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

The Coalition Report
Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Coalition Actions

Several members of the Executive Council and staff met with Mr. Charles F. Sams III, President Biden's nomination for the 19th director of the National Park Service. We had an excellent conversation and were able to provide some background on the organization, discuss issues related to the NPS, and offer our support if/when Mr. Sams is confirmed. His confirmation hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, October 19th at 10 am ET. We sent a letter of support for his nomination. The Coalition has also responded to requests for information in helping the committee prepare for the hearing: https://protectnps.org/2021/10/14/coalition-supports-charles-f-sams-iii-as-the-19th-director-of-the-national-park-service/

Coalition Chair Phil Francis spoke with *E & E News* about national parks, crowds, and the need for more funding: https://protectnps.org/2021/10/05/ticket-to-paradise-crowded-national-parks-try-reservations-fees/

In our continued efforts to support the addition of the Amache site to the national park system, we reissued our statement of support during a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing on the bill to establish the Amache National Historic Site: https://protectnps.org/2021/10/07/coalition-continues-support-of-amache-legislation-in-committee-hearing/

The Coalition also issued a statement of support for Senator Hickenlooper's COMPETES Act, which would end the Bureau of Land Management's practice of selling oil and gas leases at rock-bottom prices and without a competitive bid: https://protectnps.org/2021/10/07/coalition-supports-competes-act/

And finally, good news for national monuments last week. On October 8, President Biden officially reinstated and slightly expanded the original 1.3 million acre boundaries of Bears Ears National Monument, and restored the original 1.8 million acre boundaries of Grand Staircase-Escalante. He also restored protections covering the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts. We issued a statement celebrating the restoration of these national monuments: https://protectnps.org/2021/10/08/coalition-celebrates-president-bidens-restoration-of-bears-ears-and-grand-staircase-escalante-national-monuments/

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.

- *Senate hearings scheduled for nominated NPS Director* - On October 19, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held the confirmation hearing for Charles Sams' nomination as National Park Service Director. Source: Many

- *DOI releases climate action plan* - The Department of Interior released its 2021 Climate Action Plan, a 36-page document stating the agency's efforts to address and adapt to climate change. The National Park Service is explicitly mentioned for best practices with regards to its Cultural Resources Climate Change strategy, as well as its innovative and unique solutions related to infrastructure in coastal parks. Source: Department of Interior

- *NSF grant establishes nationwide atmospheric measurement network* - The National Science Foundation Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure program has awarded Georgia Institute of Technology professor Nga Lee "Sally" Ng $12 million to establish a network of 12 aerosol-measuring stations around the United States, including in Yellowstone, Joshua Tree, and Great Smoky Mountain National Parks. Source: Georgia Tech Research

- *$1.5 million NOAA grant given to study sea level rise* - Researchers at the University of Rhode Island and Penn State University received a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration grant to study the effects of sea level rise and how it may impact extreme weather events. They will collaborate with the Schoodic Institute and National Park Service in their research, with the goal of helping parks and communities adapt and improve resilience to climate change impacts. Source: *The Westerly Sun*

- *Study underway to understand algal toxins in national park waterways* - The U.S. Geological Survey and National Park Service, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency, University of Wisconsin, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration, are partnering on a first-of-its-kind, nationwide field study of harmful algal blooms. Professional scientists and trained volunteers are sampling and monitoring freshwater and marine environments at 18 national parks. The study started over the summer and will continue for two years. Source: National Park Service

- *Ozone pollution a growing threat to parks and biodiversity - Yale Environment 360* published an article outlining recent research about the effects of ozone on plant growth and biodiversity, particularly in national parks like Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Joshua Tree, and Rocky Mountain. Ozone may have heavier effects on ecosystems than was previously understood. Source: *Yale Environment 360*

- *Climate change in the national parks - Outside* published an article this week outlining the ways in which climate change is affecting various parks and the challenges park staff face to deal with them. Source: *Outside*

- *"Can indigenous leadership save our national parks and monuments?" - Sierra* published an article by Jacqueline Keeler last week arguing for the ways in which indigenous leadership at the NPS could make a large difference in ameliorating practices that have ostracized Native peoples. Source: *Sierra: The Magazine of the Sierra Club*

- *10 most "underrated" national parks* - A travel blog called *ParkSleepFly* created a formula for ranking the national parks in terms of its most "underrated." The review only covered the 63 national-parks-in-name, not all 423 units of the NPS system. The top three were Glacier Bay, Kenai Fjords, and Crater Lake. Source: *ParkSleepFly*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Denali National Park - The Seattle Times* ran an article outlining the challenges of keeping the park road open at Polychrome Pass due to its precarious position on top of a glacier that is rapidly melting. As reported in the Coalition Report previously, the road closed at the halfway point several weeks earlier than normal this summer after a slide caused 300 feet of road to wash out. The park has announced this week that the closure will last through the entire summer of 2022, and park staff are now considering a $53 million plan to place a bridge over the road section. Source: *The Seattle Times*

- *Fort Donelson National Battlefield* - The NPS has awarded a $3.3 million construction contract to AACON General Contractors, LLC of Louisville, Kentucky to rehabilitate the 60-year-old visitor center. Source: *Clarksville Online*

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - Horseshoe Bend Overlook has been chosen as a "Hot Spot" by the organization, Leave No Trace. Hot Spots are 10 national, state, and local parks selected each year by the organization as a place that has been heavily impacted by visitors. A team from LNT will work with NPS staff from November 4-8 to troubleshoot ways to reduce impacts at the location. Source: Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area - Tablet Magazine* ran an article by Jonah Raskin called "Red Lives Matter" that outlined the occupation of Alcatraz for almost two years from 1969-1971 by citizens trying to bring awareness to the plight of Native Americans. Source: *Tablet Magazine*

- *Grand Teton National Park - The Lily* profiled Julie Gonzalez, the NPS community engagement coordinator at the park, as part of its ongoing series called "The Work Day," which chronicles a single day in various women's working lives. Source: *The Lily*

- *Grand Teton National Park* - The park has announced that they've reinstituted the practice of body-worn cameras for law enforcement rangers. This is part of a NPS-wide initiative to increase accountability and transparency and better collect evidence. In 2018, the park had discontinued the use of body-worn cameras due to issues with data storage and aging equipment, which have both now been resolved. Source: Grand Teton National Park

- *Haleakalā National Park* - The NPS is recruiting two teachers and a digital media intern to create new distance learning programs in ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi (Hawaiian language) for fourth graders through the National Park Foundation's Open Outdoors for Kids Grant Program. Source: *Maui Now*

- *Isle Royale National Park* - The park has begun flying a Grand Portage Tribal flag alongside the U.S. flag at Windigo. In 2019, at a celebration of the park becoming a "traditional cultural property" (TCP) of the Grand Portage Tribe, tribal member Butch Deschampe presented the flag to the park superintendent and asked if the park would be willing to fly it. It took almost two years between pandemic precautions and securing official permissions, and the flag was raised through a ceremony that included traditional blessings and song. Source: Isle Royale National Park

- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The park announced that boaters should expect low water levels over the next 2 years to affect Boulder Harbor, Hemenway Harbor, Temple Bar, Callville Bay, Echo Bay, and South Cove. The ramp at Callville Bay, already down to one lane, is expected to close permanently in May 2022. Launch ramps at Temple Bar and South Cove are already closed, though a "primitive launching spot" is open nearby. Source: *Boulder City Review*

- *Lassen National Park - NPR Cap Radio* published pictures and a description of the parts of the park that burned in the Dixie Fire. Source: *NPR Cap Radio*

- *Mesa Verde National Park* - The NPS, in collaboration with the Colorado Chapter of the National Mustang Association, has begun operations to relocate trespass livestock from the park. This plan has been developed with public input over several years, and is meant to preserve the cultural and natural resources in the park. The project is utilizing low-stress livestock handling techniques. Source: Mesa Verde National Park

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS, in collaboration with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, is adding a two-way protected bike lane on 15th Street to keep pedestrians safe while visiting the National Mall. Construction will take place through the fall. Another protected lane will be installed in spring 2022 on East Basin Drive SW. Source: *WTOP*

- *Pearl Harbor National Memorial* - The NPS and U.S. Navy Region Hawaii will host the 80th National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Commemoration on December 7. Due to COVID-19, the ceremony is by invite and lottery only. Source: *KITV*

- *River Raisin National Battlefield Park* - The Michigan state Senate has approved a $2 million grant to help fund a new education center as part of its 2022 budget. The governor is expected to approve the plan. Source: River Raisin National Battlefield Park

- *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park* - An online petition is underway to stop an apartment complex project near Mission San Jose that would rescind a current zoning ordinance to keep a 1,000 foot viewshed protection around the site. A protest is also planned. Opponents say they are upset because families were forcibly removed from living adjacent to the mission when it became a park, that the promises made about the viewshed buffer are not being honored, and that the proposed apartment complex would by part of a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, which means the taxes would not go back into the neighboring schools or hospital. A member of city council has stated they will bring all stakeholders to the table and intend to fully engage with the Office of Historic Preservation and World Heritage Office. Source: *KENS5*

- *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park* - The park opened an exhibit at the San Antonio International Airport called, "We're Still Here: San Antonio Missions Descendant Stories." The exhibit seeks to give voice to the families that have deep connections to the area, both before and after the mission period in the 1700s. There is also an accompanying virtual exhibit. Source: San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

- *Zion National Park* - The park is experiencing record numbers of Search and Rescue calls. In 2019, they had 47 rescue efforts; in 2020, they had 87, and as of the end of September, the park has had 153 efforts. Source: *KSL*

Personnel Changes

- *Colonial National Historical Park* - Jerri Marr has been selected as the new superintendent, which also oversees management of Fort Monroe National Monument and Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. She has 15 years of federal experience, most recently as the U.S. Forest Service's assistant director of recreation, youth, and volunteer resources. She starts her new role on November 21. Source: Colonial National Historical Park

- *Devils Tower National Monument* - Curlinda Mitchell Blacksheep, Ed.D., has been selected as the new supervisory park ranger for interpretation and education. She has over 22 years of NPS experience, most recently as lead park ranger interpreter at Navajo National Monument. Source: Devils Tower National Monument

- *Fort Monroe National Monument* - Eola Dance has been selected to be the new superintendent. She has 20 years of experience with the NPS, most recently as the interim superintendent at Fort Monroe and the head of resource stewardship and science at Colonial National Historical Park. She started her new role on October 10. Source: *Daily Press*

- *Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site* - Talya Housman was selected as the new museum technician. She has been a seasonal museum technician at the two sites since early 2020, and will now serve in a year-round capacity. She starts her new role on October 25. Source: Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site

- *Lowell National Historical Park* - Julie Galonska has been selected as the new superintendent. She has 27 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. She starts her new role on November 7. Source: Lowell National Historical Park

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 October 2, Washington Watley Jr, 64, passed away. For a time, he was the audio engineer at the Chamizal Memorial Theater. Source: *Legacy*

- On October 5, Kevin Ziemba, 67, passed away. He worked for the NPS for 35 years before his retirement, including at Blue Ridge Parkway, Hopewell Furnace, Colonial National, Delaware Water Gap, and Big Cypress. Source: *WKYK and WTOE*

Retirements

- While the Coalition Report was on a break last year, Mike Wrigley retired at the end of 2020 with over 25 years of federal service. He recently served as the NPS Chief of the Wildlife Conservation Branch of the Biological Resources Division of Natural Resource Stewardship and Science (NRSS) in Ft Collins, CO. Prior to this position he worked as the NPS Intermountain Regional Wildlife Biologist and Biological Resource Chief in Denver. He also worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Forest Service. He began his career as a seasonal ranger at Olympic National Park. Source: M. Wrigley

Open for Comment

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

- *Antietam National Battlefield* - Public comment opens on October 21 on a Landscape Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. Comments are open until November 21. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

- *Bay Area National Parks (Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Point Reyes National Seashore, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park)* - Public comment is now open on a proposed Air Tour Management Plan that covers all four parks. Comments are open until November 15. Source: Golden Gate National Recreation Area

- *Crater Lake National Park* - Public comment is now open on a trail management plan. A key provision is adding more than 20 miles of new trails to the park. The park has created a story map to help understand the plan. Comments are open until October 21. Source: *Herald and News*

- *Denali National Park* - Public comment is now open on proposed Polychrome Area Improvements. Comments are open until October 29. Source: Denali National Park

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Public comment is now open on proposed construction on the Foothills Parkway and access improvements between Wears Valley and the Metcalf Bottoms area. Comments are open until October 31. Source: *WATE*

- *National Capital Parks - East* - Public comment is now open on an Environmental Assessment to reduce overabundant deer populations to promote healthy and diverse forests and protect native plants at several national parks in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. Comments are open until November 8. Source: *The DC Line*

- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - Public comment is now open on a plan to change camping fees and cave tour fees for the Round Spring Cave. Comments are open until November 30. Source: Ozark National Scenic Riverways

- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - Public comment is now open a plan to improve the Fairy Falls Day Use Area. Comments are open until November 21. Source: Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway

Other Department of Interior News

- *Climate change activists occupy DOI building* - On October 14, several dozen activists filled the U.S. Department of Interior building after a march through Washington, D.C. Some individuals who were unable to enter attempted to push past police, which led to physical altercations and some police using tasers. Activists also protested the Bureau of Indian Affairs and requested changes to policies related to indigenous groups. Source: *Newsweek*

- *DOI outlines offshore wind leasing plan* - On October 13, Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland announced plans for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to potentially open 7 new offshore lease sales by 2025 in Maine, New York, the Gulf of Mexico, Central Atlantic, the Carolinas, California, and Oregon. This is a step toward President Biden's commitment to deploy 30 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030. Source: Department of Interior

- *DOI announces 4 new appointees* - The Department of Interior announced appointees in the following positions: Special Assistant/Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and two Deputy Assistant Secretaries of FIsh and Wildlife and Parks. The DOI's political team is over 60% identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color) and 70% women. Source: Department of Interior

- *DOI announces $348 million in projects in Nevada and the California side of Lake Tahoe Basin* - The sale of public lands under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) has allowed for $348 million in new grants for 62 projects dedicated to recreation improvement, wildlife habitat conservation, hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention, and other purposes. The act has been in place since 1998 and has generated $4 billion and 18 rounds of projects. Source: Department of Interior

- *DOI announces listening sessions on equity in recreation* - The Department of Interior will host five listening sessions to invite feedback about barriers that underserved communities and individuals face in participating in public lands recreation. They will take place from October 19-27. 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.

New Public Laws

October 2 – The president signed into law H.R. 5434, to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, and transit programs (Public Law 117–44). The law includes a short-term extension through October 31, 2021, for the surface transportation programs of the federal government, including those that benefit the national park roads system.

Senate Actions

October 2 – The Senate passed H.R. 5434, to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, and transit programs. The bill includes a short-term extension through October 31, 2021, for the surface transportation programs of the federal government, including those that benefit the national park roads system. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

October 5 – *The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources* concluded a hearing to examine and consider updates to the Mining Law of 1872, after receiving testimony from Chris Wood, Trout Unlimited, Arlington, Virginia; Katie Sweeney, National Mining Association, and Autumn Hanna, Taxpayers for Common Sense, both of Washington, D.C.; Rich Haddock, Barrick Gold Corporation, Salt Lake City, Utah; David Brown, Wyo, and Ben, Inc., Billings, Montana.

October 6 – *The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks* concluded a hearing to examine the following:

- S. 336, to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to reauthorize the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway,
- S. 378, to reauthorize the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, the Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area, the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, the Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area, and the Oil Region National Heritage Area,
- S. 511, to establish the Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area in the State of Illinois,
- S. 635, to reauthorize The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area,
- S. 654, to reauthorize the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area,
- S. 787, to amend the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Act to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance to the local coordinating entity for the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area under that Act,
- S. 825, to establish the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area,
- S. 972, to reauthorize the Essex National Heritage Area,
- S. 990, to reauthorize the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area,
- S. 1004, to extend the authorization of the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area, to designate the Great Basin National Heritage Route in the State of Nevada as the "Great Basin National Heritage Area", to designate the Great Basin Heritage Route Partnership as the "Great Basin Heritage Area Partnership", to extend the authorization of the Great Basin National Heritage Area,
- S. 1112, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Chisholm National Historic Trail and the Western National Historic Trail,
- S. 1224, to reauthorize, and increase the total funding cap for, the America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership, to re-designate the America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership as the "Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area",
- S. 1258, to extend the authorization of each of the National Coal Heritage Area and the Wheeling National Heritage Area in the State of West Virginia,
- S. 1284 and H.R. 2497, bills to establish the Amache National Historic Site in the State of Colorado as a Unit of the National Park System,
- S. 1318, to reauthorize the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area,
- S. 1329, to amend the National Aviation Heritage Area Act to reauthorize the National Aviation Heritage Area,
- S. 1620, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the city of Eunice, Louisiana, certain Federal land in the State of Louisiana,
- S. 1643, to establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area,
- S. 1942, to standardize the designation of National Heritage Areas,
- S. 1954, to reauthorize the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor,
- S. 2158, to extend the authorization for the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission,
- S. 2296, to establish the Northern Neck National Heritage Area,
- S. 2438, to modify the boundary of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park in the State of Louisiana,
- S. 2441, to establish in the States of North Carolina and South Carolina the Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Corridor,
- S. 2482, to amend the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Act of 2006 to reauthorize the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership,
- S. 2490, to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas,
- S. 2580, to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to make free National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes available to members of the Armed Forces,
- S. 2648, to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to reauthorize the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area in the State of Alaska, and
- S. 2763, to extend the authorization for the MotorCities National Heritage Area in the State of Michigan, after receiving testimony from Joy Beasley, Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and Sara Capen, Niagara Falls National Heritage Area,

Niagara University, New York, on behalf of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas.

October 7 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 411, designating October 6, 2021, as "Energy Efficiency Day" in celebration of the economic and environmental benefits that have been driven by private sector innovation and Federal energy efficiency policies.

House Actions

October 1 – The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 5434, to provide an extension of Federal-aid highway, highway safety, and transit programs, by a 2/3 vote of 365 yeas to 51 nays. The bill includes a short-term extension through October 31, 2021, for the surface transportation programs of the federal government, including those that benefit the national park roads system.

October 6 – *The Committee on Education and Labor: Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment* held a hearing entitled "Homecoming: The Historical Roots and Continued Contributions of HBCUs." Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

October 13 – *The Committee on Natural Resources* approved the following, among other bills:

- H.R. 160, to reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 and to establish the United States Coral Reef Task Force. Sec. 301 of the legislation authorizes the Department of the Interior to provide scientific advice and technical assistance in the preservation of coral reefs.
- 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. 2024, to establish the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 2107, to establish the Nation's Oldest Port National Heritage Area in the natural watersheds in Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, and Flagler Counties in Florida.
- H.R. 2930, to enhance protections of Native American tangible cultural heritage.
- H.R. 3222, to establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area Act.
- H.R. 3670, to improve access for outdoor recreation through the use of special recreation permits on Federal recreational lands and waters.

October 14 – *The Committee on Natural Resources:* Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held a hearing on the following bills:

- H.R. 149, to designate the Peter J. McGuire Memorial and Peter J. McGuire Gravesite located in Pennsauken, New Jersey, as a National Historic Landmark.
- H.R. 250, To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish the January 8th National Memorial in Tucson, Arizona, as an affiliated area of the National Park System.
- H.R. 3197, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the City of Eunice, Louisiana, certain Federal land in Louisiana.
- 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.
- H.R. 4009, to authorize the Georgetown African American Historic Landmark Project and Tour to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.
- H.R. 4380, to designate the El Paso Community Healing Garden National Memorial.
- H.R. 4454, to establish a process for the Board on Geographic Names to review and revise offensive names of Federal land units, to create an advisory committee to recommend Federal land unit names to be reviewed by the Board.
- H.R. 4648, to modify the boundary of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park in the State of Louisiana.
- H.R. 4706, to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Green of Texas, Norton, Gonzalez of Texas, and Johnson of Louisiana; Mike Caldwell, Acting Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Scott A. Fontenot, Mayor, Eunice, Louisiana; Rodney Ellis, Commissioner, Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas; and public witnesses.

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.

Bandelier National Monument
NPS settles lawsuit for $1 million

In 2016, an 81-year-old visitor was killed in the parking lot by a falling 70-foot ponderosa pine that had been weakened by two previous lightning strikes. The tree was toppled by wind, and also caused damage to a rental car and minor injuries to the victim's son. The family filed a wrongful death lawsuit in 2019, alleging that the park should have removed the hazardous tree previously. The NPS settled with the family for $1 million. The NPS has said that they've reviewed and revised their hazardous tree protocols since the incident. Source: *Albuquerque Journal*

Blue Ridge Parkway
Body found below overlook

On October 9, a visitor reported finding a body below Yadkin Overlook. The cause of death has been determined to be homicide. Agents from the NPS Investigative Service Branch are leading the investigation, with support from the FBI, North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, and the Watauga County Sherriff's Office. Despite rumors, the FBI has stated publicly that the death is unrelated to the Gabby Petito case (see below). Source: *Citizen Times* (10/14), *Citizen Times* (10/13)

Death Valley National Park
Navy jet crashes in park

On October 4, a Navy F/A-18F Superhornet jet from the Naval Air Weapons Station in China Lake crashed in the park. The pilot ejected and suffered minor injuries. Units from the base, as well as Fort Irwin Army Base and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma responded to rescue the pilot. The pilot was treated and released from a Las Vegas hospital that evening. The Navy has stated that it will assist the NPS with cleanup of the crash site. The crash is under investigation. Source: *The San Diego Union-Tribune*

Joshua Tree National Park
Visitor killed in vehicle accident

On September 30, a car with one driver and two other passengers on board drifted and lost control on Park Boulevard. The car overturned and came to rest on its roof. A 29-year-old passenger was partially ejected and died of injuries at the scene. It appeared the victim was not wearing a seatbelt, according to the California Highway Patrol. A 27-year-old passenger suffered suspected minor injuries and was transported to Desert Regional Medical Center for treatment. The driver was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence and was charged with murder, gross vehicular manslaughter, DUI causing injury or death, and other charges. The driver is being held in West Valley Detention Center and the cause of the incident is still under investigation. Source: *Hi-Desert Star*

Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park
Vandalism of monument

On October 1, park staff observed damage to the park's Temple funerary monument, which is where the family of Augustus Saint-Gaudens is interred. The monument was tagged with spray paint and anti-Semitic language and symbols. NPS staff began treatment of the site on October 4 and expected to be finished with the restoration by October 15. Source: Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
Private fishing boat sinks

On October 6 at about 3am, a 24-foot commercial fishing vessel tied up at Hyde Street Pier sank. A sheen was observed in the area around the boat and the Coast Guard deployed three layers of containment boom and absorbent pads to mop up any fuel that might be leaking from the boat. The incident is under investigation. Source: *SFist*

Sitka National Historical Park
Park trails close due to bears

All park trails and the Kaasdaa Héen (Indian River) area of the park are currently closed due to bear activity. The closure is temporary, and the park will reopen the areas once bear activity is deemed safe again. Source: Sitka National Historical Park

Yellowstone National Park
Visitor chasing dog suffers thermal burns

On October 4, a dog jumped out of a vehicle, which led its owner to chase it into Maiden's Grave Spring. The visitor suffered serious thermal burns between her shoulders and feet. A family member who was also in the vehicle pulled her out and drove her to West Yellowstone, where she was treated and transferred and flown to the Burn Center at Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center. The dog was rescued and taken to a vet, but the dog passed away from its injuries. The incident remains under investigation. Source: *KTVQ*, *BBC*

Yellowstone National Park
Visitor sentenced for getting too close to grizzlies

On October 7, a visitor was sentenced to four days in jail, a one-year ban from Yellowstone, and $2,000 in fines and community service payments for willfully approaching and photographing a grizzly and three cubs too closely at Roaring Mountain in May 2021. A video of the encounter was taken by other visitors and went viral on social media. Source: *The New York Times*

Zion National Park
Person arrested after shooting at vehicles near park

A man was reported to have brandished a handgun during an argument in the city of Hurricane, Utah. The suspect evaded law enforcement and drove toward the park along State Route 9, shooting at multiple vehicles along the way. The highway was closed and shuttle buses inside the park were stopped so that emergency response vehicles could respond. Officers deployed spike sticks and exchanged gunfire with the suspect, who eventually crashed and ran into a neighborhood in Rockville. He was found with a gunshot wound and taken into custody. Source: *Spectrum News/Associated Press*

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - On October 7, four firefighters were hit by a falling tree while working on the KNP Complex Fire. They were helicoptered to a nearby hospital and treated for injuries. All were released by the next morning. As of October 17, the fire is currently at 87,890 acres, 55% contained, and 747 assigned personnel. Kings Canyon partially reopened for day-use and backpacking on October 18, though there will be no running water available, and no camping or lodging. The NPS has stated that developed areas of the park will not reopen before December. Source: *KPIX*, Inciweb, *KTLA*

- *Yellowstone National Park* - On October 8, the park began scaling back search and recovery efforts for Kim Crumbo. The search has gone on for three weeks using helicopters, boats, sonar technology, and ground crews, and seasonal weather conditions have begun to deteriorate. The park will continue limited search efforts as conditions allow. The incident is still under investigation. Source: Yellowstone National Park

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- Issue Contributors: Bill Waters, Mike Wrigley

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

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