



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Take Action!

[Sign onto a Coalition Member letter](#) today, **September 30, by 12 PM Pacific** to oppose the Utah Division of Air Quality's plan to revise its haze plan in order to allow two coal-fired units to remain in service.

Sign on to the letter

Nominations for the George Hartzog Award are [open through October 15](#). The award is for an individual or group that demonstrates outstanding support for the mission of the National Park Service or National Park System. Past award recipients can be seen [here](#).

Make a nomination

Coalition Actions

The Coalition joined over 150 organizations in [a letter](#) to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum to halt the proposed transfer of Yosemite National Park land to a developer for a private access road.

We joined the Wilderness Society and Rocky Mountain Wild in submitting [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management Nevada Office on its first quarter 2027 oil and gas lease sale, urging it to follow applicable laws and policy with regards to deferring leases.

The Coalition also joined four other organizations in submitting [a protest](#) to the Bureau of Land Management's Montana-Dakotas Office for its fourth quarter 2026 oil and gas lease sale, arguing

it does not comply with applicable laws.

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

- [Mansions proposal threatens national park in Georgia: A Yosemite-like land swap planned for Cumberland Island](#), joint press release with five other organizations
- [Gold statues and staff cuts: how Trump has disrupted America's parks](#), *The New York Times*
- [Utah national parks have a \\$350M maintenance backlog. The Trump admin isn't helping](#), *KUER*
- [Great Americans: A conversation with the first female superintendent of Mount Rushmore, Cheryl Schreier](#), *NBC News*
- [Yosemite land giveaway shows no place is safe from Trump's assault on public lands](#), op-ed in *CalMatters* by Coalition Member Mark Butler

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.

- *\$24 billion maintenance backlog* - According to recently-released 2025 data, the NPS has a deferred maintenance and repairs backlog of \$24 billion. Of the NPS regions, the Pacific West Region has the biggest backlog, \$6.4 billion. Source: [GearJunkie](#), [National Park Service](#)
- *More details on reorganization* - As outlined in the [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#), the NPS has circulated internal agency documents outlining a reorganization of the agency that would circumvent a formal Reduction in Force. Those documents have now been leaked to the press, and they include visual representations created by AI of the proposed “hub and spoke” model. The plan states, “No reductions in force are anticipated as a result of this realignment,” while later stating, “The realignment addresses these broader organizational challenges by reducing duplication.” Source: [Wes Siler's Newsletter](#)
- *More details on axed partnership agreements* - The Center for Western Priorities has created an interactive map of the \$25.9 million in NPS funding through partnership agreements that were recently canceled because the recipients were claimed to be “actively working against the best interests of the American people and the priorities of this administration.” Source: [Center for Western Priorities](#)
- *USFWS memo reinterprets definition of “take”* - On September 14, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service circulated a memo to its field offices reinterpreting the definition of what it means to “take” an endangered animal under the Endangered Species Act. The new guidance suggests that accidental killing or injuring an individual of a protected species is

no longer illegal, regardless of knowing the animal might live there. A “take” is now defined as an intentional act that immediately affects that animal. The directive runs counter to *Babbitt v. Sweet Home Chapter of Communities for a Great Oregon*, in which the Supreme Court rejected the argument that a “take” is limited to intentional actions. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#)

- *NPS grant funds released on eve of fiscal year* - On September 28, the National Park Service announced the award of funding through several of the grant programs it administers, including:
 - [African American Civil Rights Preservation and History Grants](#) - \$21.8 million for 55 projects in 18 states to preserve sites and stories related to the struggle for equal rights for Black Americans.
 - [Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grants](#) - \$10.7 million for 15 projects in 6 states to preserve sites and structures on HBCU campuses.
 - [History of Equal Rights Grants](#) - \$10 million for 14 projects in 10 states to preserve sites related to the history of equal rights in the U.S.
 - [Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program](#) - \$17.7 million for 24 projects in 20 states to support the revitalization of historic properties in rural communities for economic development.
 - [Save America's Treasures Grants](#) - \$25.2 million for 50 projects in 31 states to preserve nationally significant sites and collections.
 - [Semiquincentennial Grants](#) - \$11.9 million for 26 projects in 15 states for the preservation of cultural resources associated with the founding of America in honor of its 250th anniversary.
 - [Tribal Heritage Grants](#) - \$967,000 for 12 projects in 11 states to preserve Tribal sites and cultural traditions.
- *Content management contract* - Forum One Communications Corporation has received a \$13.4 million contract to migrate the NPS content management system to Drupal over the next 3.5 years. Source: [Orange Slices Public Benefit Corporation](#)
- *FOIA management contract* - Wits Solutions, Inc., has received a \$2.2 million 3-year contract to provide analytical and program support to the NPS Information Resources Directorate and its regional offices and park units in support of Freedom of Information Act administration. Source: [Orange Slices Public Benefit Corporation](#)
- *Rangers' mental health* - Scienceline published [an article](#) about mental health challenges NPS rangers face due to understaffing, new directives, and other issues. Source: [Scienceline](#)
- *Book of resignation letters* - In October, Bicycle Comics will publish *Count me Out: The Best Federal Resignations of 2025*, an anthology of letters and stories of federal employees who left their jobs under the current Trump administration. The book includes a first-hand account from Kevin Heatley, former superintendent at Crater Lake National Park. Source: [SFGate](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - In mid-October, the park will begin a \$2.5 million water line replacement project in the Maryland Unit. The project is being funded by recreation fee revenue. Some campground loops will be temporarily closed on a rolling basis. Source: [Assateague Island National Seashore](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - On September 29, the NPS announced the completion of a 75-mile road rehabilitation project, from milepost 229.6 to 305.1. The \$100 million project was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - *NPR* published an article about the many houses that have collapsed (or soon will) into the sea in Rodanthe, North Carolina, due to sea level rise. The article points to “perverse incentives created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency” explaining why homeowners do little to prevent the collapses. Homeowners can only receive a payout after a house collapses, and there is no funding available for removal. The NPS has stated that it’s collected over 480 tons of home debris from the area in the last 18 months. FEMA has stated it cannot change rules for threatened properties without Congress amending laws that govern the National Flood Insurance Program. A bill that would do that is currently stalled in the House of Representatives. Source: [NPR](#)
- *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park* - The Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute will be relocated to a new facility in Chattanooga, allowing the park’s Moccasin Bend National Archeological District to be better preserved. Source: [DiscoverDade.com](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about the recent cancellation of a partnership agreement that would have hired three staff to maintain the park’s sled dog program. The agreement was one of over 130 agreements canceled across the NPS last week (see National/Regional Updates above). An internal document warns that without the funding, kennel operations would become greatly reduced, harming winter patrol readiness and visitor engagement. The kennel has operated for “nearly a century.” Source: *SFGate*
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - The *Anchorage Daily News* published [an article](#) detailing the complexity of building the Pretty Rocks Bridge, which was recently completed (see [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#)). Source: *Anchorage Daily News*
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On September 15, the NPS sent around a draft Memorandum of Agreement with the National Capital Planning Commission, District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the construction of the “Triumphal Arch” adjacent to Arlington Cemetery. The proposal

states that the adverse effects of the project “cannot be fully avoided,” but they would mitigate the impact by creating signs and webpages to explain the project to the public, managing construction to reduce interference with burials at the cemetery, and documenting the current landscape before construction begins. The MOA is also an attempt to expedite required consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act, which is inconsistent with typical NPS procedures. On September 24, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation submitted a letter to the NPS stating that it is terminating consultation with local officials after doing its due diligence. Meanwhile, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has claimed that consultation has been in bad faith. The ACHP has stated that it will forward its final comments to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum by October 7 for review and approval. The National Capital Planning Commission is slated to review final project design in the next six months. Source: [The Washington Post](#), [ABC News](#)

- *George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On September 20, President Donald Trump announced that the proposed Triumphal Arch would double as a “top grade military complex,” with the “rapid ability to use large numbers of drones, plus snipers, on both the roof and plaza areas.” Critics have said that the administration seeks to get it approved by claiming it is necessary for national security purposes. President Trump has stated that he was asked to convert the arch into a military complex “at the strong request of the United States military.” Source: [NPR](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - On October 26, Alcatraz will close for a project to replace pilings on the ferry dock to the island. The project is expected to be complete in three weeks. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - SFGate published [an article](#) about the park’s emergency alert system, first instituted in 2024, and whether it is effective in warning visitors about impending danger. Source: *SFGate*
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The National Parks Conservation Association published [an article](#) about Blue, the park’s wildlife management dog. Source: *National Parks Conservation Association*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - Major League Baseball recently approached the Trump administration about hosting a game at a national park. Two sources reported that NPS deputy director Frank Lands visited Grand Teton the week of September 20 at three potential locations to hold a baseball game in the park. The White House put out a statement saying, “This is not a Presidential directive, nor is it being directed by the White House. It’s also not being driven by the Department of the Interior. Therefore, this is not a White House or administration priority.” Source: [ESPN](#)
- *Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park* - Park ecologist Stacey Kehaulani Torigoe received the NPS’ 2026 Director’s Award for Natural Resource Management for her efforts at abating invasive plants and animals in the park. Source: [Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park](#)

- *Hot Springs National Park* - On September 22, the park announced the award of a 10-year concession contract to Historic Baths, LLC, to operate the Buckstaff Bathhouse. The contract takes effect on January 1, 2027. Source: [Hot Springs National Park](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - The park's annual "Fat Bear Week" took place from September 22-29. The annual crowd-sourced competition asks individuals to vote for the bear that "best exemplifies fatness and success in brown bears." Source: [Explore.org](#), [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - During a House Natural Resources Committee hearing, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) revealed that the NPS has hired a civil engineering firm to begin work on the East Potomac Park Golf Course. The \$400,000 contract will cover compliance work at the site. A projected construction contract worth up to \$49 million is expected to fly on January 31, 2027. President Donald Trump has stated that he wants to turn the course into a world-class golf venue. Source: [WTNH](#)
- *National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On September 23, the NPS announced the addition of ten new listings from eight states to the program. Source: [National Park Service: Underground Railroad](#)
- *Redwood National and State Parks* - *Redwood News* published [an article](#) about Redwoods Rising, an initiative between the NPS, California State Parks, and the Save the Redwoods League to restore old-growth redwood forests. The initiative began in 2018. Source: *Redwood News*
- *Women's Rights National Historical Park* - *Global Sisters Report* published [an article](#) highlighting the relevance of the park to today's political landscape. Source: *Global Sisters Report*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On September 17, the NPS announced a Finding of No Significant Impact to reconstruct the North Entrance Road between Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, and Gardiner, Montana. The road was damaged in a 500-year flood event on June 13, 2022. A temporary road has been in place on the historic Old Gardiner Road wagon trail, but is not engineered for long-term use. The NPS will convert the Old Gardiner Road into a multi-use recreation trail. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

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.

- *Lake Chelan National Recreation Area/North Cascades National Park Complex* - On September 15, the North Cascades Conservation Council filed a lawsuit against the NPS

for its effort to build 300-350 feet of Company Creek Road in the Stehekin River channel. Part of the road was destroyed by floods in December 2025. The project would dewater part of the river for three months, move the channel north, and install 700 feet of rock bank protection. The lawsuit alleges that it will harm spawning kokanee salmon and was approved without the required environmental review. Source: [KING5](#)

- *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve* - On September 14, a federal court rejected a challenge to a Clean Water Act permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Johnson Tract mineral exploration project, which is proposed on a private inholding inside the park. The permit authorizes the discharge of general embankment fill and surfacing material into local waters, the construction of a 2.3-mile access road, and the realignment and expansion of an existing airstrip. Source: [U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Public Affairs](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Tobin Roop was selected as the new superintendent. Tobin has 24 years of NPS experience, most recently as the chief of cultural resources at Yellowstone National Park. Source: [Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#)
- *Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site, Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site* - Robert Stewart was selected as the new superintendent. Robert has 18 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park. He started his new role on September 20. Source: [Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail](#)

Park People

Deceased

- Jerry Bayron Baggett, 54, passed away on September 26. Jerry worked for the NPS at Glacier National Park during the summers in college. Source: [Legacy/Tuscaloosa Memorial Chapel Funeral Home](#)
- Paula Jo Bates, 82, passed away on September 17. Paula worked for the NPS for many years, including time at Grand Canyon National Park, Navajo National Monument, and Fort Davis National Historic Site, as an administrator and interpreter. She retired from the NPS in 1998. Source: [Harris-Hanlon Mortuary](#)
- Terry Lee Daly passed away on September 21. Terry worked for a time at the NPS in Zion National Park. Source: [Legacy/Sawyer-Fuller Funeral Home and Cremation Services](#)
- Lorrie Lynn Knies, 64, passed away on September 19. Lorrie worked for a time as an

interpretive ranger at the NPS (park undisclosed; the obituary states “in the mountains of Virginia”). Source: [Preddy Funeral Home](#)

- Jon Matthew Newman, 49, passed away on September 10. Jon worked for the NPS in maintenance for 12 years, including time at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Source: [Jersey Shore Cremation](#)
- Margaret Jane “Janie” Rayner, 96, passed away on August 3. Janie was married to Dick Rayner, who worked for the NPS for many years. Janie worked and volunteered in a variety of capacities in many parks, including time as the Postmaster in Death Valley National Park. Source: [Goes Funeral Care](#)
- David “Dave” Courtney Skilling, 74, passed away on August 18. Dave worked on a trail crew at Grand Teton National Park during summers in high school. Source: [Dahl Funeral and Cremation Service](#)
- Vaughn Dwayne Tolbert Sr., 94, passed away on September 22. Vaughn worked for the NPS for a time at Fort Necessity National Battlefield. Source: [Legacy/Donald R. Crawford Funeral Home - Hopewood](#)

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.

- *National Park Service* - Public comment is [open through November 2](#) on a proposal to eliminate some review requirements for bicycle access on roads and trails in national park units. Source: [Federal Register](#)
- *U.S. Forest Service* - Public comment is open [through October 6](#) on a proposal to repeal the “Roadless Rule,” a 2001 policy prohibiting road construction and timber harvesting on over 55 million acres of national forest lands. Source: [Federal Register](#) [Editor note: *Though U.S. Forest Service lands are outside the jurisdiction of the NPS, this rule could have heavy effects on ecosystem continuity and wildland fire management on NPS lands.*]
- *Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through October 23](#) on alternative concepts for the site. The current structure at the site, built in 1976 on the footprint of the original mid-1800s structure, has had major maintenance and stability issues. Source: [Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - Public comment is [open through September 30](#) on a proposed site management plan for the Linville Falls Area, which was damaged heavily by Hurricane Helene in 2024. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Canaveral National Seashore* - Public comment is [open through October 4](#) on a Storm

Adaptive Management Plan for the Playalinda Beach district. Source: [Canaveral National Seashore](#)

- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - Public comment is [open through October 16](#) on two voluntary proposed land exchanges on the island. Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)

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

On September 10, 2026, Public Law 11901054, the Hershel “Woody” Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act (S. 858), was approved. The act authorizes the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work on the National Mall to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients.

Senate Actions

September 16 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources concluded a hearing to examine a number of bills including:

- S. 2644, to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Camden Battlefield area in the state of South Carolina as a unit of the National Park System
- S. 4103 and H.R. 2709, bills to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias
- S. 4023, in which the Secretary of the Interior shall establish a pilot program, to be known as the “America’s Living Library Project,” to facilitate the collection of new genomic data from species that are found in units of the National Park System
- S. 4955, to amend the act of May 17, 1954, to add 2.18 acres to the boundary of the “Jefferson National Expansion Memorial” and to rename the national memorial by striking “the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial” and inserting “Gateway Arch National Park”
- S. 5169, to expand the boundaries of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, to recognize and enhance the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District partnership model
- H.R. 1682, to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for lifetime National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes for family members of members of the Armed Forces who lost their lives while serving their country.

The committee received testimony from Senator Bennet; Alex Fitzsimmons, Associate Deputy

Secretary of Energy; and Sarah Ryker, Associate Director for Geology, Energy, and Minerals, United States Geological Survey, Department of the Interior.

September 17 - The Senate reported several bills including:

- H.R. 5254 and S. 2767, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- H.R. 6365, to require the Secretary of the Interior to issue a right-of-way for an emergency exit on certain National Park Service land in the state of Virginia, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 1288, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area in the state of New York. It would consist of Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, and Yates Counties in New York
- S. 2498, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to extend certain leases within units of the National Park System without opening the lease to bidding, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 2801, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating the Canterbury Shaker Village National Heritage Area in the state of New Hampshire, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 2887, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Route 66 National Historic Trail
- S. 2933, to re-designate a playground in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve in the state of West Virginia as the “Hearts of Gold Playground: In Honor of West Virginia Children and Families Impacted by Childhood Cancer”
- S. 3194, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in the state of California as the Monterey Bay National Heritage Area, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 3715, to redesignate Chiricahua National Monument as Chiricahua National Park in the state of Arizona, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 3720, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bay Area Ridge Trail, located in the San Francisco Bay area in the state of California, as a national scenic trail, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 3743, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a feasibility study on a selective water withdrawal system at Glen Canyon Dam, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 4238, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Endless Mountains National Heritage Area in the state of Pennsylvania to consist of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Wyoming Counties, Pennsylvania, and any portions of other counties in the state of Pennsylvania identified in the feasibility study for the Endless Mountains National Heritage Area

- S. 4538, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating Washington's Trail-1753 as a national historic trail. Washington's Trail-1753, extends approximately 500 miles from Williamsburg, Virginia, to Fort LeBoeuf (now Waterford), Pennsylvania, following the route taken by George Washington and his party on his diplomatic mission to the French on behalf of Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie from October 31, 1753, to January 16, 1754, just prior to the start of the French and Indian War.

September 22 - The Senate passed H.R. 4467, the "Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act" to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the state of Mississippi. This bill directs the Department of the Interior to convey approximately 7 acres of specified land (in two parcels) within the Vicksburg National Military Park to Mississippi for an interpretive center to the state of Mississippi. The conveyed land must facilitate public access to the park, may not be used in a manner that adversely impacts the park's resources or visitor experience, and remains subject to any use restriction that Interior determines is appropriate.

September 23

The Senate reported S. 3313 with an amendment in the nature of a substitute, to require the Secretary of the Interior to issue a right-of-way for an emergency exit on certain National Park Service land along the Blue Ridge Parkway in the state of Virginia.

The Senate passed S. 2933, to re-designate a playground in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve in the State of West Virginia as the "Hearts of Gold Playground: In Honor of West Virginia Children and Families Impacted by Childhood Cancer."

September 24 - The Senate passed H.R. 2388, the "Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe Project Lands Restoration Act," to take approximately 1,083 acres of specified lands in Washington into trust for the benefit of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Land taken into trust shall be part of the Tribe's reservation.

House of Representatives

September 14 - The House passed several bills including:

- H.R. 4931, the National Park System Long-Term Lease Investment Act that authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to extend certain leases within units of the National Park System without opening the lease to bidding
- H.R. 5063, the Safe Beaches, Safe Swimmers Act: amended, to ensure continuity of staffing at federal beaches
- H.R. 8121, amended, to designate the Christiansted Bandstand at the Christiansted National Historic Site, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, as the "Peter G. Thurland, Sr., Bandstand"

- H.R. 8454, providing for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over certain federal land in the state of California
- S. 790, the “Making National Parks Safer Act”, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to Next Generation 9-1-1 systems
- S. 603, designating the General George C. Marshall House in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as an affiliated area of the National Park System
- H.R. 309, the “National Law Enforcement Officers Remembrance, Support, and Community Outreach Act”, amended, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide funding for the National Law Enforcement Museum.

September 15 - The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on several bills including:

- H.R. 7254, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bay Area Ridge National Scenic Trail located in the San Francisco Bay area in California
- H.R. 9269, the “Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act” to amend Section 308404 of title 54, United States Code, by striking “7 years after the date of enactment of this chapter” and inserting “10 years after the date of the enactment of the Renewing the African American Civil Rights Network Act”
- H.R. 9600, the “Common Sense 250 Act of 2026” to approve the location of a commemorative work for Thomas Paine, America’s indispensable and unsung founding father
- S. 675, the “Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Act” to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to award the Theodore Roosevelt Library Foundation grants in an amount not to exceed a total of \$50,000,000 for the establishment of the Library. Additionally, the bill authorizes the Secretary to enter into agreements with the Foundation to provide for a loan to the Foundation from federal agencies under the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary (including the National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service) of artifacts and objects of historic, educational, artistic, natural interest, and other museum artifacts and objects, particularly artifacts and objects that are not on display to the public, without monetary consideration, for use in the library subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines to be necessary for the preservation and exhibition of the artifacts and objects loaned to the Foundation.

H.R. 184, H.R. 7254, and H.R. 9269 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 9600 and S. 675 were ordered reported, without amendment.

September 16 -

The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries held a hearing on a number of bills including H.R 177, the “Yosemite National Park Equal Access and Fairness Act.” This bill modifies the Raker Act (which allowed San Francisco to dam the Hetch Hetchy Valley within Yosemite National Park) to (1) increase the annual rent San Francisco pays to the National Park Service (NPS), and (2) direct the NPS to expand public access to the reservoir and lake created by the dam. Specifically, the bill increases rent paid by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission for the use of the park from \$30,000 to \$2 million per year. That amount must be adjusted annually to reflect increases in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers. The commission may not recoup such sums from wholesale water or power customers. The bill allows collected rent to be used by the Department of the Interior for wildfire mitigation activities in the park and other national parks in California. The bill also requires the NPS to administer the Hetch Hetchy Reservoir and Lake Eleanor Basin areas for public recreation, benefit, and use in a manner that will preserve scenic, historic, scientific, or otherwise important features.

The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on several bills including:

- H.R. 1031, the “Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park Establishment Act” to establish the Fort Ontario National Monument in Oswego, New York as a unit of the National Park System
- H.R. 2323, the “Big Bend National Park Boundary Adjustment Act” to adjust the boundary of Big Bend National Park in the state of Texas by adding approximately 6,100 additional acres of land to the park
- H.R. 7495, to authorize the establishment of memorials to the Wisconsin infantry officers and enlisted men who fought in the Battle of Antietam and the Second Battle of Bull Run
- H.R. 8276, the “Quindaro Townsite National Historic Landmark Act” to designate the Quindaro Townsite National Historic Landmark, in Kansas. The town of Quindaro was founded in 1857, in the Territory of Kansas, with the specific intent of aiding the Free-State movement in the struggle over whether to admit Kansas to the Union as a free state or a slave state
- H.R 9104, the “Rock Creek National Park Act of 2026” to re-designate Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia as Rock Creek National Park
- H.R. 9148, the “Scipio Jones House Assessment Act” to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area as a National Historic Landmark or Affiliated Area of the National Park System; and including the study area as a part of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

- S. 1051, the "Historic Greenwood District - Black Wall Street National Monument Establishment Act" to establish the Historic Greenwood District - Black Wall Street National Monument in the state of Oklahoma as a unit of the National Park System to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations resources associated with the Historic Greenwood District, Black Wall Street, and the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 and the role of each in the history of the State of Oklahoma and the United States
- S. 1377, the "Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act" that directs the Department of the Interior to maintain a genetically diverse herd of horses, with a population of no fewer than 150 horses, in the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota. Interior must develop a management plan to protect the horses while ensuring that the natural resources within the park are not adversely impacted. The bill also prohibits Interior from removing horses from the park unless the removal is (1) to maintain a genetically diverse herd of horses, (2) in the case of an emergency, or (3) to protect public health and safety.

Testimony was heard from Chairman Hill, and Representatives Tenney, Pfluger, and Schmidt; Sara Otte Coleman, Director, Tourism and Marketing, North Dakota Department of Commerce; Matthew McCombs, State Forester and Director, State Forest Service; Colorado; Terry Wilbur, Clerk, Oswego County, New York; Deryl Wynn, Chief Policy Analyst and Executive Advisor, Office of Mayor Christal E. Watson, Kansas City, Kansas; and public witnesses.

Other Relevant Department of the Interior News

- *12 data center projects on BLM land* - The Bureau of Land Management is reviewing data center-related proposals covering 17,600 acres of public land across Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. Some projects involve building full data centers, while others involve infrastructure to support data centers, such as telecommunications lines and water pipelines. Exact locations will be disclosed when each project enters the National Environmental Policy Act process. Source: [The Washington Sun](#)
- *ND wetland easements to be updated* - On September 22, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it will update and expand the pilot Prairie Pothole Wetland project in North Dakota. This effort allows the agency to correct the mapping of wetland easements that were vague from a lack of modern mapping technology, in coordination with local landowners. "The program will not result in a reduction in total protected waterfowl easements." Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Coastal storm

On September 28, following heavy coastal storms, Dare County (NC) declared a State of Emergency for Hatteras Island, prohibiting any non-resident travel to the island. Damages were reported to the Avon Fishing Pier, septic systems along Rodanthe Beach, and boardwalks on Hatteras Island Beach. Staff and volunteers are working to clean and repair infrastructure.

Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)

Channel Islands National Park

Boat runs aground

On September 24, a 25-foot sailboat with one person aboard ran aground on Santa Rosa Island. The individual was extricated by a Coast Guard helicopter, then taken to Camarillo (CA) Airport for evaluation by the Ventura County Fire Department. No injuries were reported in the incident.

Source: [New York Post](#)

Death Valley National Park

Truck fire

On September 9, a commercial semi-truck carrying emulsified asphalt was driving eastbound on Highway 190 when its brakes overheated while descending from Towne Pass, causing a fire. The driver was able to come to a stop and detached the cab from the trailer, preventing the contents from spilling or igniting. The cab “later became fully engulfed in flames.” This is the eighth semi-truck fire on that section of Highway 190 in the past three years. Source: [Death Valley National](#)

[Park](#)

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Boat runs aground

On September 17, a commercial fishing vessel with three people aboard ran aground between Needle Rock and Lime Point Lighthouse, near the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge. Personnel from the Coast Guard and San Francisco (CA) Police Department responded and rescued all three individuals. They were transferred to ambulances at Coast Guard Station Golden Gate and transported to Marin Health Medical Center. One of the individuals later passed away at the hospital. The NPS coordinated salvage efforts for the boat, while the Coast Guard supported assessments for potential pollution and debris removal. The San Francisco Police Department is leading an investigation into the cause of the incident. Source: [United States](#)

[Coast Guard News](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

More flooding

On September 16, another flash flood swept through Bright Angel Creek, less than three weeks after the floods that killed three individuals on August 29 (see [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#)). There

were no reported injuries, but there were further damages to the Transcanyon Waterline and trails. Water conservation measures are still in effect on the South Rim, and a number of trails remain closed. Source: [Arizona Daily Sun](#)

Grand Teton National Park

Bear euthanized

On September 11, park staff euthanized a bear that had repeatedly gained access to human food and began approaching hikers at Delta Lake. The bear was “unusually difficult to haze away.” Park staff utilized a helicopter to fly the bear’s body out of the backcountry on September 12. Delta Lake has seen foot traffic increase by 440% in recent years due to social media. Source: [SFGate](#)

Harry S Truman National Historic Site

Storm damage

On September 15, a storm damaged the facade of the historic Fire Station #1 in Independence, Missouri, which is owned by the city of Independence and leased by the NPS to serve as the park’s visitor center. Brickwork was said to be “falling and bulging.” The building and sidewalk in front have been closed indefinitely. A bond measure that is on the ballot in November would raise funds to restore and repair several properties, including Fire Station #1. Source: [KHSB](#)

Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park

Tropical storm

On September 23 and 24, most of the park preemptively closed ahead of Tropical Storm Nolo, which was forecasted to bring heavy rain and damaging winds to the island. On September 27, most of the park reopened, with a couple places still being assessed for hazards. Source: *Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park* ([9/24](#), [9/27](#))

Yosemite National Park

Firefighting helicopter crash

On September 20, a contracted helicopter providing water drops for the Dome Fire went down near Ostrander Lake. Two individuals on board passed away in the accident. The cause of the crash is under investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board. Source: [SFGate](#), [12News](#)

Yosemite National Park

Fall fatality

On September 20, a 19-year-old was hiking near Illilouette Falls when they slipped and took a ~400-foot fall. The individual passed away from injuries sustained in the fall. Source: [KTLA](#), [People](#)

Zion National Park

Hiker rescue

On September 19, a hiker experienced a “non-life-threatening injury” on the Angels Landing trail. The trail was closed for a rescue operation. Medical care was provided and the individual was “escorted safely down the trail.” Source: [Gephardt Daily](#)

Wildfires

- *Death Valley National Park* - On September 15, a fire started at Saline Valley Warm Springs Campground. The fire destroyed a shed at the volunteer camp host’s site and burned the skirts of dead palm fronds on 80 nonnative palm trees. The fire was contained to the Lower Spring area. There were no injuries reported. Individuals were evacuated from the site. On September 17, the park reopened a portion of the campground. The burned area at Lower Springs remains closed to public entry. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Source: *Death Valley National Park* ([9/16](#), [9/18](#))
- *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 September 26, the fire was 8,553 acres and 42% contained. 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 September 27, the Border 2 Fire was 23,8571 acres and 75% contained. Source: [Whatcom News](#), *North Cascades National Park* ([7/27](#), [7/31](#), [8/2](#), [8/14](#), [8/17](#)), [KING5](#), [Watch Duty](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - On September 15, the Dome Fire started north of Wawona Dome, near Chilnualna Falls. There are no immediate threats to infrastructure. As of September 28, the fire was 5,215 acres and 30% contained. The cause of the fire is still under investigation, though the park has asked the public for any witness accounts of individuals with a campfire in the Chilnualna Falls area. Source: [Watch Duty](#), [KCRA](#), [Yosemite National Park \(Facebook\)](#), [Yosemite National Park \(nps.gov\)](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - On September 19, the Bureau of Reclamation reopened the East Portal Road for the first time since its closure due to rainfall and mudslides on September 14. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - On October 14, the park will reopen Water Canyon Campground and designated backcountry beach camping in the northwest and southwest quadrants of Santa Rosa Island for the first time since the Santa Rosa Island Fire in May/

June (see [5/27/26](#), [6/10/26](#), and [8/5/26 Coalition Reports](#)). The southeast quadrant will remain closed to backcountry camping through the remainder of 2026. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)

- *Death Valley National Park* - On October 2, Titus Canyon Road will be closed to repair flood damage that occurred in 2022 and 2023. The project is expected to be complete in May 2027. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The human remains found on September 14 near Crystal Rapid (see [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#)) have been confirmed to belong to the last missing individual after flash floods on August 29. Source: [CBS News](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On September 19, the park announced November 16 as the new estimated date for restoring water to the South Rim. Water has been shut off since flash floods on August 29 (see [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#)). Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) with a first-hand account of the individual who was lost for 11 days before being found on Intermediate Lake on September 12 (see [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#)). Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Olympic National Park* - On September 20, the backpacker who went missing in the Madison Falls Trail area (see [9/16/26 Coalition Report](#)) was found deceased on the northwest slope of Mt. Appleton. No other information was released. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - In July, a federal court judge rejected an argument that the park's superintendent exercises unconstitutional enforcement powers because he was not confirmed by the Senate (see [4/29/26 Coalition Report](#) under "Legal Actions"). As a result, the individual pleaded guilty to fishing without a license, and two other charges for fishing during a closure and driving on an oversnow route were dropped. The individual was fined \$500 and ordered to pay other court costs. Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#)

Acknowledgements

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Debbie Reed, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Dennis Burnett, Steve Hastings, Mike Murray, Chris Nelson, Bill Walters

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

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.

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



Copyright (C) 2026 Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. All rights reserved.