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

The Coalition Report
Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Please note: We are currently experimenting with our content and layout, based on new staffing and the suggestions given in our survey. We welcome further feedback.

This edition is also on the longer side because there's a lot to catch up on since we haven't been reporting lately!

We are eternally grateful to Bill Halainen for his years of service at the NPS Morning Report and with the Coalition. Thank you, Bill!

Coalition Actions

Coalition member Doug Morris submitted an op-ed in support of President Biden's America the Beautiful Plan. It ran in three MT newspapers, including the *Billings Gazette:* protectnps.org/2021/07/06/member-op-ed-bidens-america-the-beautiful-plan-is-well-timed/

We joined over 50 organizations in a sign-on letter urging Department of the Interior to stop the National Park Service's imminent General Management Plan Amendment for Point Reyes National Seashore, a plan that favors special interests over the public use, protection and restoration of the park: protectnps.org/2021/07/06/coalition-signs-on-in-opposition-to-general-management-plan-amendment-for-point-reyes-national-seashore/

The Coalition sent a letter to Acting Associate Director Mike Caldwell, commending the National Park Service on the release of their Campground Design Standards which will provide excellent guidance to park managers. We conveyed our belief that the guidelines are well-thought-out, comprehensive, and appropriate to maintaining the high standard of a quality camping experience that people associate with NPS campgrounds - and we also offered a few recommendations: protectnps.org/2021/07/07/coalition-sends-comment-letter-regarding-nps-campground-strategy/

We sent a letter to several Congressional representatives and NPS leadership, expressing our opposition to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site Boundary Modification Act (S. 1812). The legislation proposes to expand the boundary of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, Illinois, to incorporate a donated reconstruction of "Lincoln's Springfield cottage", as well as the historic Elijah Iles House. The legislation raises serious concerns about the NPS accepting properties into the National Park System under conditions that do not conform to the agency's cultural resource regulations and policies and that do not meet the goals of the national historic site's general management plan: protectnps.org/2021/07/08/coalition-opposes-s-1812-a-bill-to-expand-lincoln-home-nhs/

National Park Service

National/Regional Updates

A summary of articles pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the National Park System, or to either all or parts of the entire system.

- *Superintendents now given authority to regulate e-bikes* - Acting NPS Director Shawn Benge has given guidance that superintendents may now amend their park compendiums to allow or restrict e-bikes where traditional bicycles are currently allowed. This rescinds the previous NPS policy from 2019 requiring e-bikes to be allowed wherever traditional bicycles were allowed. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

- *American Geophysical Union partners with NPS to provide science fellowships* - The AGU has opened up applications for NPS employees to join a cohort that will launch community science projects. Applications are due September 5 and the cohort will begin training this October. Source: Thriving Earth Exchange

- Texas regulators have submitted a haze plan to the Environmental Protection Agency that National Park officials and National Park Conservation Association representatives say will not adequately reduce haze and improve visibility at Big Bend National Park, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and other federally protected areas, as required under the Clean Air Act. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality approved the plan and stated that further regulations that would improve visibility would do so only marginally "to the human eye" at a very high cost. Source: *Texas Tribune*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - Eight organizations assisted the National Park Service to remove 33 tons of storm debris from Shackleford Banks between February and June 2021. Source: *Carteret County News-Times*

- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - Ann Honious was selected as the new superintendent. She will start on August 1. She was most recently the deputy superintendent for National Capital Parks - East and acting superintendent at Chattahoochee River, and has also worked at Gateway Arch and Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Site. Source: Chattahooche River National Recreation Area

- *Death Valley National Park* - The park recorded a record June average temperature: 102.9 degrees. Other daily records were also broken in June. Source: *Sacramento Bee*

- *Fort Monroe National Monument* - Acting Superintendent Eola Dance will be leading a virtual book club every Friday in July, with a focus on Someone Knows My Name by Lawrence Hill. Registration is free. This is a part of the series called Revolutionary Book Club, which is a collaboration between Fort Monroe Authority, Fort Monroe NM, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, Tuskeegee Institute NP, Richmond NB, Maggie L. Walker NHS, Frederick Douglass NHS, Carter G. Woodson NHS, and Mary McLeod Bethune Home Council House NHS. Source: *Daily Press*

- *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* - The NPS is collaborating with Portland State University and Washington State University to conduct an archaeology field school this summer on the Columbia Riverfront, investigating diverse resources from indigenous occupation, the Hudson's Bay Company Fur Trade, and the U.S. Army. Source: Portland State University, Fort Vancouver NHS

- *Franklin Delano Roosevelt National Memorial* - The National Disability Leadership Alliance has issued a public letter to NPS Acting Director Shawn Benge calling for accessibility improvements at the FDR Memorial. The letter cites the recent report by the FDR Memorial Legacy Committee calling for improvements at the site, particularly for those who are blind or low vision, as well as Congressional Resolutions S. Res. 86 and H. Res 183 that call for similar improvements. Source: *PR Newswire*

- *Isle Royale National Park* - Four gray wolf pups were documented by remote cameras back in January, according to a new report by the Michigan Technological University. This, in combination with other evidence, indicates there were likely two litters born in the park last year. This would be a good sign for the health of the wolves, which have been in decline in recent years. Source: Associated Press

- *Katmai National Park* - A collaborative effort between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Ocean Plastics Recovery Project, and NPS will run a series of marine debris clean-up expeditions over the coming year in an attempt to clean 25 tons of ocean plastic from the park. Source: Deeper Blue

- *Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site* - The NPS is seeking nominations for individuals to be appointed to the federal advisory commission related to the management and development of the site. There are 15 members on the commission, each serving four-year terms. Source: *The DC Line*.

- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Greg Dudgeon was selected as the new superintendent. He will start this month. He most recently served as acting deputy regional director in Alaska, and has had a long career working in many parks, mostly in Alaska. Source: Mount Rainier National Park

- *Natchez Historical Park* - Land was officially transferred from the City of Natchez to the National Park Service on Juneteenth to establish the new Forks of the Road site, which was one of the biggest slave markets before the Civil War. Source: Natchez Historical Park

- *Natchez Trace Parkway, Brices Cross Roads National Battlefield Site, Tupelo National Battlefield* - Douglas "Doug" Neighbor has been appointed the new superintendent. He was most recently superintendent at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and has also worked at National Park of American Samoa, Big Thicket National Preserve, and Craters of the Moon National Monument ant Preserve. Source: *WRCBtv*

- *Padre Island National Seashore* - Public hatching releases for the endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle will take place on July 23-24, and August 4-6. Source: *KSAT*

- *Pu'uhonua o Honaunau National Historical Park* - The Hawai'i Department of Land and Resources and NPS will hold a lottery to distribute live goats at the park. The goats are invasive and a concern to natural and cultural resources. They expect to give away 700 goats in the lottery. Source: *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*

- *Washington Monument* - The monument will open to the public today for the first time in six months. It had been closed since the inauguration of President Biden due to both security concerns and COVID-19 precautions. Source: *DCist*

- *White Sands National Monument* - A team of researchers from the University of New Mexico's Museum of Southwestern Biology conducted an inventory of insects and other arthopods at White Sands and its sister park, Cuatrocienegas Protected Area (Coahuila, Mexico). They discovered at least 27 new species of arthopods Source: University of New Mexico

- *Yellowstone National Park* - Two brothers have acquired and fixed up four yellow buses that were used by the NPS to ferry visitors around in Yellowstone prior to WWII. They are on display and one is available to ride in at the Buses of Yellowstone Preservation Trust in Red Lodge, MT. Source: *KTVQ*

- *Yosemite National Park* - A four-day seminar developed through a collaborative effort of the University of California, Merced, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, the Yosemite Conservancy, the Merced Sunrise Rotary Club, and the National Park Service will allow veterans to connect with careers and educational benefits. It will take place in August is the second seminar of its kind. Source: UC Merced

Open for Comment

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

- *Glacier National Park* - Public comment is currently open on a new comprehensive telecommunications plan, including allowing commercial infrastructure to be built in four developed areas of the park: Lake McDonald Lodge, Many Glacier/Swiftcurrent, Two Medicine, and Rising Sun. Comments are open through July 11. Source: *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Public comment is now open on the park's Laurel Falls Trail Management Plan. The trail is one of the most popular in the park. Comments are open through August 7. Source: *Cherokee One Feather*

- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - Public comment is now open on the park's draft Roads and Trails Management Plan. Comments are open until July 18. Source: Ozark NCR

- *Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial* - Public comment is now open on a Visitor Experience Plan focused on the visitor center and Peace Garden. Comments are open until August 7. Source: Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial

- *Rock Creek Park* - Public comment is now open for the future management of Beach Drive, which has undergone various management strategies of pedestrians and car traffic in its history. Comments are open until August 22. Source: *WUSA9*

- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open for a plan to rebuild structures and restore functions lost in the Woolsey Fire. Construction is focused at Paramount Ranch, Rocky Oaks, and Peter Strauss Ranch. Comments are open through July 16. Source: Santa Monica Mountains NRA

- *Virgin Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open for the Sampling and Analysis Plan For Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis Site Assessment at Caneel Bay Resort. The NPS is looking to determine the extent of possible soil and ground water contamination at the site due to hurricanes in 2017, which will have ramifications for the concession. Comments are open through July 24. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Secretary Deb Haaland creates task force to review law enforcement* - Following a a review of U.S. Park Police's actions while dispersing protestors at Lafayette Park in June 2020, Sec. Haaland is creating a task force led by the Department of the Interior's Office of Law Enforcement and Security to review and identify opportunities for improvement in the Bureau's law enforcement programs. Source: *KULR*, Department of Interior

- *Tanya Trujillo sworn in as Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science* - Tanya has more than 20 years experience working in natural resources management and interstate/transboundary water agreements, most recently as project director with the Colorado River Sustainability Campaign. Source: Department of Interior

- *Tommy Beaudrau sworn in as Deputy Secretary* - Tommy spent 7 years at the DOI during the Obama administration, including a stint as Chief of Staff to Secretary Sally Jewell and the first director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Source: Department of the Interior

- *PILT program announces $529.3 million in 2021 funding to local governments* - The Payments in Lieu of Taxes program defrays costs for local governments who have DOI federal lands within their borders for which they cannot collect property taxes. The payments are based on the number of acres in each county or jurisdiction and its population. This funding comes from commercial activities conducted on public lands. Source: Department of Interior

- *DOI files comments with FERC about tidal facility in Turnagain Arm* - The DOI, on behalf of the NPS, is seeking records to define the boundaries for the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, a popular recreational area in Anchorage which is supported by funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Any impacts to the recreational and conservation values of the trail would need to come under NEPA and NHPA compliance. Source: *Petroleum News*

Congressional Actions

June 9 – The Senate passed both H.R. 49 and S. 1605, to designate the National Pulse Memorial located at 1912 South Orange Avenue, Orlando, Florida, 32806. The bill specifies that the memorial shall not be a unit of the National Park System. Sometimes the House and Senate bills on the same topic are both passed in one body in order for the member who introduced it to be able to show that his or her bill passed their house of Congress. Since H.R. 49 previously passed the House on May 12, that bill will be sent to the president for his signature.

June 15 – The *Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:* Subcommittee on Tourism, Trade, and Export Promotion concluded a hearing to examine the state of outdoor tourism, recreation, and ecotourism, after receiving testimony from Colin Robertson, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Reno; Glenn Hughes, American Sportfishing Association, Alexandria, Virginia; Joe Henry, Lake of the Woods Tourism, St. Cloud, Minnesota; and Zachary Hartman, Ducks Unlimited, Memphis, Tennessee.

June 16 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 273, designating June 2021 as "Great Outdoors Month''.

June 16 – The *Committee on Appropriations:* Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2022 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior.

June 16 – The *Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:* Committee ordered favorably reported the following, among other bills:

- S. 66, to require the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia to develop a plan for reducing, mitigating, and controlling harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in South Florida.
- S. 1995, to amend the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act with respect to sport fish restoration and recreational boating safety.

June 16 – The *Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:* Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining concluded a hearing to examine the following, among other bills:

- S. 173, to provide for the designation of certain wilderness areas, recreation management areas, and conservation areas in the State of Colorado. Title IV of the bill authorizes in statute the establishment of the Curecanti National Recreation Area, which currently is being managed by NPS under an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation.
- S. 182, to withdraw certain Federal land in the Pecos Watershed area of the State of New Mexico from mineral entry. The bill would help protect the Pecos River, a portion of which runs through Pecos National Historical Park.
- S. 455, to designate and expand wilderness areas in Olympic National Forest in the State of Washington, and to designate certain rivers in Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park as wild and scenic rivers.
- S. 567, to provide for conservation and economic development in the State of Nevada. Title II makes the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument eligible for funding from a Special Account established by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, and Title III includes provisions to designate 92,000 acres of wilderness in Lake Mead NRA.
- S. 904, to require the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to digitize and make publicly available geographic information system mapping data relating to public access to Federal land and waters for outdoor recreation,
- S. 1008, to require the Secretary of the Interior to develop a modeling tool, conduct a study, and issue reports relating to the tax equivalent amount of payments under the payment in lieu of taxes program,
- S. 1076, to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned oil and gas wells and surrounding land, and to provide funds to State and Tribal government to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned oil and gas wells and surrounding land.
- S. 1686, to amend the Wilderness Act to allow local Federal officials to determine the manner in which nonmotorized uses may be permitted in wilderness areas. The coalition expressed its strong opposition to this bill as being inconsistent with the Wilderness Act.

Testimony was provided by Senators Murray, Cramer, Bennet, and Romney; Nada Wolff Culver, Deputy Director, Policy and Programs, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior; Chris French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Utah Representative Keven Stratton, Salt Lake City; Marci Henson, Clark County Department of Environment and Sustainability, Las Vegas, Nevada; and public witnesses.

June 17 – The Senate confirmed the nomination of Tommy P. Beaudreau, of Alaska, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior by a vote of 88 yeas to 9 nays.

June 23 – The *Committee on Energy and Natural Resources*: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing to examine the following bills:

- S. 31, to limit the establishment or extension of national monuments in the State of Utah.
- S. 172, to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.
- S. 192, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain river segments in the State of Oregon as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- S. 270, to amend the Act entitled “Act to provide for the establishment of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in the State of Kansas” to provide for inclusion of additional related sites in the National Park System.
- S. 491, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain river segments in the York River watershed in the State of Maine as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.
- S. 535, to authorize the location of a memorial on the National Mall to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces that served on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism.
- S. 753, to reauthorize the Highlands Conservation Act, and to authorize States to use funds from that Act for administrative purposes.
- S. 1317, to modify the boundary of the Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument in the State of Arizona.
- S. 1320, to establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System.
- S. 1321, to modify the boundary of the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument.
- S. 1354, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Chilkoot National Historic Trail and to provide for a study of the Alaska Long Trail.
- S. 1526, to authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park, Utah.
- S. 1527, to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide that State law shall apply to the use of motor vehicles on roads within a System unit.
- S. 1769, to adjust the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor.
- S. 1771, to authorize reference to the museum located at Blytheville/Eaker Air Force Base in Blytheville, Arkansas, as the “National Cold War Center”.

Testimony was provided by Senator Ernst and Representative Golden; Michael A. Caldwell, Acting Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Jennifer Eberlien, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; and public witnesses.

House Actions

June 8 – The *Committee on Natural Resources:* Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing on several bills, including:

- H.R. 3113, to require the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to digitize and make publicly available geographic information system mapping data relating to public access to Federal land and waters for outdoor recreation;
- H.R. 3670, to improve access for outdoor recreation through the use of special recreation permits on Federal recreational lands and waters.
- H.R. 3687, 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.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Neguse, Tlaib and Moore of Utah; Mark Lambrecht, Assistant Director, National Conservation Lands and Community Partnerships, Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior; Jennifer Eberlien, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; and public witnesses.

June 9 & 10 – The *Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:* Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 3684, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs. This is the bill that, among other provisions, provides funding for roads, bridges, and transportation systems through national park units. On June 10, H.R. 3684 was ordered reported, as amended by the committee. See entry for July 1, below, for the provisions that affect the National Park Service.

June 15 – The *Committee on Natural Resources:* Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing on the following:

- H.R. 1154, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in Virginia and North Carolina as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 1286, to establish in the States of North Carolina and South Carolina the Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Corridor.
- H.R. 1316, to authorize a National Heritage Area Program in the National Park Service.
- H.R. 1424, to establish the St. Croix National Heritage Area in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- H.R. 1908, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in Honolulu County, Oahu, Hawaii as the Ka‘ena Point National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 1925, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land on the Big Island of Hawaii as the South Kona National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 2024, to establish the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 2107, to establish the Nation’s Oldest Port National Heritage Area in Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, and Flagler Counties, Florida.
- H.R. 2359, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain lands along the Rio Grande River in Texas as the Los Caminos del Rio National Heritage Corridor.
- H.R. 2899, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating areas within the island of Guam as a National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 3222, to establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 3616, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in Utah as the Bear River National Heritage Area.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Clyburn, Tonko, Plaskett, Case, Kahele, Rutherford, Cuellar, San Nicolas, and Moore of Utah; Joy Beasley, Associate Director, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Suzanne D. Case, Chair, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Hawaii; and public witnesses.

June 23 – The House passed a large number of bills together with one vote including H.R. 3241, to make improvements in the enactment of title 54, United States Code, into a positive law title and to improve the Code. Title 54 of the U.S. Code is where National Park Service system-wide laws are codified. H.R. 3241 makes a number of minor technical changes to certain NPS laws found in title 54. The vote on all the bills was 325 yeas to 103 nays.

June 23 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a hearing entitled “Examining the Department of the Interior’s Spending Priorities and the President’s Fiscal Year Budget 2022 Proposal”. Testimony was heard from Deb Haaland, Secretary, Department of the Interior.

June 24 – The Senate confirmed the nomination of Shannon Aneal Estenoz, of Florida, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Department of the Interior.

June 28 – The *Committee on Appropriations:* Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a markup on the Fiscal Year 2022 Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. The Fiscal Year 2022 Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill was forwarded to the full Committee, without amendment. See entry for July 1, below, for the provisions that affect the National Park Service.

June 29 – The *Committee on Science, Space, and Technology:* Full Committee held a hearing entitled "The State of Federal Wildland Fire Science: Examining Opportunities for Further Research and Coordination''. Testimony was heard from George Geissler, State Forester and Deputy, Wildland Fire and Forest Health and Resiliency, Washington Department of Natural Resources; and public witnesses.

July 1 – The House passed H.R. 3684, to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, by a vote of 221 yeas to 201 nays. The bill provides the following:

- $1.99 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 $580 million over the previous five-year period.
- $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.
- $1.65 billion from FY 2022 - 2026, for state and local entities to provide access to public lands, including national parks.

In addition to these funding levels, the House adopted three amendments to H.R. 3684 as follows:

- A reauthorization of funding for one year for 32 National Heritage Areas whose funding expires at the end of FY 2021. The amendment includes a one-year extension of the management plan deadline for six new national heritage areas established in 2019 through P.L. 116-9.
- The establishment of the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program to provide grants to urban communities for the creation and renovation of urban parks.
- An authorization for territories of the U.S. to make them eligible for the National Scenic Byways Program.
- A permanent reauthorization of the Historic Preservation Fund that also increases the authorization of appropriations level to $300 million in each fiscal year, which is an annual increase of $150 million from the level in current law.

July 1 – The *Committee on Appropriations:* Full Committee held a markup on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2022. The Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2022 was ordered reported, among other bills. The bill was given the number H.R. 4372 when it was introduced in the House after the markup.

NPS will receive $1.25 billion in mandatory appropriations from the Legacy Restoration Fund of the Great American Outdoors Act to help address the NPS deferred maintenance backlog.

H.R. 4372 also includes $452.3 million in mandatory appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for federal land acquisition, state assistance, and various grant programs as follows:

- State Conservation Grants - $200,362,000
- LWCF Outdoor Recreation Legacy Grants - $115,000,000
- State Conservation Grants Administration - $12,401,000
- American Battlefield Protection Program (P.L. 113–287) - $20,000,000
- Acquisition Management - $14,500,000
- Recreational Access - $12,800,000
- Emergencies, Hardships, Relocations, and Deficiencies - $4,162,000
- Inholding, Donations, and Exchanges - $9,750,000
- Federal Land Acquisitions - $63,329,268

Along with the amounts listed above, the bill includes a total of $3.469 billion in discretionary appropriations for the NPS in FY 2022, an increase of $346 million from FY 2021 as follows:

- Operation of the National Park System (ONPS) - $2.965 billion, which is an increase of $277 million from FY 2021.
- National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) - $80.4 million, which is an increase of $6.25 million from FY 2021.
- Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) - $155.8 million, which is an increase of $11.5 million from FY 2021.
- Construction - $252.6 million, which is an increase of $28.7 million from FY 2021.
- Centennial Challenge - $15 million, which is the same as FY 2021.

In addition to the funding shown above, the H.R. 4372 includes these additional authorizations:
Sec. 116 authorizes the NPS to coney a small amount of land for the so-called Long Bridge project to allow rail access across the Potomac River in Washington, D.C.
Sec. 120 extends the authority of the Delaware Water Gap NRA to charge fees for commercial vehicles to use Route 209.
Sec. 121 extends the authorization of appropriations, or raise the ceiling on these authorizations for several national heritage areas whose authority expires at the end of FY 2021.
Sec. 122 authorizes a study of the 1965 Voting Rights March as a possible addition to the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, as well as possibly making this trail as unit of the National Park System.
Sec. 125 requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement prior to any decision to allow drilling for oil or gas in Big Cypress National Preserve.

In the committee report to accompany H.R. 4372, federal land management agencies are directed to implement training programs of the Attorney General to cover the use of force and de-escalation, racial profiling, implicit bias, and procedural justice and to make such training a requirement for its federal law enforcement officers. In addition, the committee directs the agencies, to the extent that such Departments and agencies have not already done so, to submit their use of force data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)'s National Use of Force Data Collection database.

The committee report also directs the Department of the Interior to report back within 180 days of enactment of this Act on impacts to habitat and species from border barrier construction and
what is needed to mitigate these impacts. H.R. 4372 includes language that authorizes the federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service to accept transfers of funds from U.S. Customs and Border Protection for mitigation activities, including land acquisition, related to construction of border barriers on Federal lands.

The committee report noted the repeal of the policy by the previous administration that allowed parks to voluntarily establish disposable plastic water bottle sales elimination programs that aimed to reduce the disposal of plastic water bottles in national parks. Since the repeal, there have been no alternative approaches to mitigating or preventing plastic pollution. The NPS is directed to develop and submit to the committee a plan to mitigate or prevent plastic pollution in the National Park System. The plan should include an evaluation of the potential role of refillable water stations and recyclable packaging.

Incidents

Incidents are listed by park in alphabetical order. Incidents now include notable fires.

- **Death Valley National Park**
  No cause found for Scottys Castle fire

  A investigation into fire that started the night of April 21/morning of April 22 and destroyed the Scottys Castle Visitor Center, located in the historic garage/workshop, came back inconclusive. There was no electrical power connected to the building, no generators or equipment, no lightning, and no evidence of arson. Ongoing flood recovery at the site from the flash flood in October 2015 was suspended for two months due to the risk of wind-blown asbestos from the burn, but work has now resumed at other parts of the site. The historic district at Scottys Castle is expected to reopen in 2023.

- **Delaware River Water Gap National Recreation Area**
  Five drownings in nine days

  It had been three years since the last drowning on the 73-mile stretch of the Upper Delaware River that the NPS oversees, until last week. The latest incident took place when a 17-year-old drowned on the Fourth of July after trying to swim across the river without a personal flotation device with two others. The river was higher and faster than average due to recent rains. The other two made it across, in part with help from someone on a paddleboard. The victim has not been found. 74 drownings have been recorded since 1980 - none properly wearing a life jacket, and mostly young men between the ages of 18-30. Source: *Times Herald-Record*

- **Katmai National Park**
  Visitor swatted by grizzly bear, sustains minor injuries

  A group of three, consisting of a guide and two visitors, was approached by a bear acting aggressively while sightseeing on an island near the confluence of the Savoonski and Grosvenor Rivers. While making themselves appear larger and yelling at the bear, one of the visitors was swatted by the bear and knocked into the nearby river. The guide had been in the process of trying to deploy bear spray. Once the spray was deployed, the bear left. The visitor sustained minor injuries to their arm. Source: *Anchorage Daily News*

- **Rocky Mountain National Park**
  Woman trapped under logs, escapes

  On June 28, 45-year-old woman slipped on wet rocks in the St. Vrain River, fell in, and was swept 100 feet down river under log debris. She was able to pull herself onto the logs, and was assisted from the river by Rocky Mountain Search and Rescue team members. She declined an ambulance and it is unknown if she sustained injuries. Source: *The Herald-Sun*

- **Sequoia National Park**
  Man drowns in Middle Fork of Kaweah River

  Victor Cisneros, 20, drowned while playing in the river with his family adjacent to the Potwisha Campground on June 21. Source: *Visalia Times Delta*

- **White Sands National Park**
  Missing hiker found dead

  The vehicle of 63-year-old Jeffrey Minshew was found late on the evening of July 4. National Park Service staff searched all night without finding evidence of the hiker. The following morning, several local LE, EMS, and SAR teams, as well as Border Patrol and Organ Mountain Technical Rescue Squad responded, and the team was able to find the victim's footprints. They tracked the prints until they found him deceased. Investigation is underway, and foul play is not suspected. Source: *Alamogordo Daily News*, *Associated Press*

- **Yosemite National Park**
  Hiker's body found
  James Youngblom, 64, was found dead in LeConte Falls on June 25. He was reported to be hiking alone from White Wolf to Glen Aulin via the Grand Canyon the Tuolumne. The National Park Service is investigating the incident and asking for any information the public may have. Sources: *USA Today*, Yosemite National Park

- **Yosemite National Park**
  Lightning starts series of small fires

  14 fires were ignited by lightning in the park between Monday, June 28 through July 2. The King, Pothole, Fork, and Harden Fires were extinguished due to risks to visitor safety and protection of park resources. A couple are being monitored that are burning in Wilderness areas. Source: *Sierra Sun Times*, follow-up also from *Sierra Sun Times*

- **Yellowstone National Park**
  Man receives 5-year park ban for disorderly conduct

  An individual became upset that a commercial guide would not take his group kayaking due to intoxication. When the guide called law enforcement, the individual made threatening comments and refused to obey orders. He was charged with and pled guilty to disorderly conduct charges. He received 60 days in jail, five years of unsupervised probation, a park ban for five years, and will pay $1,500 in fines. Source: *KPVI*

- **Yellowstone National Park**
  Man receives 4-year park ban for running onto Old Faithful cone

  On July 7, 2020, a 37-year-old visitor donned a coonskin cap and carried a U.S. flag up to the edge of Old Faithful geyser. He pled guilty to a misdemeanor account of traveling in a closed thermal area. In addition to the park pan, he received 15 days in jail and $240 in fines and fees. Source: *Powell Tribune*

- **Yellowstone National Park**
  Hiker gored by bison

  A 30-year-old hiker on the Storm Point Trail was airlifted to Eastern Idaho Medical Center after being gored by a bison. She had been hiking with one other individual. Details have not yet been released. Source: *Jackson Hole News and Guide*

- **Zion National Park**
  Flash floods cause damage and close park

  On June 29, Zion received over an inch of rain in an hour, resulting in flash flooding that damaged roads, covered many areas and cars in boulders and mud. The park closed that afternoon and reopened the following morning, with some areas remaining closed and clean-up ongoing. Some areas remain closed and clean-up is ongoing. Source: *USA Today*, Zion NP Press Release.

- **Various Parks**
  Tropical Storm Elsa closes parks

  Parks across South Caroline and Georgia closed on July 7 ahead of the advance of Tropical Storm Elsa. The storm is likely to bring heavy rans and flooding, as well as wind gusts of 100 mph or more. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

Park People

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

- Charles "Chuck" Fay Buck, long-time NPS employee, most recently at Chaco Canyon, passed away on June 16. Source: *legacy.com*

- Jonathan Doherty retired in June after 41 years with the NPS. He was most recently the Chesapeake Bay Office Assistant Superintendent. The Chesapeake Conservancy awarded him their most prestigious award, the Champion of the Chesapeake, in honor of his leadership on behalf of the Chesapeake watershed. Source: *TheBayNet*

- Mike Madell, deputy superintendent at Acadia National Park and 34-year veteran of the NPS, will retire on July 31. Source: Mount Desert Islander

- A post office in the town of Redbud on the Redbud Indian Reservation was dedicated to/ named after Ben Reifel last week. He served as Special Assistant for Indian Programs with the National Park Service under the Nixon Administration after five terms in the House of Representatives. He was born on the reservation in 1906 and passed away in 1990.

- Rex Tilousi, former Grand Canyon ranger and Havasupai Tribal Chairman, passed away on June 19. Sources: *AP News*, *azcentral*

Acknowledgments

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- Issue Contributors: Kevin Dahl

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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