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THE COALITION TO PROTECT
AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS
VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

The Coalition Report
Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Happy birthday to the National Park Service!
Today, August 25, marks 105 years.

Coalition Actions

The Coalition is looking for your support for oil and gas leasing reform. The pause on new oil and gas drilling has been lifted, putting public lands at risk. We are urging Congress to make significant reforms to our onshore oil and gas leasing program as part of the budget reconciliation process. Please consider adding your name to this letter by Friday, September 3.

The Coalition sent a letter to Acting NPS Director Shawn Benge to express serious concerns about the planning process associated with the National Park Service Air Tour Management Plans (ATMPs) for Mount Rainier National Park, Death Valley National Park, Everglades National Park, and Olympic National Park: https://protectnps.org/2021/08/17/coalition-concern-over-air-tour-management-plans/

We issued a statement on President Biden's selection of Charles Sams as the nominee to fill the NPS Director position, saying, "we look forward to learning more about his priorities for the National Park System and working with him to ensure that the National Park Service has the support and funding to fulfill its mission to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.": https://protectnps.org/2021/08/18/nps-director-nominee-announced/

Denny Huffman, former superintendent of Dinosaur National Monument, submitted an op-ed to *The Daily Sentine*l regarding concerns over orphaned oil and gas wells near national parks, including over 40 orphaned wells near Dinosaur: https://protectnps.org/2021/08/09/member-oped-precious-landscapes-need-protection-from-orphaned-wells/

Tom Vaughan, former superintendent at Chaco Culture NHP, also submitted an op-ed on the threat to parks from nearby oil and gas drilling. There are 44 orphaned wells within a 30 mile radius of Chaco Culture: https://protectnps.org/2021/08/11/member-op-ed-clean-up-orphaned-wells-for-chaco-all-national-parks/

Cordell Roy published an op-ed in *The Salt Lake Tribune* expressing concern over S.1526 and S.1527 which, if passed, would allow the use of off-highway vehicles on most roads in Capitol Reef National Park. Roy believes that S.1527 is a poorly informed effort developed to allow the use of off-highway vehicles in all 423 units of the National Park System (if allowed by state law): https://protectnps.org/2021/08/16/member-op-ed-off-highway-vehicles-in-national-parks-is-a-bad-idea/

Coalition Executive Council member Maria Burks spoke with an NPR affiliate about the National Park Service's requirement to require everyone – regardless of vaccination status – to wear masks in national park facilities, public transport systems, and in crowded outside areas. Burks says that, "I think, frankly, instituting a mask mandate again was a very prudent and appropriate thing to do." https://protectnps.org/2021/08/20/coalition-speaks-with-npr-on-nps-mask-mandates/

The Association of National Park Rangers' Ranger Rendezvous has been canceled this year. We planned to present a session on the Coalition and host a hospitality room night, but we will put this on hold and participate in 2022 instead.

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 or on a more regional basis.

- *National Park Service Director Nominated* - The White House announced nomination of Charles "Chuck" F. Sams III as Director of the National Park Service. He has worked in state and Tribal governments and for conservation non-profits, and currently serves as a Council Member to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, as appointed by Oregon Governor Kate Brown. If confirmed, he would be the first Indigenous Director of the NPS. The nominations will next be considered by the Senate. Source: Department of Interior

- *Masks now required at all NPS sites* - Following the latest guidance from the CDC, the NPS is now requiring all visitors, employees, and contractors to wear a mask indoors and in crowded outdoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status or local transmission rates. The NPS is likely to soon ask all employees and contractors to be either vaccinated or regularly tested for COVID-19. Source: Green & Grey Report, National Park Service, *Anchorage Daily News*

- *NPS announces grants to support diverse communities in National Register* - On August 12, the NPS announced $743,531 in grants for 17 projects in 14 states to support diverse communities in identifying and nominating sites to the National Register of Historic Places under the Underrepresented Community Grant Program. Source: *Red Lake Nation News*
- *NPS announces grants for preservation projects to protect Indigenous cultures* - On August 16, the NPS announced $569,086 in funding through its Tribal Heritage Grant program for 12 preservation projects to preserve cultural heritage among Indigenous groups across the country. Source: Green & Grey Report, National Park Service
- *First-ever federal water shortage declared for Colorado River* - The Department of Interior declared a Tier 1 shortage for the first time in U.S. history. The announcement requires states with junior water rights, particularly Arizona and Nevada (as well as Mexico) to reduce their water use. Agribusiness will be most affected by the shortages. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *DOI to raise firefighter pay* - Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland announced the implementation of President Biden's pay initiative that will ensure all firefighters at the DOI (and at the USDA Forest Service) will be paid at least $15 per hour, and frontline firefighters will all receive bonuses. Source: *The Batesville Daily Guard*
- *Injunction denied for Obama Center construction* - On August 20, Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett denied a bid to block the construction of the Obama Presidential Center in Chicago's Jackson Park. The National Park Service is among those who are listed as defendants in the ongoing legal battle over its construction. Source: *Politico*
- *Astronaut shares photos of national parks from space* - Megan McArthur, a NASA astronaut, shared a number of photos of national parks taken from the International Space Station. The National Park Service shared them on their social media channels. Source: *Charlotte Observer*
- *Sierra Club urges creation of more national parks* - The Sierra Club ran an op-ed this week arguing for the creation of more national parks, including 12 specific locations they believe should receive national park protection status. Source: Sierra Club

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Acadia National Park* - From July 18-24, a team of teachers participated in a program hosted by the NPS, Schoodic Institute, and Earthwatch, called "Climate Change: Sea to Trees at Acadia National Park." They worked along scientists to look at climate change effects and adaptation strategies. Source: *Charlestown Patriot-Bridge*
- *Appalachian National Scenic Trail - The Washington Post* ran an article outlining the boom in popularity and resultant management issues on the Appalachian Trail, particularly a section near Washington, D.C. nicknamed the "Roller Coaster". Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - Maryland First Lady Yumi Hogan, Maryland DNR Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Maryland State Senator Mary Beth Carozza, members of the non-profit friends group Assateague Island Alliance, and NPS staff visited Assateague State Park on August 20 as part of a local PR campaign for safe driving called "Give Wild Horses a Brake." The NPS is planning to add speed feedback signs and is lowering speed limits to 15mph in key areas to prevent horses from getting hit. Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- *Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area* - The park is getting close to lake levels that would require them to close many boat launches. They have cautioned the public about shallow waters and they have received several reports of damaged props and boats stuck on sand bars. Drought conditions are expected to close launches before the end of the month. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Burke Park, Samuel Gompers Memorial Park* - The U.S. Park Police plans to close both parks from August 18 through the autumn to remove homeless encampments and provide maintenance to the parks after several reports of drug activity, violence and unsanitary conditions. This differs from a July statement by the NPS that it had "no imminent plans to remove existing encampments." Source: *WUSA9*
- *Cape Hattaras National Seashore* - A two-headed loggerhead sea turtle was discovered at the park this month. The turtle hatchling was reported to be in good health. Source: *Travel + Leisure*
- *Chaco Canyon National Historical Park - E&E News* ran an article describing the supporters and opponents of oil and gas development adjacent to Chaco Canyon on Bureau of Land Management land that has many ancestral sites important to local tribes. A DOI draft resource management plan for the region is currently being finalized. The BLM said it is still weighing public input. Source: *E&E News*

- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - In response to the Federal Aviation Administration's Environmental Impact Statement concluding that building Spaceport Camden is their Preferred Alternative (released in June), the NPS and DOI sent a letter stating that the final study on the spaceport's impacts failed to look closely at potential risks to Cumberland Island due to explosions or releases of hazardous materials. Source: *U.S. News & World Report*

- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The *Washington Post* ran an op-ed denouncing the behavior of U.S. Park Police officers in the 2017 shooting and death of an unarmed driver, Bijan Ghaisar, whose vehicle had just been rear-ended. The state of Virginia is prosecuting the case in federal court. Source: *The Washington Post*

- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - Superintendent Charles Cuvelier gave an interview with the *Sun Gazette* and *Inside NoVA* to discuss recent and future park developments. Source: *Inside NoVA*

- *Glacier National Park* - Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park (which consists of Glacier NP and Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada) is now certified as an International Dark Sky Park. It is the first international transboundary park to receive the certification. Source: *CNN*

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - Wahweap Main Ramp is now closed to motorized vehicles due to low lake levels. The repurposed Wahweap Auxiliary Ramp is now open to vessels up to 36 feet in length and 8.5 feet in width. Source: Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

- *Golden Gate Recreation Area* - The park will cancel the 2019 request for qualifications (RFQ) for the Lands End Restaurant location, which will allow them to issue a revised request for proposals (RFP). They canceled the RFQ due to changed economic conditions (which closed the famous Cliff House restaurant last year). The RFP is expected to be issued later this year with a final selection by mid-2022 and lease start in late 2022. Two short-term use agreements for the space have also been granted to non-profits for two different public exhibitions. Source: Golden Gate Recreation Area

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - The park will require parking reservations for the Laurel Falls trailhead, starting September 7. The pilot program to test the system will go through October 3. Reservations can be made online at recreation.gov for a fee of $14, and are based on 2-hour time blocks. 150 public comments were received about the program between July and August, with the most common comment about the high price of the reservation. Local outfitters will also provide shuttle access to the trailhead. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

- *Pullman National Monument* - The NPS and Illinois Department of Natural Resources will celebrate the grand opening of Pullman National Monument Visitor Center and State Historic Site over Labor Day. The weekend's events will include tours, programming, and a suite of activities hosted by a variety of agencies and organizations. Source: Pullman National Monument

- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Buffalo National River* - The NPS from both these park units partnered with the U.S. Department of Transportation and local law enforcement to partake in an impaired driver awareness campaign, "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" during the 4th of July weekend. It resulted in 653 traffic stops and 30 arrests for impaired driving. Source: Ozark National Scenic Riverways

- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - The park announced that hunting regulations in the park will remain unchanged this fall from the previous year, despite the park's federal re-designation as a national park & preserve last year. Hunting is mandated by law as part of the park's enabling legislation. Source: *West Virginia Explorer Magazine*

- *Padre Island National Seashore* - The Nueces County commissioners' court unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Sea Turtle Science and Recovery program at Padre Island, which has recently undergone a budget shortfall and proposed restrictions to cut costs. The Kemp's ridley sea turtle, a highly endangered species, is expected to suffer from the cuts, as will local tourism, which benefits from public releases. Source: *Caller Times*

- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - The NPS and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, a federation of Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo tribes, have signed a new management agreement that will give the Indigenous groups more authority in decision making, particularly around cultural resource protection and stewardship. Source: Sacramento Bee

- *Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park* - NPS staff from 5 local National Parks, in collaboration with Hawai'i state Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry Wildlife, removed 458 invasive live goats from the park the week of August 9. The goats were given away for free to local residents via a lottery system. Source: *Hawaii Tribune Herald*

- *Redwood National Park* - U.S. Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland met with the Yurok Tribe, Trinidad Elementary Water Protectors, the NPS, and the Save the Redwoods League in a visit to Redwood National and State Parks. She discussed climate change, the infrastructure deal, and job creation through clean energy, and listened to local concerns about local fisheries, fires, and other climate concerns. Source: *Red Green and Blue*

- *Shenandoah National Park* - Fishing is now closed throughout the park due to low stream flows and high water temperatures, which stress fish populations. Angling is known to cause further stress to fish populations. Though some rain has hit the park recently, it has not yet been enough to lift the restriction. Source: Shenandoah National Park

- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - U.S. Deputy Secretary of Interior Tommy Beaudreau and Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) toured the park with Superintendent Wendy Ross on August 17. They discussed and visited the Scenic Loop construction project, improvements needed at the Painted Canyon Visitor Center, and other maintenance needs. The officials also met with National Park Foundation staff, state and local officials, and the Medora Grazing Association. Source: *Grand Forks Herald*

- *Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River* - The NPS partnered with NASA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies and organizations to offer a 10-session "Earth to Sky" course to 20 residents in counties of the Upper Delaware River Watershed. The course covered the latest research on climate change, as well as practical information and strategies for working with local communities to develop climate change action plans. Source: Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River

- *Yellowstone National Park* - U.S. Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland visited Yellowstone on August 13. While there, she gave a speech overlooking the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River and canoed on Yellowstone Lake. She touted the Great American Outdoors Act, which will invest $120+ million in improving Yellowstone infrastructure, as well as President Biden's America the Beautiful Initiative, which is working to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters. Source: *Independent Record*

Personnel Changes

- *Bandelier National Monument* - Patrick Suddath has been selected as superintendent. He has 30 years of NPS experience, most recently as deputy superintendent of Independence National Historical Park. He began his new role on August 15. Source: Bandelier National Monument

- *Cultural Resources Office of Science, Technology and Training* - Marty Hylton has been selected as the first-ever historic architect for climate change adaptation. He was most recently the head of University of Florida's Preservation Institute: Nantucket for 12 years. Source: *The Inquirer and Mirror*

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Angela Boyers has been selected as the new chief ranger. She has 20 years of NPS experience, including as deputy chief ranger at Yosemite National Park. She is the first female chief ranger in the park's history. She will begin her role in September. Source: *KNAU*

- *Grand Teton Park* - Erika Jostad has been selected as the new chief ranger. She has 25 years of NPS experience, most recently as the interim chief ranger at the park. She is the first female chief ranger in the park's history Source: *Jackson Hole News & Guide*

- *Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site* - Beth Wasson has been selected as the new lead park ranger for interpretation. She has 4 years of NPS experience, including most recently as a park guide at the National Mall and Memorial Parks. She started her new position in early August. Source: Longfellow House Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site

- *Mississippi National River and Recreation Area* - Matthew Tucker Blythe has been selected as the new superintendent. He has 24 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent of Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site. He will start his new role on September 12. Source: Mississippi National River and Recreation Area

Park People

Here we honor deceased park employees, as well as important news about Coalition Members. People are listed alphabetically by last name.

Deceased

- On July 25, Jennie M. Archuleta, 96, passed away. At the age of 16, she worked as a riveter of C-47 wing flaps at Doak Aircraft in Torrance, CA, during WWII, and was an "Honored Rosie" at Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Park. Source: *Roswell Daily Record*

- On August 4, Wilmer Kenneth "Ken/Jonesy" Jones Jr., 82, passed away. He and his wife, Deryl "Dee" Jones spent time as volunteer campground hosts at Dinosaur National Park. Source: *Mohoning Matters*

Open for Comment

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

- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to increase backcountry camping permit fees from $5 per person to $15 for a permit, plus $7 per person per day. Comments are open until September 6. Source: Bryce Canyon National Park

- *Death Valley National Park* - Public comment is now open on a draft Air Tour Management Plan to comply with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000. Comments are open until August 28. Source: *Federal Register*

- *Everglades National Park* - Public comment is now open on a draft Air Tour Management Plan to comply with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000. Comments are open until August 28. Source: *Federal Register*

- *Great Basin National Park* - Public comment is now open on the Environmental Assessment for the Strawberry Creek Restoration Project. Comments are open until September 6. Source: Great Basin National Park

- *Guadalupe Mountains National Park* - Public comment is now open on a new proposed fee for overnight Wilderness Use Permits. They are currently free and would move to $6 per permit, plus $6 per person per night. Comments are open until September 12. Source: Guadalupe Mountains National Park

- *Hovenweep National Monument, Natural Bridges National Monument* - Public comment is now open on raising campground fee rates at both sites. Comments are open until September 15. Source: Natural Bridges National Monument

- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - Public comment is now open on charging entrance fees, as well as six new backcountry campsites and a group campsite. Comments are open until October 1. Source: *CBS Chicago*

- *Jewel Cave National Monument, Wind Cave National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposed increase in fees for cave tours and camping. Comments are open until September 7. Source: Wind Cave National Park

- *Joshua Tree National Park* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment to construct a new West Entrance Station. Comments are open until September 17. Source: Joshua Tree National Park

- *Joshua Tree National Park* - Public comment is now open on a plan to expand the Barker Dam parking lot. Comments are open until September 17. Source: Joshua Tree National Park

- *Minute Man National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a plan to minimize or mitigate effects to historic resources through its extensive strategy to revitalize the park in time for the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. Comments are open until September 19. Source: Minute Man National Historical Park

- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is now open on a transportation and visitor use management plan for the Nisqually to Paradise travel corridor. Comments are open until September 14. Source: Mount Rainier National Park

- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is now open on a draft Air Tour Management Plan to comply with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000. Comments are open until August 28. Source: *Federal Register*

- *Olympic National Park* - Public comment is now open on a draft Air Tour Management Plan to comply with the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 2000. Comments are open until August 28. Source: *Federal Register*

- *Pearl Harbor National Memorial* - Public comment is now open for a proposal to implement paid parking at the park for $7 per vehicle. Entrance to the visitor center and memorial will remain free. Comments are open until August 30. Source: *Honolulu Star Advertiser*

- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - Public comment is now open for a proposed trail connection in the town of Cable on an abandoned railroad grade. Comments are open until September 14. Source: Ashland Daily Press

- *Shenandoah National Park* - Public comment is now open for proposed fee increases to campgrounds, backcountry permits, and an Old Rag pilot permit system. Comments are open until September 16. Source: Shenandoah National Park

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Public comment is now open for a Draft Accessibility Self Evaluation and Transition Plan. Comments are open until August 27. Source: *Sierra Sun Times*

- *Zion National Park* - Public comment is now open on a day-use permit lottery system for hiking the chained portion of the Angels Landing trail, and a provision to increase fees at Lava Point Campground. Comments are open until September 12. Source: *Utah Public Radio*

- *Environmental Protection Agency* - Public comment is now open for a proposed rule to revise existing greenhouse gas emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks. Comments are open until September 27. Source: National Parks Conservation Association

Other Department of Interior News

- *DOJ to appeal injunction that would allow for new federal oil and gas leasing* - In *Louisiana v. Biden*, the district court ruled that federal onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing will continue, per an injunction to Section 208 of Executive Order 14008, which seeks to pause all new leasing until appropriate assessment of risks can be completed. The Department of Interior confirmed that the Department of Justice will appeal the injunction in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Source: Department of Interior

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

Senate Actions

August 10 – The Senate passed H.R. 3684, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, by a vote of 69 yeas to 30 nays. The Senate used this House-passed bill, which only reauthorized funding for federal highway programs, to also include the Biden administration's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. While no specific amounts of funding were set aside for the National Park Service in the infrastructure part of the bill, the NPS could benefit from individual programs such as the wildland fire management and mitigation funds.

Additionally, the bill provides the following for the NPS in federal highways funding as follows:

- $1.731 billion from FY 2022 – 2026 for roads, bridges, and transportation systems of the NPS in the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP), which is an increase of $321 million over the previous five-year period. The House version of the bill has $1.99 billion for the NPS.
- $1.7 billion from FY 2022 – 2026 for the Federal Lands and Tribal Major Projects program, which is a competitive grant program among federal land management agencies and tribes for large repair projects that are funded separately from the amounts noted above. The House version of the bill has the same amount for this program.
- $1.488 billion from FY 2022 - 2026, for state and local entities to provide access to public lands, including national parks. The House version of the bill has $1.65 billion for this program.

August 10 – The Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 14, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2022 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2023 through 2031, by a vote of 50 yeas to 49 nays.

The Senate is in recess until September 13, 2021.

House Actions

The House is in recess until August 23, 2021.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park. Where multiple sources are listed, the information evolved over the course of the two weeks this report was being compiled.

Acadia National Park
2 back-to-back water rescues

On August 14, emergency responders rescued two individuals. At Sand Beach, an 18-year-old dove into shallow water before needing assistance. Rangers and bystanders helped stabilize him on a backboard and he was taken to Bangor by Life Flight. An hour later, a 6-year-old sustained head and neck injuries when he fell about 50 feet into a shallow pool adjacent to the Canon Brook Trail. Over 30 responders from the NPS, Maine Forest Service, Friends of Acadia Summits Stewards, and Mount Desert Island Search and Rescue responded and the victim was transported by Life Flight to a local hospital. The park said it has seen a 65% increase in rescues over 2019. Source: *Press Herald*

Blue Ridge Parkway
Another motorcycle fatality

On August 8, George Wayne Harkins, 74, was killed in a crash while riding a motorcycle near the Rough Ridge Tunnel. He was riding with a group of motorcyclists when he lost control in a curve and left the roadway. He was pronounced dead at the scene. With the crashes reported in the last Coalition Report, this was the seventh fatality this year on the parkway, fifth involving a motorcycle, and third within three weeks. Source: *Charlotte Observer*

Canyonlands National Park
Hiker lost for 4 days found alive

On July 29, a 66-year-old hiker set out alone on a 10.8 mile round-trip on-trail hike to Druid Arch. He arrived at the arch, but got fatigued on his return and missed a turn out of a dry creek bed. He stayed out overnight during a thunderstorm and drank from puddles. The following morning, he was able to get back on trail and encountered two other hikers, who gave him water, and parted ways with him. He again got lost and spent the rest of the day trying to find the trail. He spent another two nights out, drinking from puddles and calling for help. Another hiker heard his calls, but upon calling back, could not make contact with him. The hiker who heard the calls reported it to rangers, who were able to identify him by his car left at the trailhead and made contact with his wife, who was able to give them his itinerary. Search and rescue staff and a helicopter were dispatched, and two rangers in a Jeep were able to locate him on the afternoon of the fourth day. Source: *The Daily Ardmoreite*

Cape Cod National Seashore
3-year-old attacked by coyote

On August 11, a coyote bit a child at North Herring Cove Beach. The child was taken to Cape Cod Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, and the coyote was identified, shot, and killed. It was confirmed not to have rabies. The park has had a number of incidents between coyotes and visitors, including a woman who was rescued after being circled by a "relentless" coyote. Source: *Merced Sun Star*, *Boston Globe*

Death Valley National Park
Hiker dies of suspected heat stroke

On August 18, visitors reported a suspected heat stroke victim and CPR in-progress near Red Cathedral on the Golden Canyon Trail. Rangers responded on foot and found the 60-year-old hiker to be deceased. California Highway Patrol Helicopter H-80 assisted in the recovery that evening. Source: Death Valley National Park

Denali National Park
Man sentenced to prison for firearm possession

On September 10, 2019, law enforcement rangers conducted a vehicle stop in the park for excessive speed. They identified the driver as a convicted felon on probation. They conducted a search of the vehicle and found ammunition and a firearm, which is unlawful for a convicted felon. This week, he was sentenced to 16 months in prison and 3 years of supervised release. Source: Denali National Park

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Sherriff cited for boating under the influence

On August 7 at Wahweap Marina, Yavapai County Sheriff David Rhodes was issued a misdemeanor citation for operating a boat while under the influence of alcohol. Sheriff Rhodes has stated publicly that he deeply regrets his actions and has learned from his mistake. Source: *AZ Central*

Grand Canyon National Park
Missing man's vehicle found in park

45-year-old Gabor Berczi-Tomcsanyi was reported missing to the Las Vegas police by his family. Authorities located his vehicle at the South Rim visitor center on August 9. Investigators believe he arrived to the park on July 19. Ground and aerial search have not yet turned up evidence and the park is seeking any information the public may have. Source: *KNAU*

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
2020 death confirmed to be due to bear trauma

On September 11, 2020, backpackers initially found an occupied tent at a backcountry campsite in the Hazel Creek Area. Later, they discovered what appeared to be human remains and they observed a bear scavenging in the area. When park law enforcement arrived, they saw a bear actively scavenging on the remains and the bear was euthanized. The Hazel Creek Trail and campsite were closed for a time, and have since reopened. Last week, the North Carolina Chief Medical Examiner released a final report confirming that the victim probably died from trauma caused by the bear. It is the second bear-related fatality in the history of the park. Source: Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Isle Royale National Park
Fire closes eastern end of island

On August 22, lightning sparked the Horne Fire near the shore of Duncan Bay by the Tobin-Duncan Portage Trail. It has burned 200 acres thus far. Many campgrounds, trails, and docks are currently closed on the eastern end of the island. Source: *The Detroit News*

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
Flood closes campground and trails

On August 13, flooding of the Taiya River caused closures to the Dyea campground and Chilkoot Trail. They remained closed for 3 days and are now open. Source: Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

Olympic National Park
Heat victim airlifted

On August 10, a hiker became ill due to heat. Her hiking partner walked out and reported the incident to park dispatchers. Two rangers hiked in and spent the night with her, and she was unable to hike out on her own. The next morning, a helicopter airlifted her from Grand Valley off Obstruction Point Road to Fairchild International Airport, and she was taken by ambulance to Olympic Medical Center. Source: *Peninsula Daily News*

Rocky Mountain National Park
White-out conditions close roads

On August 19, a cold front hit the park, dropping many inches of rain and snow and creating icy conditions on Trail Ridge and Fall River Roads. The roads were closed, then able to open the next day. Source: *Coloradoan*

Washington Monument
Lightning strike damages electric system

On August 15, the Washington Monument was struck by lightning, which damaged the electrical access system. It has been closed since then and is expected to be open again after parts arrive on August 26. There was no damage to the structure or elevator. Source: *WTOP*, National Park Service *[Editor note: For those interested, there is a video screenshot of the Monument being struck in the WTOP article.]*

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
Hunter found dead by creek

On August 12, a 40-year-old hunter stopped regular communication by his InReach device. His last message indicated he was about to cross Jacksina Creek. His point-of-contact notified the NPS on August 16, and a multi-day search was begun by the NPS, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, helicopters, and fixed wing aircraft. On August 21, a packrafting search team found his body alongside Jacksina Creek. It appeared he attempted to cross the creek and was swept away by the current. Source: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Yellowstone National Park
2 rangers face civil charges for holding family at gunpoint

In 2017, a family was stopped while driving on the North Fork near Newton Creek Campground, shortly after leaving Yellowstone through the East Entrance. They pulled over when they noticed they were being closely followed by an NPS vehicle, thinking they would let it pass. The NPS vehicle pulled over in front of the family's car, and two rangers got out with long guns drawn. 8 county sheriff's deputies arrived on scene shortly thereafter. The driver was ordered to throw his car keys outside of the vehicle and the group was held at gunpoint, handcuffed, and put into patrol cars for an hour. Authorities later said they had confused the driver for a man who was wanted in connection with a triple murder in Idaho. The family is suing the two rangers and two deputies in Wyoming Federal District Court for civil charges of mental and emotional duress, false imprisonment, reckless endangering, and excessive force. Source: *Cody Enterprise*

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Lassen National Park* - As of August 24, the Dixie Fire was at 731,310 acres and 41% contained, with 5,918 fire personnel on scene. 6 private cabins and 1 NPS staff cabin were destroyed at Juniper Lake last week. A campground at the same location also burned, but damage has not yet been assessed. The entire park remains closed. Source: Lassen National Park, *Record Searchlight*

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- Issue Contributors: Bill Waters

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

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