YOUR AMERICAN WEST

PARKS
American Indian Heritage Month

EVENTS
Tucson Festival of Books
Walk with Nature
Restored by Light

PRODUCTS
Mission San José Mini Blocks
3-D Magnets
The new year brings the promise of new experiences and the opportunity for new discoveries. In this issue, we feature stories and events from many of our smaller parks, such as Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site and Tuzigoot National Monument. This year I hope you visit these treasured sites and explore what makes them so unique.

During the production of our last issue of Your American West, the Carr Fire devastated northern California, including Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. Thirty-nine thousand acres of the park, as well as the homes of both National Park Service (NPS) and Western National Parks Association (WNPA) staff, were destroyed. As we continue to support those affected by the Carr Fire, our thoughts are also with our colleagues at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and the residents of the surrounding areas who have been affected by the Woolsey Fire.

The Woolsey Fire burned fifteen hundred structures and almost one hundred thousand acres, including more than twenty thousand acres within Santa Monica Mountains NRA. Approximately 88 percent of NPS land within the park boundary burned. Several structures, including the historic Peter Strauss Ranch, the University of California, Los Angeles La Kretz Research Center for California Conservation Science, and the famous Western Town at Paramount Ranch, were damaged or destroyed as well. According to the NPS, the Woolsey Fire has burned more acres within the park than any other fire in recorded history. The damage to this beautiful park and the loss of these structures is devastating.

As fires continue to be a concern across the West, we are grateful for the dedication of those working to save lives, homes, and land. We are also thankful for the hard work of our colleagues at Santa Monica Mountains NRA. Although some of what we have lost is irreplaceable, we know that—through the collaborative efforts of NPS, WNPA, and dedicated volunteers—the park will recover.

With sincerest thanks for your support,

Sincerely,

James E. Cook
Executive Director
Since 1938 WNPA has funded scientific research to help advance the management, preservation, and interpretation of our national parks. WNPA has partnered with the University of Arizona School of Journalism to provide engaging stories about the research projects completed with the aid of WNPA funding. Your American West will feature one of these stories in each of the next few issues. Discover more of the historical, social, and environmental research projects WNPA has funded in recent years on our website.

Research Matters

This past October we celebrated Bat Week in honor of the crucial role bats play in our ecosystem. These helpful but often misunderstood creatures fulfill the important functions of controlling insect populations, dispersing seeds for fruit production, and pollinating plants. Sadly bat populations in the eastern United States have been severely reduced by a devastating disease known as white-nose syndrome. Bat biologist Debbie Buecher conducted research at El Malpais National Monument in New Mexico to collect data that will help environmental groups address this issue. Read on for a summary of this research project. This article was originally published online.

Bats Battle Fungus: Bat Cave Microclimates at El Malpais

By Susan Swanberg, assistant professor of journalism at the University of Arizona

Imagine a world without bats—a world overrun with biting insects, a world where plants that rely on bat pollinators might disappear. Debbie Buecher, a Tucson bat biologist, is trying to prevent that scenario from becoming a reality. Buecher studies bat cave microclimates, examining whether conditions are ripe for the spread of *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (formerly known as *Geomyces destructans*), the fungal pathogen that causes white-nose syndrome (WNS) in bats. WNS has hit the little brown bats of the genus *Myotis*, one of the most common bats in North America, particularly hard.

**What Is White-Nose Syndrome?**

WNS is named for the sometimes visible, fuzzy, white fungal growth on a bat’s muzzle, ears, or wings. In the absence of visible fungal growth, a characteristic microscopic pattern of eroded skin is diagnostic of the disease. The behavior of affected bats is sometimes abnormal, including daytime flight during hibernation season. Many infected bats suffer severe emaciation prior to death, caused by loss of stored fat reserves.

Since the emergence of WNS, bat colonies in the eastern United States have been decimated. According to Buecher, the mortality for little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) suffering with WNS is often greater than 95 percent.

**Studying Bat Cave Microclimates**

The fungus that causes WNS is cold-loving and thrives in high (nearly saturated) humidity, just the conditions often found in bat hibernacula (the caves and abandoned mines where bats hibernate). Buecher’s research, funded in part by Western National Parks Association, examines the microclimate in bat hibernacula in New Mexico, including Java caves in New Mexico’s El Malpais National Monument. Buecher’s research will help biologists assess whether conditions within bat caves in the western United States are favorable for the fungus.

The results showed that, in one section of an El Malpais bat cave, the temperature was appropriate for the fungus but the relative humidity was low. In another section of the cave, neither the temperature nor the relative humidity was optimal for the fungus. Other caves in New Mexico harbored conditions amenable to the fungus.

The data Buecher collected will be used to model the microclimate conditions preferred by hibernating bats in New Mexico. This in turn will allow resource agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service to focus their efforts on monitoring and decontaminating caves where conditions are optimal for the fungus, thereby providing our bats with a fighting chance against this devastating disease.
Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve Store Reaches $1 Million Milestone

Kris Illenberger, WNPA Park Store Manager at Great Sand Dunes NP & Pres

Reaching $1 million in sales within one year certainly has been a rewarding milestone to achieve. When I consider the path we’ve been on toward this achievement, it’s obvious it would not have occurred without the participation of many individuals: WNPA and park staff and volunteers, WNPA Home Office staff, vendors, and, of course, visitors.

The most significant part of this journey has occurred just in the past four or five years, as we’ve seen the most dramatic growth over that period of time. Sales have risen 100 percent since 2014, along with a healthy rise in visitation. The increase in visitation combined with our ongoing efforts to introduce new, relevant, and attractive products are the primary factors we believe have brought us to where we are.

Wild Tribute Donates to Whiskeytown National Recreation Area

This past July the Carr Fire claimed about 93 percent of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, destroying several buildings and leaving only about three thousand of the park’s forty-two thousand acres untouched. Since then the top priority for the park has been to make the area safe again as a place for people to work and visit.

To help with this effort, Wild Tribute—a clothing company and WNPA vendor partner since February 2018—generously donated $5,000 to replace and repair educational elements in the park, including signs, exhibits, and program materials that were damaged during the fire.

“Supporting our parks and public lands is the core of Wild Tribute’s DNA,” said Ben Kieffner, Wild Tribute co-founder. “Having the ability to quickly direct funding from our #4theParks donations to the Whiskeytown recovery efforts epitomizes and validates why we do what we do. We are park stewards working to ensure our most wild and historic places, inclusive of Whiskeytown, remain for generations to come.”

All of us at WNPA thank Wild Tribute for their generosity and our friends at Whiskeytown NRA for their continued dedication to the park’s recovery.

To learn more about Wild Tribute, visit their website.

The National Parks Store Gets a New Look

On October 2 we celebrated the renovation of The National Parks Store, our flagship store in Oro Valley, Arizona, where we were joined by members of the Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce and the City of Oro Valley for a ribbon cutting.

The remodel, which took just six days to complete, fulfilled our long-held goal of making The National Parks Store more like a visitor center by adding educational displays about our partner parks. In addition to our new look, we made significant accessibility updates to our store and Kiva Room, where we host more than one hundred educational programs and shows for more than six thousand attendees annually. The updates include an audio induction looping system for guests who are hard of hearing and universally accessible front entrance and restroom doors so our programs can be enjoyed by all. A big thank you to our annual Kiva Room sponsor, Splendido at Rancho Vistoso, and our sponsor for the months of October and November, Pima Federal Credit Union, for making these improvements possible!

WNPA Annual Awards Presented

For over 30 years WNPA has recognized individuals and organizations who make extraordinary contributions to national parks and increase awareness of our mission. At our board reception in November, the WNPA Board of Directors presented awards to four exceptional individuals.

Dr. T. J. Ferguson, professor of anthropology at the University of Arizona, received the Emil W. Haury Award for his collaboration with American Indian leaders and elders and his crucial role in bringing the voices and perspectives of American Indian tribes to...
the NPS. The Emil W. Haury Award is named for the esteemed anthropologist and archaeologist who was instrumental in founding Southwest Monuments Association, the precursor to WNPA.

Dr. Siriporn Peters, assistant professor in the Department of Art, Communications, and Theatre at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, received the Stewart L. Udall Award for her leadership in the creation of collaborative, engaging, and accessible programs and exhibits at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site in Oklahoma. The Stewart L. Udall Award is named for the renowned conservationist and former secretary of the interior who served as a WNPA board member from 1984 to 1994.

This year we honored two recipients of the Edward B. Danson Award. Katherine Faz, chief of interpretation and visitor services at Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve in Colorado, was recognized for her commitment to the shared mission of WNPA and the NPS at the park, where she was instrumental in the park store achieving annual sales of more than $1 million for fiscal year 2018. We also posthumously honored Dr. Pepe Marcos-Iga, former board member and chief operating officer of WNPA, in recognition of his dedication to environmental education and commitment to connecting new audiences to our national parks. Marcos-Iga’s award was accepted by his son, José Marcos. The Edward B. Danson award is named for the noted archaeologist and former director of the Museum of Northern Arizona who served as a WNPA Board of Directors and the National Park System Advisory Board.

We are proud to honor these individuals who not only preserve and protect our national parks, but also work to ensure that the parks can be enjoyed by all. We are proud to honor these individuals who not only preserve and protect our national parks, but also work to ensure that the parks can be enjoyed by all.

In the Parks

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Nature as a Classroom

Brittany Morrissette, Education Intern at Great Sand Dunes NP & Pres

This spring and summer, I had the opportunity of a lifetime as the education intern for the Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve. I am an educator who believes that hands-on learning and immersion in an environment can leave lasting impressions on learners. As the person leading field trips and other learning experiences, I learned how to make educational trips to the outdoors a lively, fulfilling visit for students, their teachers, and even adult chaperones. I believe that people value things that they are familiar with, and through educating people about this park’s living systems, I hope to instill a sense of land stewardship in national park visitors. My internship prepared me to share my wonder and knowledge with students who came from all over Colorado and New Mexico by leading playful, explorative programs on topics like archaeology, identifying edible plants, and geology. For some students, being off the pavement is a novelty, and wildlife is seen only on screens. But here at the Great Sand Dunes, mule deer and elk graze near the roads, predatory birds circle the skies above, and our feet sink into the hot sand. It takes hours of climbing to reach a peak in the dune field! Some school groups reserved camp sites for overnight trips; when we’d meet in the morning, they shared their awe of seeing the Milky Way for the first time and recount the number of shooting stars they saw. I was originally from city suburbs, too, and didn’t see the Milky Way until my mid-twenties. It was originally from city suburbs, too, and didn’t see the Milky Way until my mid-twenties. I was originally from city suburbs, too, and didn’t see the Milky Way until my mid-twenties.

As a former teacher in the rural communities near this remote national park, I recall how expensive and time-consuming it was to go on meaningful field trips to greater cultural centers. I made it my goal to connect this amazing resource we have—the national park—with underserved schools. I hoped to familiarize the local, largely Hispanic/Latinx students with this place’s history and how their own history is important in the story of our nation. I am honored to have represented the park in a workshop organized by the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, which worked to give educators place-based teaching methods about local cultural and natural resources. My enthusiasm as a part-time archaeologist demonstrated to students some of the employment options available to them, and I was able to tell them about the variety of career paths open to them if they enjoyed these topics or activities.

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American Indian Heritage Month

November was American Indian Heritage Month, a time dedicated to celebrating the diverse traditions, cultures, and contributions of American Indians. Every year the NPS joins other federal cultural institutions in hosting events, lectures, concerts, webinars, and more to honor American Indians. WNPA took part in this initiative by supporting and bringing attention to events throughout November. The following are just a few of these events.

150th Commemoration of the Attack at Washita

This November marked the 150th anniversary of the attack on Cheyenne Peace Chief Black Kettle’s encampment near the Washita River. On the morning of November 27, 1868, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and the 7th US Cavalry surrounded the sleeping village and opened fire. They killed between 30 and 60 Cheyenne, including Black Kettle and his wife, and took 53 women and children captive. Today the site of this attack is preserved at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site near Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

Throughout November the park hosted numerous events, including art workshops, ranger programs, and speaker presentations, offering hundreds of park visitors a chance to remember, learn about, and reflect on the attack. Tim Sanders, the descendant of a soldier in the 7th US Cavalry, and Alissa Old Crow, a descendant of Cheyenne tribal members involved in the conflict, shared stories of how they learned about their family history and their connection to the attack. That night the park hosted a dinner for the speakers and their families.

“To hear the hum of conversation and the laughter and the connections that were being made [that night] it was probably one of the most powerful things I’ve ever seen,” said park superintendent Matthew Tucker Blythe. “To see those families who are tied together because of something that happened 150 years ago and to know they left the room becoming lifelong friends was really incredible.”

The 150th commemoration was an opportunity not only to remember what took place, but also to deepen cultural understanding, educate younger generations, and support healing and reconciliation.

Artists Visit Tuzigoot and Montezuma Castle National Monuments

Tuzigoot National Monument and Montezuma Castle National Monument, both located in central Arizona, protect the remains of two pueblos built between 1000 and 1100 by the Sinagua people. Many Pueblo people today have cultural, linguistic, or genetic ties to the Sinagua. Throughout November Tuzigoot NM and Montezuma Castle NM honored the rich and diverse artistic traditions of the Puebloans by hosting a series of potters, carvers, painters, jewelry makers, weavers, and storytellers from tribes across Arizona and New Mexico.

Every weekend park visitors were given a unique and exciting opportunity to learn more about Hopi, Zuni, and Kewa (formerly known as Santo Domingo) cultures while enjoying engaging demonstrations by renowned artists, including Hopi weaver Davis Maho, Kewa jewelry maker Priscilla Nieto, and Zuni fetish carvers Jimmy Yawakia and Duran Gasper.

Montezuma Castle NM also hosted their fourth annual Yavapai-Apache Nation Celebration, which featured many artists, singers, and dancers honoring both Yavapai and Apache history and heritage.

“Our two monuments are significant cultural sites of the Sinagua people,” said Dorothy FireCloud, superintendent for both parks. “It is our pleasure to honor tribal history by having modern-day tribal artisans present a small part of what has survived through the centuries.”

Spiritual Healing Run/Walk at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

The Sand Creek Massacre was one of the most controversial and tragic events in our country’s history. On November 29, 1864, more than 600 US volunteer soldiers attacked a peaceful village of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians along Sand Creek in present-day Colorado. Despite the tribes raising a white flag, the recognized symbol of surrender, by the next morning soldiers had slaughtered between 150 and 230 people—most of whom were women, children, and the elderly. The memory of this attack is preserved at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site.

The approximately 180-mile run began on November 22 at Sand Creek Massacre NHS near Eads, Colorado, and concluded on November 25 at the steps of the Colorado State Capitol Building in Denver. On the final day of the event, participants gathered at Riverside Cemetery to honor Capt. Silas Soule and Lt. Joseph A. Cramer, who refused to take part in the massacre and whose descriptions of the horrors they witnessed led to multiple federal investigations that uncovered the brutality of the attack.

Cheyenne and Arapaho runners during a Spiritual Healing Run at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (courtesy of NPS).
Focus On

Teri Jobe, NPS interpretive park guide at Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, first decided to become a park ranger in college when she discovered the Parks and Resource Management Program at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. Before joining the Sand Creek Massacre NHS staff in 2017, Teri was a park guide at Boston National Historical Park in Massachusetts, one of her favorite national parks. “I enjoy being able to talk to visitors and help them learn about parts of history they might not have known about before,” Teri wrote. “Seeing people make connections between what they already knew and what they learn at the park is an amazing feeling.” At Sand Creek Massacre NHS, Teri helps visitors understand and reflect on the horrific events that took place there in 1864. “[The Sand Creek Massacre] is a darker and lesser known piece of American history,” wrote Teri. “Those parts are important because people can learn valuable lessons from them.” Thank you, Teri, for your help in making Sand Creek Massacre NHS a place of learning and empathy.

New & Notable Releases

3-D Magnet

Decorate your fridge with a sight from San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park! This unique and eye-catching 3-D magnet of Balclutha is hand painted so no two are exactly alike. Detailed information about the ship is included on the back. Find this magnet in our online store.

Mission San José Mini Blocks

Now you can own the Queen of the Missions in miniature! Mission San José, known as Queen of the Missions, is the largest of the five Spanish missions at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. With these 788 pieces, you’re sure to have a ton of fun building your own tiny version of this iconic structure. For ages 7+. Available for purchase in our online store.

Did you know?

1. Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site is located near Eads, Colorado.

2. The area was designated a national historic site in 2000, but wasn’t dedicated or formally opened to the public until April 27, 2007.

3. The site was established to preserve the memory of the men, women, and children who were killed there and to create a place of healing for tribal members and descendants of those who suffered or died in the attack.

4. The site is of sacred significance to Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.

5. The Monument Hill area within the site includes the Repatriation Area, where visitors can go to pay their respects to the victims.

WNPA Bookmarks

Be sure to pick up a free bookmark the next time you stop by one of our park stores! The bookmarks feature a one-time 20 percent off discount code for any online store purchase. Just scan the QR code on the bookmark or visit store.wnpa.org and use the promo code at checkout.
Featured Events & Activities

At Home in the Big Thicket
Saturday, December 1–Tuesday, April 30
Big Thicket National Preserve
6044 FM 420
Kountze, TX 77625
Enjoy art in the park! This temporary art exhibit displays the work of more than 480 students across the country. Students created pieces of art highlighting the vast array of plants and animals found at the park, and each piece represents a student's unique perspective on the diversity of the natural environment in the region. For more information, click here.

Winter Astronomy Program
Saturday, March 2, 7 PM–10 PM
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
South Rim Visitor Center
9800 Highway 347
Montrose, CO 81401
In 2015 Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park was designated as an International Dark Sky Park, and it preserves some of the darkest skies in the country. Join NPS rangers and members of the Black Canyon Astronomical Society for a program called Spring Night Sky at the South Rim Visitor Center. Following the program, visitors will be invited to a night sky viewing, weather permitting. For more information, call 970-641-2337.

Walk with Nature
Tuesday, January 8–Wednesday, February 27
9 AM–4:30 PM
Santa Monica Mountains Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center
26876 Mulholland Highway
Calabasas, CA 91302
Enjoy more than 30 paintings by local landscape painter Russell Hunsicker. See original watercolor, acrylic, and oil paintings of the beautiful landscapes in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and Channel Islands National Park. Meet the artist on Saturday, January 12, from 1 PM to 3 PM. For more information, call 805-370-2302.

Tucson Festival of Books
Saturday, March 2 & Sunday, March 3
9:30 AM–5:30 PM each day
The University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721
Come celebrate literacy at the 11th annual Tucson Festival of Books and meet representatives from more than 15 of our parks! TFOB, as it’s known, is one of the largest book festivals in the country and is free and open to the public. WNPA will once again host our popular The National Park Experience Pavilion, with informational and educational activities as well as pop-up shops for The National Parks Store and Hubbell Trading Post. For more information, click here.

Civil War Battlefield Hike
Saturdays through April 27
10:30 AM–12:30 PM
Pecos National Historical Park
1 Peach Drive
Pecos, NM 87552
Step back into the 1860s! Visit battle sites of the Civil War and discover the story behind the Battle of Glorieta Pass on a ranger-led hike along the beautiful 2.25-mile loop. Visitors should bring sturdy hiking footwear, snacks, and plenty of water. For more information, call 505-757-7241.

O’odham Tash (O’odham Day)
Sunday, March 3, 10 AM–1 PM
Tumacácori National Historical Park
1891 East Frontage Rd.
Tumacácori, AZ 85640
What is a “tash”? It’s a celebration of culture! Discover the heritage of the original residents of Tumacácori National Historical Park and immerse yourself in O’odham art, music, food, and crafts. For more information, click here.

Restored by Light
Friday, March 22, 6 PM–11 PM
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
Mission San José
6701 San Jose Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78214
See Mission San José as it once was. The evening will kick off with family-friendly activities and entertainment. At dusk the façade of Mission San José will be restored to its original appearance using projection technology. Bring a picnic or enjoy snacks from on-site food vendors while listening to music by DJ Steven Lee Moya. For more information, call 210-932-1001 or click here.

Anza Fun Run
Sunday, April 28
7 AM–12 PM
Tubac Presidio State Historic Park
1 Burruel St.
Tubac, AZ 85646
Join us for a four-mile run (or walk) along the beautiful Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, starting at Tubac Presidio State Historic Park and concluding at Tumacácori National Historical Park! Enjoy historical displays and activities along the way. The entry fee is $20 and includes a t-shirt. For more information, call 520-370-5060.

Fee-Free Day
Monday, January 21
All NPS sites
Enjoy fee-free entrance to all NPS sites for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day!
For more events at national parks near you, check out their websites!

**Arizona**
- Canyon de Chelly National Monument
- Casa Grande Ruins National Monument
- Chiricahua National Monument
- Coronado National Memorial
- Fort Bowie National Historic Site
- Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site
- Lake Mead National Recreation Area
- Montezuma Castle National Monument
- Navajo National Monument
- Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
- Saguaro National Park
- Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument
- The National Parks Store
- Tonto National Monument
- Tumacácori National Historical Park
- United States National Park Service
- Walnut Canyon National Monument
- Wupatki National Monument

**California**
- Channel Islands National Park
- Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site
- John Muir National Historic Site
- Mojave National Preserve
- Pinnacles National Park
- Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial
- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- Santa Rosa Island National Park
- San Diego National Wildlife Refuge
- Shasta-Trinity National Forest
- Sonoma Forts National Monument
- Temescal Creek Natural Monument
- The National Parks Store
- Twin Peaks National Recreation Area
- Whiskeytown National Recreation Area

**Colorado**
- Bent’s Old Fort National Historic Site
- Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
- Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad National Historical Park
- Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve
- High Country National Historic Site
- Mesa Verde National Park
- Niwot Ridge National Historic Site
- Portal National Monument
- Royal Gorge National and Provincial Park
- Taos Pueblo National Monument
- Wind River Indian Reservation National Monument
- Wyoming 1904 National Historic Site
- Theodore Roosevelt National Park
- The National Parks Store
- Yampa River Natural Area

**Nevada**
- Great Basin National Park
- Lake Mead National Recreation Area

**New Mexico**
- Aztec Ruins National Monument
- Bandelier National Monument
- Capulin Volcano National Monument
- Carlsbad Caverns National Park
- Chaco Culture National Historical Park
- El Malpais National Monument
- El Morro National Monument
- Fort Union National Monument
- Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument
- Pecos National Historical Park
- Petroglyph National Monument
- Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument
- White Sands National Monument

**Oklahoma**
- Chickasaw National Recreation Area
- Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

**Texas**
- Allabates Flint Quarrries National Monument
- Big Thicket National Preserve
- Chamizal National Memorial
- Fort Davis National Historic Site
- Guadalupe Mountains National Park
- Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
- Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park
- Padre Island National Seashore
- Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park
- San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
- The National Parks Store
- The Llano Estacado Natural Area
- The National Parks Store
- Texas State Parks
- The National Parks Store

**Utah**
- Golden Spike National Historic Site
- Timpanogos Cave National Monument

**Kansas**
- Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site
- Fort Larned National Historic Site
- Fort Scott National Historic Site
- Nicodemus National Historic Site
- The National Parks Store

**Montana & Wyoming**
- Big Horn National Recreation Area
- Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

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Kids in Parks

The Stewart L. Udall Parks in Focus program connects middle school-aged youth to nature through photography. Using photography as a tool not just for creative expression but also to learn about their local environment, Parks in Focus helps kids develop an appreciation for the outdoors. The kids are taught introductory photography concepts and work alongside park rangers and professional photographers while learning about the importance of national parks.

The program begins every January with a series of after-school activities held at each of the six Boys & Girls Club locations in Tucson, Arizona, and includes Saturday field trips to sites like Saguaro National Park, Tumacácori National Historical Park, and the Tucson Botanical Gardens. In the summer the most engaged participants are invited to attend multi-day camping trips to Sedona, Flagstaff, and Grand Canyon.

Many of the program’s participants live in metropolitan areas and have limited or no access to nature. The field trips and camping excursions organized by Parks in Focus provide kids with the opportunity to experience national parks—often for the first time.

“Parks in Focus was an amazing adventure. The hikes we went on were beautiful, exciting, and fun. I learned a lot about different types of plants and animals and even learned to love broccoli! It was the most fun I’ve ever had,” said Mer’jai, age 10. Since 1999 Parks in Focus has grown from a small program that reached 12 kids every summer into a year-round program that reaches approximately five hundred kids in Tucson and nearly one thousand kids at program sites across the country annually. This is made possible in part through donations given to WNPA, the program’s official nonprofit partner.

“Photography remains an effective and relevant way to engage youth with the outdoors and with our nation’s public lands,” said Udall Foundation Executive Director Phil Lemanski. “Ultimately, we are striving to inspire the next generation of public lands visitors and stewards.”

Throughout October and November, photos taken by the program’s 2018 participants were on display at The National Parks Store in Oro Valley, Arizona. To find out how you can donate to Parks in Focus, click here.
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