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

The Coalition Report
Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Coalition Actions

The Coalition has officially surpassed 2,000 members! Thank you to all our members for your support and we appreciate your efforts to spread the word about the Coalition. This is a huge milestone and we look forward to continuing the work to Protect Our Parks.

An op-ed on overcrowding and the need for additional funding by Coalition Executive Council members Don Neubacher and Russell Galilpeau ran in *The Hill.* The op-ed emphasizes the need to "ensure that our existing national parks, and any new units added to the NPS, are adequately funded on an annual basis so they can hire the staff necessary to protect resources and provide a safe experience for visitors, even as crowds continue to grow."
https://protectnps.org/2021/09/20/member-op-ed-protect-national-parks-before-they-reach-their-breaking-point/

Several members of the Executive Council had a meeting with Shannon Estenoz, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, to express our support for some initiatives - such as President Biden's America the Beautiful Plan - and to voice our concerns about other topics including overcrowding in parks, oil and gas leasing near national parks, and how GAOA funds are distributed across the National Park System. We also discussed Mr. Sams, the nominee for NPS Director.

As a follow-up to our meeting with Shannon Estenoz, we submitted a letter expressing our support for the proposed Alabama Black Belt NHA which "epitomizes this Administration's and the Department's vision of appropriate action related to the 30×30 Initiative." The local vision for this NHA represents the convergence of protection, conservation, and education of both natural and cultural resources in one of our nation's most biodiverse and culturally significant regions and we urge DOI and the NPS to support the *local* proponents' vision for the Alabama Black Belt.
https://protectnps.org/2021/09/30/coalition-supports-local-vision-for-alabama-black-belt-nha/

Coalition member Don Falvey's op-ed ran in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, urging Congress and the White House to, "ensure that parks are adequately funded and have the staffing to manage crowds."
https://protectnps.org/2021/09/27/member-op-ed-we-still-have-a-chance-to-save-our-national-parks/

The Coalition, as a member of National Parks Second Century Action Coalition, signed a letter in support of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, particularly the significant investments for national parks through investments in the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP), Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), and Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Project Program (NSFLTP):
https://protectnps.org/2021/09/30/coalition-signs-on-in-support-of-infrastructure-investments-and-jobs-act/

Tracy Stone-Manning has been confirmed as the new Director of the Bureau of Land Management and the Coalition issued a statement of support, saying, "we look forward to working with Stone-Manning to address the problem of our broken oil and gas leasing system and explore solutions, and to help restore protections to our national monuments, including Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante."
https://protectnps.org/2021/10/01/former-national-park-service-leaders-applaud-tracy-stone-mannings-confirmation-to-be-the-next-director-of-the-bureau-of-land-management/

Finally, we submitted comments on four more Air Tour Management Plans at:

Glacier NP: https://protectnps.org/2021/09/30/comments-on-glacier-national-park-proposed-air-tour-management-plan/
Bryce Canyon NP: https://protectnps.org/2021/09/30/comments-on-bryce-canyon-national-park-proposed-air-tour-management-plan/
Natural Bridges NM: https://protectnps.org/2021/09/30/comments-on-natural-bridges-national-monument-proposed-air-tour-management-plan/
Great Smoky Mountains NP: https://protectnps.org/2021/09/30/37526/

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.

- *NPS awards $3.3 million for hurricane damage recovery* - The NPS regional storm recovery program has awarded funding to Virgin Islands National Park, Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument, Buck Island Reef National Monument, and Salt River National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve to address lingering impacts of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Source: *Virgin Islands Daily News*

- *4 resources added to African American Civil Rights Network* - 3 sites in South Carolina and 1 in California were added to the African American Civil Rights Network, which is a series of properties, programs, and facilities that tell the stories of the civil rights movement. 25 resources have been added in 2021 thus far. Source: National Park Service

- *NPS awards $917K in Battlefield Interpretation Grants* - On October 4, the NPS announced American Battlefield Protection Program grants to 11 preservation partners around the country. Source: National Park Service

- *GAO reports on fee revenue fluctuations during pandemic* - The Government Accountability Office looked at how fee revenue changed during the pandemic for federal agencies and how agencies responded. They found that pandemic fee revenue was down 39% across federal agencies. The NPS adapted by relying on funds carried over from previous years. The GAO recommends that the NPS Director document and implement plans to periodically review the agency's target rate for carryover balances at individual parks. Source: Government Accountability Office

- *"North is Freedom" virtual photo exhibit* - The NPS' National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program announced a new virtual exhibit called "North is Freedom," focused on the descendants of Underground Railroad. It will be available online until February 2022. Source: National Park Service

- *Power of Parks for Health Roundtable tomorrow* - On October 7, the NPS and National Environmental Education Foundation are partnering to host a roundtable discussion on the Power of Parks for Health. It will focus on present and historical barriers to outdoor access, opportunities for engagement, and strategies to empower health connections to parks and public lands, particularly with Hispanic/Latinx communities, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Source: National Park Service

- *Senator Angus King looking to alleviate park crowding* - Sen. King (I - ME), the head of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, has stated that he plans "to be an activist chairman" as he explores ideas on how to alleviate recent crowding in parks, examine how GAOA funding is being used, and consider new additions to the NPS. Source: *E&E Daily*

- *Why the NPS Director is confirmed by the Senate - History News Network* outlined the politics behind the 1996 change to require the U.S. Senate to confirm new NPS Directors and what it has meant for subsequent administrations. Source: *History News Network*

- *Are anti-geotagging campaigns protective of public lands or inequitable gatekeeping? - 5280*, a Denver-focused media outlet published an article investigating efforts by municipalities to protect places by asking people not to tag locations publicly. They review the purpose of such efforts, as well as some of the backlash that the practice inequitably focuses on who is trying to visit rather than fixing the bigger systemic issues, such as public lands funding. Source: *5280*

- *New podcast focuses on BIPOC people in parks* - A new podcast called "Hello, Nature", hosted by Misha Euceph and sponsored by REI, focuses on historic and present-day stories from the national parks about Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, as well as other historically underrepresented communities. The first four episodes will focus on Yosemite, Arches, Glacier, and Yellowstone. Source: *Independent Record*

- Hulu *premieres true crime series about the NPS* - On September 28, *Hulu* aired the first episode of a new series called "Wild Crime," which focuses on criminal investigations within national parks. The first season focuses on a murder investigation in Rocky Mountain National Park. A trailer can be seen here. Source: *The Futon Critic*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Badlands National Park* - Department of Interior Volunteer Fire Chief Cliff McClure has received the DOI's Citizen's Award for Bravery for saving a family during a blizzard in the park on December 24, 2016. McClure, along with NPS rangers Daniel Baker and Christopher Mengak, used a tractor and UTV through 3 hours of whiteout conditions to save the family from dying of hypothermia. The NPS has indicated that the rangers will be recognized at a later date. Source: *Rapid City Journal*

- *Bandelier National Monument* - Dr. Craig Allen, an employee of the U.S. Geolgoical Survey stationed at Bandelier, was honored with the DOI Distinguished Service Award for his work on the establishment and management of the Jemez Mountains Field Station, an interagency effort that has greatly enhanced preservation and ecological research in the region. Dr. Allen retired from federal service earlier this year after over 35 years of federal service. Source: *Los Alamos Reporter*

- *Buffalo National River* - The Wilderness Stewardship Team has been awarded the NPS Director's Wes Henry Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Team Award for its work across disciplines to preserve wilderness character. Furthermore, long-time Buffalo River volunteer Jerry Goller also took home the Wes Henry Non-Government Partner Award for his PSAR efforts. Source: National Park Service

- *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* - The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board is currently holding two weeks of hearings about various parts of the ozone precursor pollutants rule, which came out of an executive order by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham. New Mexico is the second largest producer of oil and gas in the United States. Carlsbad Caverns has measured levels of ozone exceeding National Ambient Air Quality standards. Source: *The New Mexico Political Report*

- *Chaco Canyon National Historical Park* - Bruce Babbit, former Secretary of Interior and former Arizona Governor, wrote an op-ed in the *Craig Press* arguing against development of oil and gas on BLM land adjacent to the park. Source: *Craig Press*

- *Congaree National Park* - A 216-acre property along the north bank of Running Creek was donated to the park by the National Park Foundation, Friends of Congaree Swamp, and Open Space Institute. Source: National Park Foundation

- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - The Federal Aviation Administration has delayed its plans to issue a decision on Spaceport Camden due to "ongoing consultation efforts." The new decision date is November 3, which has already been delayed twice. The DOI and NPS have both disputed the FAA's conclusion that the spaceport will have minimal risks and impacts to adjacent Cumberland Island. Source: *The Wichita Eagle*

- *Cuyahoga National Park* - Ecologist Chris Davis was recently interviewed on *Ideastream Public Media* about the effects of climate change on the park and the NPS' efforts to mitigate them. Source: *Ideastream Public Media*

- *Cuyahoga National Park* - On September 27, the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park announced that it has purchased the former Brandywine Country Club Golf Course, a 207-acre property. The purchase was supported by individual donors and grants from the Akron Community Foundation, Connor Foundation, GAR Foundation, and National Park Foundation. The National Park Service intends to purchase most of the property, 192 acres, from the friends group once environmental restoration is complete. The village of Peninsula and Woodridge Local School District Board of Education have opposed the plan, wanting the property to remain privately owned and developed for the tax revenue. Source: *Akron Beacon Journal*

- *Death Valley National Park* - The park recently upgraded its iconic Furnace Creek thermometer exhibit to include Celsius and a new tile mosaic that shows how elevation affects temperature. The project was funded by the Death Valley Natural History Association and The Fund for People in Parks. Source: Death Valley National Park

- *Everglades National Park* - Kiewit, an Omaha-based engineering and construction company, was awarded a $136.6 million contract to perform work in Fort Pierce, Florida on the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The plan is aimed at restoring and protecting the ecosystem and local water supply, as well as providing flood protection, and will take 30 years and $10.5 billion to complete. Source: *GovConWire*

- *Fort Federica National Monument* - Several people associated with the park recently received awards. The Glynn Academy Ethnology Club received the 2020 George and Helen Hartzog Youth Group Volunteer Award for the Southeast Region for their volunteer work carrying out excavations and educational programs. Tom and Karen Hartley received the 2020 George and Helen Hartzog Individual Volunteer National Award for providing outstanding support for new pandemic protocols, as well as leading a number of new visitor programs and trail enhancements in the park. Michael Seibert received several awards for archeology and interpretation for work around the location of burials of enslaved and freed populations of African Americans on St. Simons Island, Georgia. Source: Fort Federica National Monument

- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve* - *Politico* reported on the conundrum of the 211-mile Ambler Road project in the Alaskan interior, including through the park (which was included in the park's establishing legislation in 1980). The road was approved during the Trump administration, would allow for large-scale copper and zinc mining. The Biden administration has shown no intent to slow the approval process because it supports their green energy platform. Large quantities of rare earth metals and other minerals are needed to support devices like solar panels, electric vehicles, and wind turbines. Opponents note that the road will affect caribou migration, pollute spawning grounds for fish, and threaten the subsistence lifestyles of Native Alaskans. Source: *Politico*

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On October 1, the NPS opened the rehabilitated Stateline Auxiliary Ramp to all vessels. The ramp is a result of record-low water levels on Lake Powell and the need to continue providing boater access to all vessels on the southern end of the lake. The rehabilitation was supported by concessioner Aramark. The Wahweap Auxiliary Ramp is now closed to public use. Source: Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - Law enforcement ranger Zachary Stuenkel received a Citation for Valor from Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland in recognition for his work saving the life of a woman under a capsized boat during a thunderstorm in June 2020. Source: Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Colorado Governor Jared Polis has proposed publicly that the NPS send bison to Colorado instead of the current plan to allow hunters to kill 12 of them over the course of the fall (in addition to the relocation of many others to neighboring tribal members, reported on previously in the Coalition Report). U.S. Rep Joe Neguse (D-CO) has also sent a letter for DOI Secretary Deb Haaland asking for an alternative method of bison management. Source: *Rocky Mountain PBS*

- *Grand Teton National Park* - A group of biologists with the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team will conduct pre-baiting and trapping operations within the park from October 4-31 to monitor the population of grizzlies within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, as required under the Endangered Species Act. Source: Grand Teton National Park

- *Great Basin National Park* - Joshua Vann, the park's head of law enforcement, was awarded the Citation of Valor for his bravery in saving the life of a visitor in a burning vehicle in November 2020. Source: *KTNV*

- *Great Basin National Park* - The NPS has approved a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Non-Impairment Determination for the Strawberry Creek Restoration Project, which will improve the ecological function and resilience of the watershed in the wake of the 2016 Strawberry Fire. Source: Great Basin National Park

- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On September 28, the park opened the John Oliver Cabin accessible trail. It is the park's second accessible trail and the first to feature a historic site. Funding was provided by the National Park Foundation and Friends of the Smokies. Source: *The Titusville Herald*

- *Hawaii Volcanoes National Park* - On September 29, the USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory detected glow in the Kilauea summit web cameras, indicating an eruption within the crater. The park is increasing staffing in anticipation of increased visitation. Source: *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*

- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - The park's popular annual social media competition, Fat Bear Week, took place from September 29 through October 5. The competition is a March Madness-style bracket pitting individual bears against one another, upon which the public votes, based on any criteria they see fit. The new 2021 champion is 480 Otis. Source: Katmai National Park and Preserve, *NPR*

- *Minidoka National Historic Site* - The NPS and Friends of Minidoka have expressed concerns about the impacts of a proposed wind energy project on adjacent BLM land. The project is still in early analysis and the public comment period has been extended until October 20. A draft EIS will be the next stage, which will also be open to public comment. Source: *Boise State Public Radio*

- *Natchez National Historical Park* - Ser Boxley received the Wilbur Siebert Award for Exemplary Underground Railroad Research for his work preserving Forks of the Road, which was recently added to the park. Source: National Park Service

- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - The first Great American Outdoors Act project is underway at the park: a historic preservation project at Grandview utilizing Americorps volunteers. Source: *WVVA*

- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - The Register-Herald ran a biographical piece about Superintendent Lizzie Watts, including her path to and through the ranks of the NPS. Source: *The Register-Herald*

- Point Reyes National Seashore - *Sierra* ran an article outlining the conflict between wildlife advocates and the National Park Service regarding elk management during drought. Source: *Sierra, the Magazine of the Sierra Club*

- *Rosie the Riveter/World War II National Historical Park* - Betty Reid Soskin, the oldest ranger in the National Park Service, turned 100 years old on September 22. Source: *The Washington Post*

- *Saratoga National Historical Park* - The park signed an agreement with the Open Space Institute that will now give them management of the site where the British Army surrendered during the 1777 Battle of Saratoga, often considered the turning point in the Revolutionary War. OSI has long protected the site with support from the Friends of Saratoga Battlefield, and will retain ownership of the site. Source: *The Post Star*

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - *The Washington Post* ran a photography feature this week about the history of giant sequoia management, particularly in an era of climate change and wildfires. Source: *The Washington Post*

- *Stonewall National Monument* - The Biden administration is planning to install a permanent Rainbow Flag at Christopher Park. This counters the Trump administration's decision in 2017 to cancel the NPS' intentions to dedicate a Rainbow Flag in commemoration of National Coming Out Day. The Trump administration argued that the flagpole was not on federal land, so they would not raise the flag. The NPS has agreed that the land with the current flag pole is city-owned, but has now committed to bringing a new permanent flagpole to host the Rainbow Flag on federal property. The National Park Foundation will be donating funds toward the flag's installation. Source: *Gay City News*

- *Virgin Islands National Park* - On September 20, the NPS released its final Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis Report for Caneel Bay. It found contaminants at "concentrations that pose unacceptable long-term risks to human health and the environment in two of three study areas." Both of those areas are already closed to the public. Removing the contaminated soil will cost ~$6 million and take place over a six-year period. Source: *Virgin Islands Daily News*

- *Voyageurs National Park* - The park has extended the Oberholtzer Trail by 0.2 miles, which will increase trail connectivity and allow a number of loop opportunities. Source: Voyageurs National Park

- *White Sands National Park* - Fossilized footprints in the park were recently able to be dated to 21,000-23,000 years ago through radiocarbon dating of seeds imbedded in the prints, as published recently in the journal *Science*. The length of human habitation in North America has long been debated, and this evidence is the most substantial thus far that shows humans were present during the height of the last major ice age. Source: *NPR*

- *Yellowstone National Park* - Superintendent Cam Sholly publicly went on record advocating for greater protection of wolves, including reinstating hunting quotas that were recently rolled back in Montana. Source: *Montana Standard*

- *Yellowstone National Park* - The world's tallest geyser, Steamboat Geyser, has not had a major eruption for more than two months - the longest time between eruptions since March 2018. It has also had only 14 eruptions in 2021, compared to 30-50 the last 3 years. Scientists are unclear whether the trend will continue or if it is a regular fluctuation, though they suspect low groundwater due to low rain and snow may be part of the reason for its decline. Source: *KRTV*

- *Yosemite National Park* - The park installed a new snow and weather station within the footprint of the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp. It is expected to greatly enhance weather and water forecasting for the NPS, Merced Irrigation District, National Weather Service, and California Department of Water Resources. Source: *Merced Sun-Star*

- *Yosemite National Park* - Mark Fincher, Wilderness Specialist, was awarded the NPS Director's Wes Henry Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Individual Award. Source: National Park Service

- *Yosemite National Park* - The park opened new exhibits at the Yosemite History Center in Wawona that recognize the contributions of Chinese people in the development of the park and local tourism economy. The exhibits were supported by the Yosemite Conservancy and Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Source: *Fresno Bee*

- *Franklin Park* (an NPS-owned property managed by the city of Washington, DC) - The park reopened on September 24 after a renovation that included the collaboration of the DC Government, the NPS, and the Downtown DC Business Improvement District. The $21 million renovation included ADA accessible sidewalks, lighting, vegetation, seating, green space, and a restaurant and pavilion. Source: Government of the District of Columbia

Personnel Changes

- *Midwest Region (Regions 3, 4, and 5)* - Wendy Hart Ross was selected as the next Deputy Regional Director for Management and Administration. She was most recently the superintendent at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. [more info from NPS press release?] Source: *The Dickinson Press*

- *Minute Man National Historical Park* - Simone Monteleone was selected as the new superintendent. She has 14 years of NPS experience, most recently as the chief of cultural resources, partnerships, and science for Interior Region 2 (Southeast Region). She also worked in the private sector as an architectural historian. She will start her new role on November 7. Source: *Lowell Sun*

- *Ninety Six National Historic Site* - Joshua Manly was selected as the new superintendent. He has seven years of NPS experience, most recently as the management analyst, acting administrative officer, and project manager for five park sites in Western Pennsylvania. He also is a U.S. Army combat veteran. He will start his new role on October 24. Source: Ninety Six National Historic Site

- *North Cascades National Park* Service *Complex* - Don Striker was selected as the new superintendent for North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. He has nearly 30 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Denali National Park. He will start his new position in November. Source: *Yakima Herald*

- *Southeast Arizona Group* - Matt Carroll was selected as the new superintendent of Chiricahua National Monument, Coronado National Memorial, and Fort Bowie National Historic Site. He has six years of NPS experience, most recently as the acting superintendent of the same parks. He also has experience with the Department of Energy's Office of Science, and 25 years as a colonel in the U.S. Air Force. Source: Chiricahua National Monument

Park People

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

Deceased

- Cheryl Becker passed away in late August. She was a faithful volunteer with the Friends of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, often helping with the park partner's visitor center store. Source: Friends of Fort Vancouver Newsletter

- Ann Riese Brand Haney, 71, passed away on September 16. She was a board member of the Mill Springs National Battlefield Association, and was involved in getting the site established as a National Park site. Source: *Commonwealth Journal*

- Father John P. Miller, 73, passed away on September 22. He worked at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument from 1969-1975, and later went on to be a pastor in the Catholic Church for over 30 years. Source: Tribute Archive

- Howard Oliver Ness, 82, passed away on September 26. He was responsible for piloting and building the National Park Service's U.S.-Mexico Affairs Office, including supporting the creation of several national parks in Mexico. Source: *Las Cruces Sun News*

Retirements

- On September 29, Celeste Bernardo, superintendent of Lowell National Historical Park since 2012, retired after 35 years with the NPS. Lowell Mayor John Leahy recognized her service by awarding her a key to the city and a citation of recognition. She was also honored with a citation from the State Senate. Source: *Lowell Sun*

- Mark Engler, superintendent of Homestead National Historical Park, has retired after 24 years at the park. He was the longest-serving superintendent at the park. Source: *The North Platte Telegraph*

- John Hennessy, chief historian and chief of interpretation at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, retired after 26 years at the park and 40 total years with the NPS. Source: *The Free Lance-Star*

- Ralph Jerla, who has been a ranger at Yellowstone National Park for 45 years, retired last week. He was presented with the superintendent's medallion for exemplary service and support by Superintendent Cam Sholly. Source: *KULR*

- On September 24, Haleakala National Park botanist Patti Welton retired from the National Park Service. She worked at the park for 30 years, including the restoration of the koa forest at Kaupo Gap, as well as many other important efforts around the propagation of rare native plants. Source: *Maui Now*

- On October 2, Paul Zaenger retired from the National Park Service after 40 years of service. He has worked a a diverse array of national park sites, most recently at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (since its establishment in 1993). Source: *Montrose Press*

Open for Comment

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

- *Air Tour Management Plans* - Due to errors discovered on the PEPC pages, several parks have extended public comment periods on their Air Tour Management Plans until October 13:
  - *Bandelier National Monument*
  - *Great Smoky Mountains National Park*

- *Biscayne National Park* - Public comment is now open on increases to campground fees. Comments are open until October 7. Source: Biscayne National Park

- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on a plan to repair the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and surrounding landscape. Comments are open until October 17. Source: Cape Hatteras National Seashore

- *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*

Other Department of Interior News

- *Judge determines USFWS was wrong to not give threatened status to Joshua trees* - A federal judge has determined that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2019 denial of Endangered Species Act protections for Joshua trees was incorrect, using climate change data that was "unsupported, speculative, or irrational." The court has directed the USFWS to reconsider its decision using better science, including climate change models. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

- *BLM returns headquarters to D.C.* - The Biden administration will move the Bureau of Land Management's headquarters back to Washington, D.C. A Trump administration decision had moved hundreds of positions to Grand Junction and other state offices across the West, resulting in the departure of hundreds of senior officials. The office in Grand Junction will remain as a "sub-headquarters" and non-directorial staff will have the option to stay. Furthermore, the DOI announced other steps to strengthen the BLM, including the creation of a BLM Foundation authorized by legislation and supporting Tribal Liaisons in each state. Source: *E&E News*, Department of Interior

- *$34 million in grants approved by Migratory Bird Conservation Commission* - The Department of Interior announced North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants to restore 177,000 acres of wetland in 20 states. The $34 million in grants will be matched by $74 million in partner funds. Furthermore, $3.1 million was approved to conserve land in four national wildlife refuges for public use and hunt programs. Source: Department of Interior

- *DOI withdraws Fossil Fuel Valuation and Civil Penalty Rule* - On September 28, the Department of Interior announced that a Trump administration policy that rolled back payment and reporting by oil and gas leases, would be reinstated. The DOI estimates a $64 million annual increase in royalty collections and increased civil penalties for violations of statues and regulations associated with mineral leases. Source: Department of Interior

- *USFWS gives $79.2 million for endangered species* - On September 28, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced grants to conserve and protect 56,000 acres of habitat for 55 listed and at-risk species in 13 states through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The grants will be matched by $49.3 million in partner funds. Source: Department of Interior

- *USFWS proposes delisting 23 species due to extinction* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the best available science to determine that 23 species are now extinct and no longer require listing. The majority of species proposed for delisting are birds and aquatic species. One is the ivory-billed woodpecker, once America's largest woodpecker. Source: Department of Interior

- *"Emergency petition" to Sec. Haaland to protect the gray wolf* - A coalition of conservation organizations and indigenous groups are asking U.S. Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland to reestablish federal protections for the gray wolf and block federal Pittman-Roberson and Sport Fish Restoration funds to states that allow hunting and trapping of predators beyond healthy ecosystem levels. Source: *Pinedale Roundup*

- *DOI makes improvements to Migratory Bird Treaty Act* - The Department of Interior revoked a January 2021 rule that limited the scope of the MBTA, returning to implementing it the way it had been utilized to prohibiting incidental take and applying enforcement discretion, while also providing for greater clarity to regulatory enforcement to industry and stakeholders. 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

September 24 – The president signed into law S. 272, to amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to require the budget justifications and appropriation requests of agencies be made publicly available (Public Law 117–40).

October 1 – The president signed into law H.R. 5305, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for providing emergency assistance. The bill extends funding for federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, through December 3, 2021. For the provisions that affect the National Park Service, see the action on H.R. 5305 by the House on September 21, below. Signed on September 30, 2021 (Public Law 117–43).

Senate Actions

September 21 – The *Committee on Energy and Natural Resources* concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Laura Daniel-Davis, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, and M. Camille Calimlim Touton, of Nevada, to be Commissioner of Reclamation, who was introduced by Senator Cortez Masto, both of the Department of the Interior, and Sara C. Bronin, of Connecticut, to be Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, who was introduced by Senators Blumenthal and Murphy, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

September 29 – The Senate approved the nomination of Robert T. Anderson, of Washington, to be Solicitor of the Department of the Interior by a vote of 53 yeas to 44 nays.

September 30 – The Senate amended and passed H.R. 5305, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for providing emergency assistance, by a vote of 65 yeas to 35 nays. The bill extends funding for federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, through December 3, 2021. For the provisions that affect the National Park Service, see the action on H.R. 5305 by the House on September 21, below. The bill now returns to the House for consideration of the Senate amendments.

October 1 – The Senate passed H.R. 2278, to designate the September 11th National Memorial Trail Route. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

House Actions

September 21 – The House passed H.R. 5305, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for providing emergency assistance, by a yea-and-nay vote of 220 yeas to 211 nays. The bill extends funding for federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, through December 3, 2021. Section 135 of Division A of the act includes a provision that authorizes continued appropriations for approximately 30 national heritage areas whose federal funding expired on September 30, 2021, or for areas that had reached their ceiling on federal appropriations. Section 136 includes a limit of $14.5 million for the National Park Service's federal land acquisition management costs under the Land and Water Conservation Fund during the period covered by this continuing resolution.

Title VII of Division B of H.R. 5305 includes $229,475,000 for the National Park Service to address wildfires, hurricanes, and other natural disaster costs incurred from 2019-2021. There is also an additional $100 million provided for the Department of the Interior's wildland fire management program, which includes NPS.

September 23 – The House passed H.R. 4350, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2022 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, by a yea-and-nay vote of 316 yeas to 113 nays. The final text as passed by the House, was unavailable as of press time. Typically, there are provisions affecting the National Park Service included in the bill. These provisions will be reported once the final bill is made available.

September 28 – The House passed H.R. 1154, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area, by a vote of 391 yeas to 36 nays.

September 29 – The *Committee on Agriculture:* Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry held a hearing entitled "The 2021 Wildland Fire Year: Responding to and Mitigating Threats to Communities". Testimony was heard from Randy Moore, Chief, U.S. Forest Service.

September 30 – The House agreed to concur in the Senate amendment to H.R. 5305, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for providing emergency assistance, by a vote of 254 yeas to 175 nays. The bill extends funding for federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, through December 3, 2021. For the provisions that affect the National Park Service, see the action on H.R. 5305 by the House on September 21, above. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.

September 30 – The House passed H.R. 3533, to establish occupational series for Federal positions in software development, software engineering, data science, and data management, by a vote of 416 yeas to 9 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.

Big Bend National Park
Lost hiker rescued by Border Patrol

On September 27, a hiker was reported overdue in the Chisos Basin. A search involving NPS, the Border Patrol, and Department of Public Safety was dispatched. Agents from the Border Patrol Horse Patrol Unit found footprints and tracked them to a remote location in Juniper Canyon, where an agent heard the victim calling for help. The hiker was found responsive and flown by a Customs and Border Protection Black Hawk Helicopter to Big Bend Regional Medical Center. Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Big Hole National Battlefield
Partial closure due to fire

The park and visitor center has been closed since July 17 due to the Trail Creek Fire. The visitor center reopened on October 5, while the lower parking lot, trails, and picnic area remain closed. The Trail Creek Fire is still active in the area, is 61,987 acres and 67% contained with 328 assigned personnel. Source: Big Hole National Battlefield, *The Spectrum*

Blue Ridge Parkway
Bear attacks dog owners

On September 30, an unleashed dog near the Folk Art Center ran towards a bear while barking loudly. The bear, likely aggravated by the dog, attacked the owners, who retreated with their dog into their vehicle. They drove to Mission Hospital, where they were treated for their injuries and released. Temporary closures and restrictions in the area have been enacted, and the NPS and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission are searching for the bear to capture and euthanize it. Source: Blue Ridge Parkway

Buffalo National River
Teen dies of fall while hiking

On September 25, a 16-year-old took a 20-foot fall while scrambling off-trail along steep slopes adjacent to Eden Falls Trail. Witnesses at the scene immediately administered CPR until emergency personnel arrived. The victim was later pronounced dead due to traumatic injuries to head and spinal cord. Source: *5 News Online*

Cape Hatteras National Seashore
Visitor drowns

On October 1, a visitor died while swimming in the Atlantic Ocean near the northern entrance to Buxton. The victim was not wearing a flotation device and told a friend he was tired. The friend called 911, and Hatteras Island Rescue Squad was able to bring him to shore to perform CPR. Rip currents were not observed at the time of the victim's death and are not suspected to be a factor. Source: *U.S. News and World Report*

Gauley National Recreation Area
Abandoned kayak found

The NPS is investigating after a kayak was found abandoned on the upper section of the Gauley River. No one has yet been reported missing and a search did not reveal anyone. The investigation is ongoing. Source: *WVVA*

Gulf Islands National Seashore
Military munitions found

Following Hurricane Ida, military munitions were discovered near the southeastern end of the Perdido Key Area. The park has closed the area to monitor the area for new munitions that may surface and for public safety. Source: Gulf Islands National Seashore

Glacier National Park
Bear struck by car, later euthanized

On September 30, a black bear was struck by a car on the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Though the driver did not report the accident, park officials found it in an area near the road. The bear suffered "unsurvivable traumatic injuries" from the event, and wildlife officials euthanized the bear. Source: *The Herald-Sun*

Indiana Dunes National Park
Steel plant spill causes beaches to close

On September 26, a U.S. Steel plant in Portage, Indiana experienced "an upset condition with the finishing line wastewater treatment plant," resulting in the spill of iron particles into the Burns Waterway. A water treatment facility and many local beaches were closed for public safety, including those at the park. The park beaches reopened on September 29. The Environmental Protection Agency and other local agencies have responded and are testing and monitoring the situation. Source: *The Times of Northwest Indiana*, *WNDU*

Lake Mead National Recreation Area
2 toxic algae blooms

The Southern Nevada Water Authority and NPS are closely monitoring at least two toxic algae blooms on Lake Mohave, the reservoir between Hoover Dam and to the Davis Dam. So far, no toxic algae has been detected on Lake Mead. Source: *News3LV*

Katmai National Park
3 face federal charges after caught on bear cam

On August 9, 2018, three visitors left the Brooks Falls viewing platform to enter the river and approach brown bears feeding just below the falls. They were captured on the NPS' live bear cam and federal charges were filed by the U.S. Attorney's Office last week. Source: *Alaska News Source/KTUU*, *Anchorage Daily News*

Olympic National Park
Missing backpacker found after a week

On September 16, a backpacker was reported overdue by a family member. The hiker had a wilderness permit for September 8-12, and his car was located at the planned trailhead. Search personnel from Olympic Mountain Rescue, Tacoma Mountain Rescue, Washington State Search and Rescue Planning Unit, the Coast Guard, and the NPS (Olympic and North Cascades) responded to the incident. The search continued through cold, rainy, windy weather until searchers made voice contact with him in a ravine near

Mount Olson on September 19, and a Coast Guard helicopter was able to hoist and transport him to Olympia Regional Airport, where he was taken to the hospital for medical evaluation and care. Source: Olympic National Park, Seattle Times

Olympic National Park
Sexual assault perpetrator receives 7 years in prison

A 36-year-old was sentenced in federal court to 87 months in prison for the August 2020 rape of a 14-year-old at a gathering of family and friends in the park. The perpetrator was a trusted family friend of the victim and victim's family. Source: National Park Service Investigative Services

Rocky Mountain National Park
Barn catches fire

On September 18, a fire broke out at the Glacier Creek Stables near Sprague Lake. NPS and interagency firefighters responded immediately and were able to contain the fire by pulling the building down to smother the hay that was burning inside. No people or horses were harmed in the incident. The cause is still under investigation. Source: *Sky-Hi News*

Saguaro National Park
Body discovered in backcountry

On September 29, a body was found near Grass Shack Campground, located 10 miles into the wilderness in the Rincon Mountains. Authorities said there were obvious signs of trauma and the "death appears to be an accident." The investigation is ongoing and the campground is currently closed. Source: *AZ Central*, Saguaro National Park

San Juan Island National Historical Park
Vandals steal and destroy signs and fencing

On September 4, a number of signs were stolen or destroyed, split rail fencing was damaged, and ATV tracks were found on sensitive vegetation at American Camp. No suspects have been identified yet and the investigation is ongoing. Source: *San Juan Islander*

Yellowstone National Park
2 retired NPS rangers go missing while backpacking; 1 confirmed dead

On September 19, brothers Kim Crumbo and Mark O'Neill were reported by a relative as overdue from a backpacking trip to Shoshone Lake. O'Neill's body was found on September 20 on the east side of the lake and the cause of death was determined to be exposure/hypothermia The park experienced its first snowstorm of the season on September 19.   A vacant campsite with gear and a canoe was located on the south lake shore. The search for Crumbo is ongoing, and the park announced that the search shifted "from rescue to recovery" on September 24. Both are retired NPS rangers, and Crumbo is a former Navy Seal and long-time activist for public lands. Source: *WHDH*, Yellowstone National Park, *Backpacker*

Zion National Park
Missing hiker found after 5 days

On September 28, a 79-year-old hiker staying with a group of 50 others in Kanab, Utah, was reported missing. He had last been seen that morning at the hotel and said that he might hike the Canyon Overlook Trail in Zion. His vehicle was found at the trailhead, and the trail and Pine Creek Canyon were both closed to conduct the search. Teams from the NPS, Nellis Air Force Base, and Washington County Sheriff's Office were involved. On October 1, the hiker was able to make a 911 call to Washington County and leave a voicemail for his family. These communications gave enough insight to focus the operation to a more targeted area and the hiker was found alive on October 2. He was treated on scene, and then transported to St. George for further medical attention. Source: *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Zion National Park

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Grand Teton National Park* - On Sunday, September 19, remains were found in the Bridger-Teton National Forest. They were confirmed to be those of Gabby Petito, 22, who was reported missing after last being heard from in Grand Teton. The coroner's determination of death is homicide. Petito had been traveling with her partner, Brian Laundrie, who is now wanted under a federal arrest warrant. Laundrie was last seen in the couple's home town of North Port, Florida. The search for Laundrie is currently focused in Carlton Reserve, a 25,000 acre nature reserve. Laundrie is also wanted for unauthorized use of a debit card during the period in which Petito was missing. Source: *CNN*, *News4Jax*

- *Lassen National Park* - Part of the park opened on September 27 after almost two months of closures due to the Dixie Fire. 68% of the park has burned. The fire is now at 963,309 acres, 94% contained, with 1,612 personnel assigned. Source: *KRCR*, Inciweb, Lassen National Park

- *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore* - The second of two kayakers who went missing on September 16 was found deceased on September 17. When they were reported as missing, Lake Superior was experience gale force winds of up to 35 knots and waves up to 7 feet. As reported previously in the Coalition Report, the other kayaker was also found deceased. Source: Click on Detroit

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - The KNP Complex Fire is 84,166 acres, 11% contained, with 1,866 personnel assigned. There are multiple evacuation orders in place and both parks are closed indefinitely. No damage has been reported to structures or giant sequoias in the parks at this time. Source: Inciweb, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

- *USS Arizona National Memorial* - The shoreside dock was able to be repaired after two weeks of being closed due to a broken steel collar that was in danger of allowing the gangway to slide into the harbor. Additional repair work will be necessary, but the dock is now open for visitation. Source: *Honolulu Star Advertiser*

- *Yellowstone National Park* - The concession employee who ended up with second and third-degree burns on 5% of her body near Old Faithful on September 16 was said to be hiking with friends, and then got separated from the group. She took a wrong turn and her phone died, and it was starting to get dark. She accidentally wandered off trail into a thermal area, where the ground cracked and though the hole was not deep, it was filled with scalding water. She was able to escape and make her way to a road, and was transported via ambulance and helicopter to a burn center. Source: *WJAR*

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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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