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

# The Coalition Report
Wednesday, December 15, 2021

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## Coalition Actions

**Thank you to everyone who has supported us with an end-of-year-gift!** Your support will allow us to expand our advocacy efforts, tackle more issues, and continue to act in support of our national park system! If you haven't had a chance to give, please consider supporting our work!

At the end of November, we submitted comments on CEQ's proposed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Regulations Revisions, as announced in 86 Federal Register 55757 et seq. on October 7, 2021.
https://protectnps.org/2021/11/19/comments-on-proposed-revisions-of-40-cfr-sections-1502-1507-and-1508/

We issued comments on the long-awaited Department of the Interior report on the federal oil and gas leasing program, calling the report "a step in the right direction."
https://protectnps.org/2021/11/30/coalition-comments-on-oil-and-gas-leasing-report/

The Coalition also signed on to comments submitted on behalf of 46 organizations in support of the proposal to remove the definition of "habitat" and rescind regulations pertaining to critical habitat exclusions that were added to the Endangered Species Act implementing regulations at the end of the Trump administration.
https://protectnps.org/2021/12/01/comments-on-proposed-rescission-of-regulations-for-listing-endangered-and-threatened-species-and-designating-critical-habitat/

An op-ed by Sarah Bransom ran in the *Daily Sentinel*, supporting Mr. Charles Sams as the new Director of the NPS:
https://protectnps.org/2021/12/06/member-oped-nps-director-sams-is-right-for-the-job/

The Coalition joined 35 organizations and signed on to comments submitted by the Southern Environmental Law Center in response to the Fish and Wildlife Service's advance notice of proposed rulemaking and intent to prepare a NEPA document regarding incidental take under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA):
https://protectnps.org/2021/12/06/coalition-joins-comments-regarding-migratory-bird-treaty-act/

We also joined comments sent to Big Cypress National Preserve regarding a revised mitigation plan that is part of the Proposal for Modification of Burnett Oil Company, Inc.'s plan of operations. In them, we urged the NPS to require Burnett Oil to fully compensate for the wetland damage it caused during its Phase I oil exploration activities in Big Cypress through more robust on-site mitigation in addition to fully restoring and revegetating all of the seismic survey lines it created that still visibly remain today:
https://protectnps.org/2021/12/08/coalition-joins-comments-on-oil-mitigation-plan-at-big-cypress/

## 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.*

- *Executive order to improve customer experience across federal agencies* - On December 13, President Biden signed an executive order to extend 36 "customer experience improvement commitments" across 17 federal agencies. Examples include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service providing more service transactions online, the ability for citizens to renew their passports online, speeding up airport security lines, and streamlining special permit processing. The NPS was identified as one of the federal agencies considered "high impact service providers." Source: *E&E News*

- *FLETC Honor Graduates of the Year both from NPS* - The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center held a ceremony on November 30 to honor the 2019 and 2020 Honor Graduates of the Year, both of whom are National Park Service rangers: Sean Nelb of Colorado National Monument and Dillon O'Brien of Yosemite National Park. Source: FLETC Headquarters Facebook page

- *NPS awards $3.3 million in battlefield grants* - On December 10, the NPS' American Battlefield Protection Program awarded $3,378,437 in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to the City of Chattanooga, Tennessee and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to acquire lands related to the American

Revolutionary War and Civil War. Source: *Red Lake Nation News*

- *2021 Holland Prize goes to Notre Dame student* - The Library of Congress and National Park Service announced that the 2021 Leicester B. Holland Prize will go to University of Notre Dame architecture student Nathan Walz for a drawing of the historic St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kendalville, Indiana. The Holland Prize honors an outstanding historic building, structure, or landscape drawing. Walz will receive $1,000, a certificate of recognition, and have his drawing published in the online newsletter of the American Institute of Architects' Historic Resources Committee. Source: National Park Service Heritage Documentation Programs

- *WNPA announces 3 awards* - On November 22, the Western National Parks Association announced three awards. Dr. Alfred Runte received the Stewart L. Udall Award for his lifelong dedication to researching and writing about national parks and other public lands. Ana Flores and Eva Vieyra, both participants of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area youth programs, received Ernest Quintana and Marty Sterkel Education Program Scholarships. Source: Western National Parks Association

## Around the Parks

*Park reports are in alphabetical order.*

- *Arches National Park* - The park will implement a temporary, timed entry reservation system from April 3 to October 3, 2022. Reservations will be available, first-come, first-served, three months in advance, as well as a limited amount available the day before. The park will use this pilot program to collect data and determine whether it should be a part of a longer-term visitor access strategy. Source: Arches National Park

- *Catoctin Mountain Park* - The NPS is moving forward with plans for a parkwide utility infrastructure replacement, including potable water, sewer, electric, communications network, and fire hydrants. Source: Catoctin Mountain Park

- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park - Cleveland.com* ran an article outlining the predicament of the gateway community of Peninsula. Though it depends heavily on the park for tourism, the recent acquisition of 207 acres of golf course by the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (of which 190 acres will be donated to the NPS) has locked up 14% of the small community's taxable property. The community struggles to maintain enough infrastructure to support the high levels of visitation. Source: *Cleveland.com*

- *First State National Historical Park* - The NPS has awarded a $5.4 million construction contract to rehabilitate the historic Sheriff's House at the park. The project includes accessibility and utility improvements, stone repair, interior restoration and replacement, and exhibit fabrication and installation. The project is being funded through the line-item construction program, and the NPS is coordinating with the State of Delaware and the New Castle Historical Society on the project. Source: First State National Historical Park

- *Gates of the Arctic National Park* - Author and former NPS ranger Jon Waterman wrote an article for *The New York Times* describing the radical changes that have occurred due to climate change in the park in the 36 years since he last visited. Source: *The New York Times*

- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The NPS, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, awarded the largest Great American Outdoors Act investment to date: $161 million to rehab the northern section of the Parkway. Source: George Washington Memorial Parkway

- *Gettysburg National Military Park, Eisenhower National Historic Site* - The NPS recently donated 7,000 pounds of venison to local food banks, the result of culling 250 deer through its ecological and cultural landscape management program. Source: Gettysburg National Military Park

- *Glacier National Park* - The State of Montana has requested the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lift threatened species protections for grizzly bears in the northern portion of the state, including areas in and around the park. Growing bear populations have created more run-ins with the bears, including attacks on livestock and people. In March, federal scientists announced that the region's grizzlies are biologically recovered, but need continued protection under the Endangered Species Act due to ongoing pressures on the species. Source: *KTAR*

- *Glacier National Park* - A new purchase of 106 acres of grassland by the Nature Conservancy of Canada will be added to the public lands surrounding Waterton Lakes National Park, which is adjacent to Glacier National Park, across the U.S.-Canada border (together, they are Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park). Source: *Global News*

- *Glacier National Park* - The park has announced that they will implement a second year of their pilot ticketing system to access parts of the park, from May 27-September 11, 2022. Source: Glacier National Park

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park - Citizen Times* ran a profile on Supervisory Forester Kristine Johnson and the work the vegetation management team has done to control invasive species in the park. Source: *Citizen Times*

- *Jewel Cave National Monument, Wind Cave National Park* - A plan to increase fees for tours and campgrounds will be enacted in early 2022. Source: *KEVN*

- *Monocacy National Battlefield* - On December 13, the Monocacy Battlefield Foundation donated a rare item to the park: the I.D. tag of a soldier who fought in the Battle of Monocacy on July 9, 1864. The item will be placed in the park's museum. Source: *WDVM*

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS has begun a two-year project to renovate the exhibit area, increase accessibility, fix damaged paving, and upgrade fire suppression and security systems at the Jefferson Memorial. Parts of the memorial will remain open to the public throughout construction. The project was funded by the National Park Foundation and NPS line-item construction. Source: National Mall and Memorial Parks

- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, Gauley River National Recreation Area, Bluestone National Scenic River* - The NPS announced that ramp harvest will no longer be allowed within these three parks, starting January 1. Recent biological surveys showed that the population has declined significantly and that continued collection would jeopardize the species. Restrictions will continue until surveys show the species is rebounding. Source: *WVNews*

- *North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - Seattle City Light, the local utility company, has three dams on the Skagit River that are up for federal relicensing. The utility worked with nearly 40 license participants, including tribes, federal and state agencies, local governments, and nonprofit organizations, to develop its new license application, and their plan was submitted in April and recently approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Local tribes and environmentalists have asked the plan include better fish passage along the river and City Light has agreed that the science behind the previous license is outdated. The current license expires in 2025 and ongoing studies funded by City Light and the City Council will inform the application for the new license, which is due in 2023. Source: *Seattle Times*

- *Olympic National Park* - The park, in coordination with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, has updated its in-season fishing regulations to reflect record low steelhead returns. In the park, fishing on the Queets and Quinault Rivers (upper bridge downstream to park boundary) will be closed to recreational fishing starting December 1, and closed on the Salmon River starting January 1. Source: Olympic National Park

- *Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument* - *Fronteras* ran an article about the Indigenous protestor, Amber Ortega, who is on trial in federal court for blocking machinery at a border wall construction site near Quitobaquito Springs in the park. Though President Biden officially mandated the wall construction be canceled a year ago, her charges have remained. During the trial, her defense lawyer argued her actions should be protected under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act due to the importance of the spring site to her religious and cultural beliefs. A ruling is pending. Source: *Fronteras*

- *Pearl Harbor National Memorial* - On December 7, the park commemorated the 80th anniversary of the bombing on Pearl Harbor. About 30 survivors and 100 other veterans of WWII joined in the ceremony. Source: *Cleveland.com*

- *Pearl Harbor National Memorial* - *Hawaii News Now* ran an article about the artifact collection that the park preserves. There are over 67,000 artifacts in the collection. Source: *Hawaii News Now*

- *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore* - The park will begin charging entrance fees starting March 1. Camping and lighthouse tour fees will increase starting on January 1. Source: Pictured Rocks National Seashore

- *Salem Armory (NPS Regional Visitor Center)* - On December 13, the NPS, in collaboration with the Massachusetts National Guard, opened a new museum exhibit to commemorate the 385th anniversary of the National Guard. The exhibit is the result of two years of planning, collaboration, and design. Source: *DVIDS*

- *Shenandoah National Park* - The park has announced that, following public comments this past year, they will be increasing or establishing new fees for campgrounds, backcountry camping, and hiking Old Rag. Old Rag will also have a pilot program for day-hiking tickets, which they will provide more information on this winter. New fees are expected to start December 16. Source: *Daily News-Record*

- *Wind Cave National Park* - 20 elk were recently fitted with GPS/VHF radio-telemetry collars to monitor them for chronic wasting disease. The study is being led by the U.S. Geological Survey, which seeks to find out whether it is possible to reduce the prevalence of the disease by reducing herd density. The study has been ongoing for six years. Source: Wind Cave National Park

- *Yellowstone National Park* - Park officials said that as many as 900 bison will need to be shot by hunters, sent to slaughter, or placed in quarantine this winter to prevent them from the possibility of spreading brucellosis to cows in the region surrounding the park. There are no documented cases of bison spreading brucellosis to livestock in the wild, though there are documented cases of elk doing so. Source: *CBS News*

- *Yosemite National Park* - Mark Butler, formerly a backcountry ranger and chief of project management in Yosemite and superintendent at Joshua Tree National Park, wrote an op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* arguing for Yosemite to continue using a reservation system to reduce overcrowding in the park.  Source: *Los Angeles Times*

- *Zion National Park* - Park officials have announced that the Angels Landing hike will require permits via an online lottery, starting on April 1, 2022.  Some will be available three months in advance and others will be offered the day before. Source: *CNN*

## Commercial Use News

- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - Commercial Use Authorizations for 2022 will open on January 1 through March 31.  Current authorized services include kayak rentals, camp store, lodging, and guiding services.  Source: Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - On December 1, the park announced that it is cancelling the Request for Qualifications  (RFQ) solicitation for the Fort Baker Boat Shop.  Due to pandemic delays and a changed environment for the hospitality, tourism, and recreation industries, they have re-issued the RFQ instead as a Request for Proposals (RFP).  More details on the RFP will be announced at a later date.  Source: Golden Gate National Recreation Area

- *Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* - The park has announced a concession for the sale of firewood and incidentals, and a concession for vending machine beverages.  Applications are due to the park by February 17.  Source: Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

- *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore* - The park has announced the opening of applications for the 2022 and 2023 commercial operating seasons for guided backpacking, kayaking, photography, and ice climbing, as well as transportation service.  Applications will be open until January 15.  Source: Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

## Personnel Changes

- *Alaska Region* - Sarah Creachbaum was selected as the new regional director.  She has 22 years of NPS experience, most recently as the superintendent at Olympic National Park.  She will start her new role on January 16.  Source: National Park Service Office of Communications

- *Fire and Aviation Management* - Richard "Rich" Schwab has been selected as the program lead for NPS Wildland Fire Science and Ecology.  He has 40 years of federal work experience, including 17 years of NPS experience in his most recent position as the burned area coordinator.  He started his new role on December 4. Source: NPS Fire and Aviation Management

- *Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument* - Sheldon "Mark" Wimmer was selected as the new superintendent.  He was most recently the monument manager for Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument with the Bureau of Land Management, where he supervised both NPS and BLM employees.  He starts his new role on January 2.  Source: Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument

- *South Atlantic-Gulf Region* - The NPS announced new leaders in HR, science, and natural resources for the region.  *Unfortunately, the link provided for the press release is broken and we were unable to obtain more information.  We will attempt to report on this as we get more information.*

## Park People

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

### Deceased

- Richard G. Lentini passed away on December 11.  He worked as a carpenter and park ranger at Yellowstone National Park for 10 years.  Source: *The Outer Banks Voice*

- Howard Earl Yanish, 85, passed away on October 29.  He was born in Yosemite National Park and later worked for the park as a forestry worker and law enforcement ranger.  He later worked at Delaware Water Gap and Olympic, totaling 38 years with the NPS.  Source: *Legacy*

## Open for Comment

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

- *Aztec Ruins National Monument* - Public comment is now open on a plan to continue allowing bicycle use on the Old Spanish Historic Trail that connects the town of Aztec to the park.  Comments are open until December 27.  Source: *Farmington Daily Times*

- *Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration is seeking public comment on proposed repairs to the James Rumsey Bridge over the Potomac River and C&O Canal between Sharpsburg, MD and Shepherdstown, WV.  Comments are open until December 15 and can be submitted directly to the project managers via phone or email (listed in press release).  Source: Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park

- *Death Valley National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to remove contaminated soils from Gold Hill Mine.  Comments are open until December 26. Source: Death Valley National Park

- *Glacier Bay National Park* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment to replace employee housing used by the concessioner. Comments are open until December 21. Source: Glacier Bay National Park

- *Haleakalā National Park* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment to suppress non-native mosquito populations due to their effects on endangered native birds. Comments are open until January 20. Source: Haleakalā National Park

- *Mesa Verde National Park* - Public comment is now open on a plan to stabilize the sandstone arch at the front of the Spruce Tree House cliff dwelling site. Comments are open until January 7. Source: Mesa Verde National Park

- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment is now open on proposed fee increases for vehicle entrance and campgrounds. Comments are open until January 7. Source: *Sky-Hi News*

- *Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment for changes to the park's General Management Plan. Comments are open until December 30. Source: *Inside NOVA*

## Other Department of the Interior News

- *New Senior Advisor selected* - The Department of the Interior announced that Winnie Stachelberg has been selected as its new Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator to oversee implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Winnie was most recently the executive vice president for external affairs at the Center for American Progress, and also has experience working with the Human Rights Campaign and Office of Management and Budget. Source: Department of the Interior

## Congressional Actions

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

### New Public Laws

**December 3** – The president signed into law H.R. 6119, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022 (P.L. 117-70). The bill extends appropriations for federal agencies, including the National Park Service, through February 18, 2022, or the passage of the annual Department of the Interior Appropriations Act, whichever occurs first.

### Senate Actions

**December 2** – The Senate passed H.R. 6119, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, by a vote of 69 yeas to 28 nays. The bill extended appropriations for federal agencies, including the National Park Service, through February 18, 2022, or the passage of the annual Department of the Interior Appropriations Act, whichever occurs first. The bill then went to the president to be signed into law.

**December 2** – The *Committee on Energy and Natural Resources* concluded a hearing to examine:

- S. 1229, to modify the procedures for issuing special recreation permits for certain public land units,
- S. 1269, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to complete an interagency report on the effects of special recreation permits on environmental justice communities,
- S. 1616, to provide exceptions from permitting and fee requirements for content creation, regardless of distribution platform, including digital or analog video and digital or analog audio recording activities, conducted on land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior,
- S. 1874, to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to increase opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners,
- S. 2258, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Parks, Jobs, and Equity Program to support job creation, economic revitalization and park development for communities impacted by COVD–19,
- S. 2886, to amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the donation and distribution of capes, horns, and antlers from wildlife management activities carried out on National Park System land,
- S. 2887, to codify the existing Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program of the National Park Service,
- S. 3264, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop long-distance bike trails on Federal land, and
- S. 3266, to improve recreation opportunities on, and facilitate greater access to, Federal public land,

after receiving testimony from Senator Luján; Chris French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Mark Lambrecht, Assistant Director, National Conservation Lands and Community Partnerships, Bureau of Land Management, and Reginald Chapple, Acting Assistant Director for Partnerships and Civic Engagement, National Park Service, both of the Department of the Interior; Fred Ferguson, Vista Outdoor, Anoka, Minnesota; and Jessica Turner, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, Washington, D.C.

### House Actions

**Update: November 19** – The House passed H.R. 5376, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of S. Con. Res. 14, by a vote of 220 yeas to 213 nays. This bill is the so-called Build Back Better Act of the Biden administration. The final text of the bill as passed by the House was unavailable at the time it was first noted in the Coalition Report. Below are the provisions that affect the National Park Service:

Title VII, Subtitle G:

- Sec. 70701 appropriates $1.25 billion to the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management to carry out projects for the conservation, protection, and resiliency of lands and resources on their respective lands. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2031.
- Sec. 70702 appropriates $750 million to carry out conservation, ecosystem and habitat restoration projects on lands administered by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2031.
- Sec. 70703 appropriates $500 million for the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management to carry out conservation, resiliency, or restoration projects on their lands. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2031.
- Sec. 70704 appropriates $500 million for the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management's wildfire management programs. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2031.
- Sec. 70705 appropriates $400 million to the National Park Service for deferred maintenance and employee housing. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2026.
- Sec. 70706 appropriates $100 million for the National Park Services urban parks program, with an additional $10 million to NPS to administer the program. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2026.
- Sec. 70707 appropriates $25 million to the National Park Service for the Historic Preservation program. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2026.
- Sec. 70708 appropriates $50 million to the National Park Service for the National Heritage Area program. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2026.
- Sec. 70710 appropriates $500 million to the National Park Service to hire employees in units of the National Park System. The funds would remain available until September 30, 2030.

**December 2** – The House passed H.R. 6119, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, by a vote of 221 yeas to 212 nays. The bill extends appropriations for federal agencies, including the National Park Service, through February 18, 2022, or the passage of the annual Department of the Interior Appropriations Act, whichever occurs first.

**December 2** – The House passed H.R. 2930, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage, by a vote of 364 yeas to 57 nays.

**December 2** – The *Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources* held a hearing entitled "What More Public Lands Leasing Means for Achieving U.S. Climate Targets." Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

**December 7** – The House passed S. 1605, to designate the National Pulse Memorial located at 1912 South Orange Avenue in Orlando, Florida, by a vote of 363 yeas to 70 nays. The House struck the language of the previously passed Senate bill to designate this memorial and used S. 1605 as a vehicle to pass the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act. The House and Senate decided to move the annual defense authorization bill this way because the full Senate had been having problems moving its own version of the bill. The House and Senate Armed Services Committee members got together to work out disagreements between the two versions of their respective committee-reported bills to come up with a final version that would go to each house for approval.

As passed by the House, S. 1605 includes the following provisions relevant to the National Park Service:

- Division A, Title VI, Subtitle E: Section 641 authorizes Gold Star families and veterans to receive a lifetime pass under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
- Division F, Title LXVI: Section 6605 requires the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial to be located in the Reserve on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., despite the Reserve being designated by Congress in 1986 to be a completed work of civic art where no new memorials would be authorized. Congress continues to make exceptions, resulting in more memorials in the Reserve and less open space.

All other provisions affecting the National Park Service that were in the original House-passed version of the FY 2022 Defense Authorization Act were dropped in this final bill. Those matters will have to be passed in other park and public lands bills in the future. For a list of those provisions, see the entry under House Actions labeled "Update: September 23", which discussed the provisions of H.R. 4350 in the November 3, 2021 Coalition Report.

S. 1605 now returns to the Senate for further action on the House-passed amendments.

**December 7** – The *Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands* held a hearing on:

- H.R. 1117, to amend the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park Establishment Act of 2000 to provide for additional areas to be added to the park. The bill would add the Nystrom Elementary School–The Maritime Building, as well as any other properties the secretary finds appropriate.
- H.R. 3525, to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

- H.R. 5230, to provide a one-time grant (of between $5-10 million) for the operation, security, and maintenance of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center to commemorate the events, and honor the victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Testimony was heard from Chairman Nadler, and Representatives Meng, DeSaulnier, and Katko; Tom Butt, Mayor, Richmond, California; Theodore S. Gonzalves, Acting Director, Asian Pacific American Center, Smithsonian Institution; and public witnesses.

**December 8** – The House passed the following:

- H.R. 3531, to authorize the Women Who Worked on the Home Front Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, by a vote of 425 yeas to 1 nay.
- H.R. 4706, to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas, by a vote of 417 yeas to 8 nays.

## 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.*

**Arches National Park**
**150 lbs of trash removed from illegal camp**

Backcountry rangers recently cleaned up an illegal camp. They hauled out 150 pounds of trash, including tarps, clothing, a foam mattress, and other gear. The park posted about it on its social media. Source: *The Spectrum*

**Big Bend National Park**
**70 undocumented migrants apprehended**

On December 1, Border Patrol agents, working with NPS rangers, apprehended a group of over 70 undocumented migrants from Venezuela. They were found south of Alpine, Texas. The individuals were transported to the Alpine Border Patrol Station for processing under established Big Bend Sector Guidelines. Source: *CBS7*

**Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area**
**Body found**

On December 1, the body of a 33-year-old was found in the Split Bow Arch Overlook Parking Area., which is in the Kentucky District of the park. The cause of death is suspected to be drug overdose. McCreary County Sheriff's Office is investigating and will make the final determination. Source: Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

**Cape Hatteras National Seashore**
**Sailing vessel goes aground**

On December 11, a 37-foot sailing vessel grounded safely just north of the Avon Fishing Pier. The NPS is working with the U.S. Coast Guard and the vessel's owner to remove any hazardous substances and remove the boat from the beach. Source: Cape Hatteras National Seashore

**Colorado National Monument**
**Car accident results in fatality**

On December 5, about one mile from the west entrance on Rimrock Drive, a vehicle left the road, resulting in one fatality. The NPS is conducting an investigation. Source: *KKCO*

**Cuyahoga Valley National Park**
**Arrest for murder**

On December 8, FBI agents announced that a Florida resident has been arrested and charged with murder for a victim whose body was found near Terra Vista Cemetery on March 9. Investigators determined the victim had died several days before being found and had evidence of a gunshot to the head. Source: *News 5 Cleveland*

**Grand Canyon National Park**
**Voyeurism in bathrooms**

In September 2020, visitors reported to park staff that they believed a maintenance worker recorded them as they used the toilet. The worker was fired and removed from the park. A criminal investigation is now underway by the FBI, and they have a survey out to potentially find other victims of voyeurism along the corridor trail system in the park between November 2018 and September 2020. Individuals who may have used pit or flush toilets at Indian Garden, Phantom Ranch, Bright Angel Campground, South Kaibab Trail, and North Kaibab Trail during that time are asked to fill out this survey. Agents said there is no evidence that images taken in the restroom were shared. The Department of the Interior is conducting an internal review at the park. Source: Federal Bureau of Investigations, *KOLD*

**Haleakalā National Park**
**Storm closes part of park**

On December 5, the Summit and Kīpahulu Districts of the park were closed due to severe weather, including many inches of snow on the summit. Both districts remained closed until December 7. Source: Haleakalā National Park

**Mount Rainier National Park**

**Burglary of government property**

Sometime between the evening of November 28 and the morning of November 29, individuals broke through a closed gate on Washington state Route 410 at the intersection of Crystal Mountain Boulevard, then drove to the White River area. Upon arrival, they destroyed and stole government property from multiple facilities. Park officials have not announced what was damaged or stolen. The park is looking for any information the public may have and the investigation is ongoing. Source: *The Chronicle*

**Natchez Trace Parkway**
**Traffic checkpoint nets dozens of citations**

On December 7, NPS rangers and Mississippi Highway Patrol troopers conducted a traffic safety checkpoint, just south of the City of Tupelo. The area has had many fatal accidents in the early morning, often involving unlicensed drivers. Over 1,000 vehicles were screened in a five-hour period, resulting in 40 citations, 10 arrests, 24 towed vehicles, and 11 warnings. Six of the arrests were for driving under the influence, one was for an out-of-state felony warrant, and three were associated with an ongoing criminal investigation. District Ranger John Hearne said they expect to conduct more checkpoints and patrol activity after the number of infractions they observed. Source: Natchez Trace Parkway

**New River Gorge National Park and Preserve**
**Wildfire**

On November 30, a fire broke out in a steep and rugged area of Beauty Mountain. The Headhouse Trail, Kenney's Creek Rail Trail, Endless Wall Trail, and Nuttalburg area were closed. Nuttallburg Headhouse was found to be unharmed in the blaze. As of December 6, the fire was 100% contained at 132 acres. The cause is still under investigation. Source: *WCHS*, *WV Metro News*, *The Register-Herald*

**Padre Island National Seashore**
**Barge company to pay $15 million in damages**

Kirby Inland Marine LP has agreed to pay $15.3 million in damages and assessment costs under the Oil Pollution Act to resolve federal and state claims for injuries to natural resources resulting from an oil spill from one of their barges in 2014. A Kirby towboat was trying to push two 300-foot-long oil barges across the Houston Ship Channel, which ended up colliding with a bulk cargo ship that was already underway in the channel near the Texas City "Y" crossing. About 4,000 barrels (168,000 gallons) of oil were discharged into the channel, and flowed into Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, as well as Padre Island. The United States Department of Justice and the Office of the Texas Attorney General filed the civil suit against Kirby. The NPS is one of several designated federal trustees for the natural resources impacted by the spill. The proposed consent decree is subject to a 30-day public comment period. Source: The United States Department of Justice

**Pearl Harbor National Memorial**
**More dock issues close tours**

On December 12, the NPS was alerted to an issue with the shoreside dock, which required it to be closed and all public programs to the *USS Arizona* Memorial to be suspended until conditions are deemed safe. This is the second closure in three months, as reported in the September 8 Coalition Report. Source: Pearl Harbor Natioal Memorial

**Rocky Mountain National Park**
**Officer shot**

On December 8, a Colorado State Patrol officer pulled a vehicle over for a traffic stop on Highway 34 in Loveland. When the officer returned to his vehicle, the driver took off. The officer gave short pursuit before pulling back. An NPS law enforcement ranger observed the vehicle in the park and pulled them over near the Fall River Entrance of the park. After contacting the vehicle, the ranger was shot by the driver. The ranger then shot the driver. The ranger and driver were rushed to the hospital and an uninjured passenger was taken into custody. The ranger was protected by a ballistic vest and was said to not have suffered serious injuries. It was the first recorded gunfire incident with an officer in the park. The Fall River Entrance was closed for the investigation, which is being led by the FBI and supported by Estes Park Police, Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Colorado State Patrol troopers, and Colorado State Park officers. Source: *CBS Denver*

**Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area**
**4 mountain lion kittens found**

Four six-week-old mountain lion kittens were discovered under a picnic table near a Thousand Oaks office building. They were monitored for several days by biologists from the NPS and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, in hopes that their mother might return to them. When this did not happen, they decided to take the kittens into veterinary care due to their failing health. Two of the kittens died overnight and the other two are still being treated and will be temporarily housed at the Orange County Zoo until a permanent home can be found for them. Source: *Sierra Sun Times*

## Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On December 11, Giant Forest opened for the first time since the KNP Complex Fire passed through in September. It will be opened on a limited schedule for the coming weeks, and the phased reopening may be further affected by inclement weather. Source: *KTLA*

## Acknowledgments

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

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

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

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The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that "studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service."

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