, and planning infrastructure improvements. Source: *Unofficial Networks*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel* published [an article](#) about the early management of Yellowstone, including the dispatch of the U.S. Cavalry to protect the park. Source: *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*
- *Yosemite National Park* - *Gripped* published [an article](#) about the park's annual "Facelift" event, a community event to clean up trash across the park that has been running since the early 2000s. Source: *Gripped: The Climbing Magazine*
- *Yosemite National Park* - The site *DeFlock.org*, an open-source project that documents license plate reader locations, has identified six cameras in the park. Park officials have stated that the cameras do not capture license plate information, and are in place to monitor traffic and capacity in parking lots to provide better information to visitors and would-be visitors about wait times in the park. Source: [WKRN](#)

Legal Actions

Legal actions involving the National Park Service. If the Coalition is involved in a lawsuit, those will be recorded in "Coalition Actions" above. Listed alphabetically, except for items affecting the entire NPS,

which are listed on top.

- *National Park Service* - The New Civil Liberties Alliance (NCLA) has sued the NPS for disallowing BASE jumping in parks, arguing that its use of the “Aerial Delivery Rule” is improperly applied and that only Congress can make the act criminal. A district court dismissed the suit, ruling the clients lacked standing. On August 10, the NCLA filed an appeal. Source: [New Civil Liberties Alliance](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - On August 14, a coalition including a non-profit, a business, and two individuals filed a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security and the NPS seeking to block border-related construction in Big Bend (see above in “Around the Parks”), arguing it threatens constitutionally protected religious freedoms. Source: [The Texas Tribune](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On August 4, the Cultural Landscape Foundation filed a petition in its ongoing lawsuit against the National Park Service and Department of the Interior over the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool project. The petition asked for emergency permission to inspect and document the pool’s current condition before crews could further repair work that would erase physical evidence. The district judge ruled against the request. Source: [RawStory](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - The Thurmond (WV) Town Council passed a motion to pursue pro bono legal representation for a lawsuit for a temporary restraining order against the demolition of historically significant structures in Thurmond. The park recently finalized a plan to demolish the buildings due to deterioration, safety concerns, vandalism, and the cost of maintenance. A non-profit, Preserve Thurmond, is working to find individuals or organizations to lease and rehabilitate the buildings instead. Source: [West Virginia Explorer](#)
- *The White House and President’s Park* - On August 7, a federal appeals court voted 2-1 that President Donald Trump lacks the authority to construct a ballroom in the East Wing of the White House because Congress has “full constitutional control over federal property and the funding of its maintenance and development.” President Trump stated that he will appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court. Source: [CBS News](#)
- *The White House and President’s Park* - On August 6, a federal district court granted the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization’s motion for partial summary judgment in its Freedom of Information Act case about the demolition of the White House East Wing. The Departments of Labor and the Interior, and the NPS, have been ordered to make determinations on their pending FOIA requests within 10 days. The requests include information about “the extent of asbestos assessments, safeguards, and regulatory compliance during the demolition of the East Wing of the White House.” Source: [Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Carlisle Federal Indian Boarding School National Monument, Eisenhower National Historic Site, Gettysburg National Military Park* - Stephanie Stephens has been selected as the new superintendent. Stephanie has 37 years of NPS experience, most recently as deputy regional director and acting regional director of the Midwest Region. She will begin her new role this fall. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - Jason J. Taylor was selected as the new superintendent. Jason has over 20 years of federal public lands experience, most recently as superintendent at Indiana Dunes National Park. He will begin his new role in late September. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#)

Park People

Deceased

- Laurence David Funk, 80, passed away on August 3. Laurence worked for the NPS for over 25 years, retiring in the early 2000s. Source: [Legacy/Osborne Funeral Home](#)
- Ventura Albert Gonzalez, 82, passed away on August 2. Ventura worked for the NPS as a carpenter at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area from 1977-2005. Source: [Pocono Record](#)
- Carol Jean (Bjorkman) Linthacum, 88, passed away on July 30. Carol worked a summer job in Glacier National Park shortly after college. Source: [The Mercury News](#)
- Alice Lorentz, 98, passed away on July 31. Alice worked a summer job in Yellowstone National Park while in college. Source: [KRTV](#)
- Jeanne Marie (Hagen) Milledge, 71, passed away on July 30. Jeanne worked at Yellowstone National Park for a time in the 1970s. Source: [KBZK](#)
- Bruce Northrup, 93, passed away on August 12. Bruce worked for the NPS at Theodore Roosevelt National Park for 25 years, retiring in 1993. Source: [The Dickinson Press](#)
- Philip E. Ruppe, 99, passed away on August 1. Philip was a six-term U.S. Representative from Michigan and played a pivotal role in getting Isle Royale National Park and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore designated. Source: [Palm Beach Daily News](#)
- Paul Wayne Winters, 63, passed away on August 11. Paul volunteered for the NPS at the visitor center at Shiloh National Military Park for a time. Source: [Legacy/WTVA](#)

Open for Comment

Items will stay on this list until public comment has closed. Listed alphabetically, except for items

affecting the entire NPS, which are listed on top.

- *First State National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through September 28](#) on a proposal to open bicycle use on 25 miles of designated trails within the Brandywine Valley unit of the park. Source: [First State National Historical Park](#)
- *Manassas National Battlefield Park* - Public comment is [open through September 4](#) on a plan to transfer a partial set of human remains of a Union soldier and a personal object (comb) that were excavated during an archaeological study in March 2024 to the Office of Army Cemeteries so that the individual can be interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Source: [Manassas National Battlefield Park](#)
- *Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is [open through September 6](#) on a proposal to change the Superintendent's Compendium's rule in order to allow e-bicycles to access Kennecott Mines. Source: [Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Chris Soller, former superintendent of Fire Island National Seashore and legislative specialist for the National Park Service.

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

August 6 - The Senate agreed to and passed S. Res. 837, designating the week of August 22 through August 30, 2026, as "National Park Week." The resolution reads as follows:

"Whereas, on March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park as the first national park for the enjoyment of the people of the United States;

"Whereas, on August 25, 1916, Congress established the National Park Service with the mission to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations;

"Whereas the National Park Service continues to protect and manage the majestic landscapes, hallowed battlefields, and iconic cultural and historical sites of the United States;

"Whereas the units of the National Park System can be found in every State and many territories of the United States, and many of those units embody the rich natural and cultural heritage of the United States, reflect a unique national story through people and places, and offer countless opportunities for recreation, volunteerism, cultural exchange, education, civic engagement, and exploration;

“Whereas, in 2025, the national parks of the United States attracted 323,014,305 recreational visits;

“Whereas visits and visitors to the national parks of the United States are important economic drivers, responsible for contributing \$56,300,000,000 in economic output in 2024;

“Whereas the dedicated employees of the National Park Service carry out their mission to protect the units of the National Park System so that the vibrant culture, diverse wildlife, and priceless resources of these unique places will endure for perpetuity; and

“Whereas the people of the United States have inherited the remarkable legacy of the National Park System and are entrusted with the preservation of the National Park System throughout its second century:

“Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Senate designates the week of August 22 through August 30, 2026, as ‘National Park Week.’”

August 7 - The Senate passed H.R. 6500, Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, as amended. The bill provides continuing Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations for federal agencies and extends various expiring programs and authorities.

Specifically, the bill provides continuing FY27 appropriations to federal agencies through the earlier of December 11, 2026, or the enactment of the applicable appropriations act. It is known as a continuing resolution (CR) and prevents a government shutdown that would otherwise occur if the appropriations bills have not been enacted when the fiscal year begins on October 1, 2026.

The CR funds most programs and activities at the FY26 levels, with several exceptions that provide funding flexibility or additional appropriations for various programs.

(The House of Representatives passed a similar resolution, H.R. 9770, on July 21.)

House Actions

The house was in recess during this period.

Other Relevant Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service (Dept. of Agriculture) News

- *Proposed repeal of Roadless Rule* - On August 18, the U.S. Forest Service posted a proposal to repeal the 2001 “Roadless Rule,” which has guided the preservation of roadless areas in national forests to protect ecosystems and undeveloped recreation opportunities. The proposal will soon be open for public comment. Source: [The New York Times](#)
- *Hunting and fishing expansion* - On August 13, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

announced a final rule opening 1,488 new hunting and sport fishing opportunities across 32 states, including opening those activities for the first time at 14 refuges and three hatcheries. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Offshore drilling sale* - On August 12, the Marine Minerals Administration held its third Gulf of Mexico offshore oil and gas lease sale, resulting in \$83 million in high bids for 59 blocks. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Acadia National Park

Arrest for threats

On August 5, a group was setting up their campsite at Seawall Campground when a 62-year-old individual believed to be intoxicated told them they were going to get their gun from their vehicle and kill them. Personnel from the NPS, Southwest Harbor (ME) Police Department, Bar Harbor Police Department, and Mount Desert Police Department responded to the scene. The individual was arrested for disorderly conduct. Source: [Bar Harbor Story](#)

Cape Cod National Seashore

Rip current rescue

On August 14, a group of three individuals swimming at the far north end of Herring Cove Beach got caught in a rip current. Personnel from the NPS, Provincetown (MA) Fire, the Harbormaster, U.S. Coast Guard, and Massachusetts State Police were dispatched to the scene. Two individuals were rescued and brought back safely. The third individual, an 81-year-old, had gone under the water, prompting a search by a dive team and a helicopter. That individual was located shortly thereafter floating in the water and was extricated in critical condition. The individual was later pronounced deceased at Cape Cod Hospital. Source: [CapeCod.com](#), [Cape Cod Times](#)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Swimming fatality

On August 5, an individual went unresponsive while swimming offshore in the Hatteras village area. NPS and other emergency personnel attempted to resuscitate the individual, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The NPS did not release further information, but did cite a moderate risk of rip currents at the time of the incident. Source: [The Charlotte Observer](#)

Curecanti National Recreation Area

Toxic algae

On August 13, the NPS announced the presence of low levels of blue-green algae containing cyanotoxins in the Iola Basin. Visitors are advised to avoid areas with “observed or suspected

blue-green algal mats throughout the reservoir.” Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Dumped trailer

Between the evening of August 2 and the morning of August 3, a travel trailer was abandoned on Route 209 at mile marker 1.5. The park is looking for any information the public can provide.

Source: [WRNJ](#)

Fire Island National Seashore

West Nile Virus

Mosquitoes collected from a trap at the William Floyd Estate at Mastic Beach on July 25 tested positively for West Nile Virus. Testing is done in partnership with the Suffolk County (NY) Department of Health Services - Arthropod-Borne Disease Laboratory. Visitors are advised to take mosquito precautions. Source: [Fire Island National Seashore](#)

Gateway National Recreation Area

Drowning

On August 9, an individual was pulled from the ocean at Sandy Hook and emergency assistance was requested. Personnel from the NPS and Sea Bright Fire Rescue responded to the scene. The individual was transported to the hospital, where they were later pronounced dead. Source: [NJ.com](#)

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

Whale sinks sailboat

On July 29, a couple and their adult child were sleeping on a 25-foot sailboat next to Gloomy Knob when a humpback whale crashed into the boat, sinking it. As it started taking on water, the individuals grabbed their phones, a couple of sleeping bags, radios, and a dry bag with emergency supplies, and were able to escape via their dinghy. They estimate that the boat sank within three minutes of being struck. They were able to paddle and swim to shore, where they started a fire and huddled under an emergency blanket and the sleeping bags. They attempted to make mayday calls on their radios, but were unsuccessful. One of the individuals rowed out of the cove to try to get better signal and was able to hit a repeater and request emergency assistance via a broken communication. At about 3 AM, a small cruise ship came into view. The group was able to make contact with the ship, which relayed communications to the National Park Service about their location. The following morning, the NPS rescued the three individuals. Over the weekend of August 1-2, one of the individuals worked with a salvage crew to haul the boat ashore, patch it, and tow it to Gustavus, Alaska. Later, while cleaning it, they found several chunks of whale skin inside the boat, which were later confirmed to be from a humpback.

Source: [Alaska Public Media](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Another waterline break

On August 5, the Transcanyon Waterline broke again, shutting off potable water along the North Kaibab Trail and at Phantom Ranch. Water conservation measures were also enacted at the South Rim. On August 13, further water conservation measures were enacted at the South Rim, including turning off water at Mather Campground, while water on the North Kaibab Trail and at Phantom Ranch was restored. Breaks in the line are common, and the park is currently undergoing a multi-year project to replace and repair the line. Source: [Arizona Daily Sun](#), [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

Hit-and-run

On August 1, two off-highway vehicles were involved in a hit-and-run with another vehicle while driving on Medano Pass Primitive Road. Off-highway vehicles are illegal within the park. Photos of the individuals in the OHVs were released, and the NPS is looking for any information the public can provide. Source: [The Denver Gazette](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

River rescue

On August 9, a group of five individuals became stranded on the Little River, two on a rock in the middle of the flow, and three others on a steep embankment. Personnel from the Townsend Area Volunteer Fire Department responded to the scene, utilizing swiftwater rescue techniques, including ropes and a kayak, to extricate the individuals. Source: [WATE](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Tropical storm

On August 13 and 14, most of the park was closed in anticipation of the landing of Tropical Storm Lala, forecast to bring heavy rain and wind to the area. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

Katmai National Park and Preserve

Plane crash

On August 6, a floatplane crashed near lower Moraine Creek. No injuries were reported in the accident. The NPS worked with the aircraft owner to have it removed and cleaned up by August 11. Fuel from the aircraft remained contained, and the NPS will conduct a final site inspection to verify cleanup has been completed sufficiently. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the accident. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Reflecting pool saga continues

On August 7, the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool was partially refilled to flush out what the NPS called clogged pipes. A sign was posted nearby stating that more than half of the 58 supply ports were “deemed nonfunctioning” due to “years of neglect by previous administrations.” The NPS has stated that the flushing may temporarily discolor the water as buildup is cleaned out.

Source: [ABC7](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Vandalism

On August 13, the World War II Memorial was marked with spray paint graffiti and the fountains were filled with soap, creating large amounts of foam. The incident was reported by bystanders. The individual later recorded a livestream video in which they acknowledged defacing the property. The individual was indicted on August 14. NPS personnel removed the paint and soap.

Source: [The Dallas Express](#)

Olympic National Park

Rabid bat

On August 9, a visitor on the Staircase Rapids Trail Bridge had a bat swoop near them and get tangled in their hair. Shortly thereafter, an employee was notified that a bat was swooping near visitors. The employee safely captured the bat using rubber gloves and the bat was taken to an emergency vet clinic for euthanasia. It was then sent to Colorado State University’s Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, where it tested positive for rabies. The NPS is looking for any information related to visitors that might have come in contact with the bat. Source: [SFGate](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Drowning

On August 2, a 27-year-old drowned near Hospital Rock on the Kaweah River. NPS staff and other personnel responded to the scene and provided emergency medical care. It is unclear whether the individual passed away at the scene or was taken to the hospital. No further details were given. Source: [SFGate](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Climbing fatality

On August 2, a 30-year-old rock climber fell while attempting a first ascent in the park backcountry (location undisclosed). The individual passed away from “blunt force trauma injuries sustained as a result of [the] fall.” Personnel from the park’s search and rescue team recovered the individual’s body the following day. Source: [SFGate](#), [Climbing](#)

White Sands National Park

Monsoon storms

On August 13, the Department of the Interior announced that an iconic cottonwood tree along

the Dune Life Nature Trail fell after monsoon storms weakened its roots. The tree has been a popular subject of photography for visitors for several decades. Source: [Department of the Interior \(Facebook\)](#)

Wildfires

- *Everglades National Park* - On August 2, a lightning-caused fire was detected in the park nine miles east of Shark Valley and a quarter-mile south of Highway 41 at Mile Marker 26. As of August 4, the Bluegill Fire was 815 acres and 100% contained. Source: [Everglades National Park](#), [Watch Duty](#)
- *Grand Portage National Monument* - On July 20, the NPS closed the Fort Charlotte Campground due to high fire danger in the region. It reopened on July 30. Source: [Grand Portage National Monument](#), [Grand Portage National Monument \(Facebook\)](#)
- *John Day Fossil Beds National Monument* - On July 20, the park closed several units of the park due to the Rowe Creek Complex, Hay Creek Complex, and Shingle Fire. On August 6, they were reopened. Source: [John Day Fossil Beds National Monument](#), [Central Oregon Fire Info](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On August 7, the Grand Park 2 Fire started in the park about seven miles southwest of Snoquera. The park closed the Sunrise and White River roads and evacuated the Sunrise Visitor Center and White River Campground. As of August 18, the fire was 167 acres and 65% contained. Source: [KING5](#), [The Courier-Herald](#), [Watch Duty](#)
- *North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area*
 - On June 24, a series of lightning strikes hit the area, causing several fires north of Little Beaver Creek and west of Ross Lake. Of them, the Luna Fire, located east of Big Beaver Creek and north of McMillan Creek, continues burning. As of August 17, the fire was 4,475 acres and 0% contained. [Editor note: We incorrectly called this fire 100% contained in our 7/8/26 Coalition Report.] Source: *North Cascades National Park* ([7/27](#), [7/31](#), [8/2](#)), [Inciweb](#)
 - The week of July 12, lightning struck the area east of Ross Lake, igniting the Border 1 and Border 2 Fires. As of August 18, the Border 2 Fire was 14,777 acres and 31% contained, with ~6,700 of those acres located in the U.S. A historic cabin in the Hozomeen area has been wrapped in heat-reflective material and surrounded by sprinklers to protect it from the fire. Structures at Deerlick camp were also wrapped. Crews have also done a partial wrap of Desolation Lookout, allowing it to continue to be used for operations until it needs to be fully wrapped. Source: [Whatcom News](#), *North Cascades National Park* ([7/27](#), [7/31](#), [8/2](#), [8/14](#), [8/17](#)), [KING5](#), [Watch Duty](#)
 - On August 13, the Stiletto Fire was reported, located on the slopes of Stiletto Peak. As of August 14, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#), [Watch Duty](#)

- *Yosemite National Park* - On August 12, lightning started eight new wildfires. As of August 13, the fires were as follows:
 - The Ackerson Fire, burning 1 mile west of Aspen Valley, was 1.5 acres and 50% contained.
 - The Long Fire, burning 1 mile south of Aspen Valley, was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
 - The Grouse Fire, burning in Grouse Creek less than a mile from Wawona Road, was 2 acres and 30% contained.
 - The Steamboat Fire, burning in the top of the Grouse Creek drainage less than a mile from Wawona Road, was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Crocker Fire, burning in the Meadow Brook drainage less than a mile from the Inspiration Trail, was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Dewey Fire, burning near Dewey Point, was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The McGurk Fire, burning 0.25 miles east of Dewey Point and north of the Inspiration Trail, was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - Source: [Yosemite National Park](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On August 9, President Donald Trump acknowledged “some contractor error done by rushing the job for a July 4th opening” at the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool. He still claimed vandalism was involved in the liner’s disintegration. Source: [USA Today](#)
- *Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve* - On August 3, the park announced the opening of a newly established trail reroute to the Root Glacier after landslides closed the previous access (see [8/5/26 Coalition Report](#)). The new access route starts 1.8 miles along the Erie Mine Trail. It is a 2.5-mile hike to access the Root Glacier. Source: [Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On August 12, the park removed some of its fishing restrictions, though others remain in place on the Madison, Firehole, and Gibbon Rivers until conditions improve for fish populations. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

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- Editor: Katie Wallace
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- Regular Correspondent: Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Dennis Burnett, Teresa Ford, Steve Hastings, Mike Murray, Bill Walters

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The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks 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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