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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

Coalition Actions

The Coalition signed on to a letter submitted to the Bureau of Land Management, expressing concern regarding Magic Valley Energy's Lava Ridge proposal to develop one of the largest land-based wind projects in the United States on the historic footprint of the Minidoka Relocation Center and within the viewshed of Minidoka National Historic Site:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/07/14/coalition-signs-on-to-protect-minidoka-from-lava-ridge-development/>

Coalition Chair Mike Murray spoke with *National Parks Traveler* regarding the news that the National Park Service ranks 370th out of 432 agencies in the 2021 Best Places to Work in Federal Government rankings. "There is definitely an element in recent years of employees feeling overworked and undervalued as many parks have become busier than ever while budgets and staffing have not grown to meet the needs of serving visitors, maintaining facilities, and protecting park resources," he said. Immediate past Chair of the Coalition, Phil Francis, was also quoted in the article.

<https://protectnps.org/2022/07/15/coalition-comments-on-low-workplace-satisfaction-of-nps-employees/>

The Coalition also submitted comments on draft regional haze state implementation plans for both [Hawaii](#) and [Idaho](#) this week.

National/Regional NPS Updates

A summary of news pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the National Park System and its programs, or intersecting with the parks on a more regional

basis.

- *NPS exploring expansion of civil rights sites* - National Public Radio ran [a 5-minute segment](#) about the NPS' discussions of expanding civil rights sites, particularly the controversial study of a park focused on the Black Panthers, as well as other possible sites. Source: [KERA/NPR](#)
- *NPS law enforcement numbers "dangerously thin"* - The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility released a report documenting a 15% decline in the number of permanent NPS law enforcement rangers and 30% decline in seasonal law enforcement rangers from 2005 to 2021. The U.S. Park Police numbers have also hit a nearly-50-year low. This is during a time of record levels of visitation and search and rescue incidents, as well as rising crime rates in park units. They called it a "breaking point" and argued that the NPS has plans to address its deteriorating infrastructure, but no plan to reinforce the overstressed ranks of law enforcement rangers, including a lack of required needs assessments and little to no action taken after a 2019 Government Accountability Office report found that the NPS is not doing enough to address security threats. Source: [E&E News](#)
- *DOI finalizes plan to remove derogatory word* - On July 22, the Department of the Interior announced that the Derogatory Geographic Names Task Force had concluded its review of more than 600 geographic features on federal land with the name "Sq***." Replacement name recommendations have been submitted to the U.S. Board on Geographic names and they are expected to vote on those recommendations in September. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$537K in Tribal Heritage Grants* - On July 15, the NPS announced the award of \$537,005 in Tribal Heritage Grants to 11 projects across the country to support the preservation of cultural heritage among Indigenous groups. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *RTCA grants given* - The NPS' Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program announced the selection of nine new communities and partners across the South Atlantic-Gulf Region to receive assistance. Source: [The Elba Clipper](#)
- *Oldest trees falling to climate change* - The Washington Post published [an article](#) about the effects of climate change on bristlecone pines, the oldest trees in the world. Several parks were named in the article, including Death Valley, Great Basin, Yosemite, and Big Bend. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Jarvis book excerpt* - The University of Chicago Press has published [an excerpt](#) from the book *National Parks Forever* by Jonathan and Destry Jarvis. Meanwhile, Jonathan Jarvis, who is the former NPS Director (2009-2017), also had [an op-ed](#) published in *The Seattle Times* that sums up the thesis of their book: that the National Park Service should be made an independent agency apart from the

Department of the Interior. Source: *The Chicago Blog*, *The Seattle Times*

- *Delaware North President interview* - *Yahoo!money* interviewed Scott Socha, Delaware North President of Parks and Resorts Division about the trend of luxury accommodations adjacent to national parks, as well as other aspects of national park lodging. One talking point was that consumers today want more amenities and want to have internet and cell connectivity. Source: [Yahoo!money](#)

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Acadia National Park* - In partnership with Cathy and Jim Gero, the NPS, and the National Park Foundation, the Schoodic Institute has announced the Cathy and Jim Gero Acadia Early-Career Fellowship, which will be a 10-month program for recent college graduates to work alongside scientists, educators, and resource managers to develop professional skills. Source: [Schoodic Institute](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - NPS staff and volunteers restored the Craggy Gardens Picnic Area, repairing dozens of picnic tables and flagstones, adding handrails on walkways, and painting the restrooms. Source: [WLOS](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The National Scenic Byway Foundation presented the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation with the 2022 Communications Award for its work fundraising, restoring, and reopening the historic Bluffs Restaurant. The restaurant reopened in 2021, and more than 27,000 customers were served that year. Source: [Wilkes Journal-Patriot](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Shenandoah National Park* - *National Public Radio's* program "All Things Considered" ran a segment about Aaron Purcell's new book, *Lost in Transition*, about the ways in which the federal government made Appalachian residents leave to make way for national parks and hydroelectric projects. Source: [WVTF/National Public Radio](#)
- *Cape Lookout National Seashore* - On July 19, the park posted on their Facebook page that their turtle patrol had found two organisms that the park could not identify and were seeking the public's help. Members of the public suspected they were polychaetes, also known commonly as bristle worms or fire worms. Source: [Cape Lookout National Seashore Facebook page](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland visited the park on July 14. While there, he celebrated close to \$10,000 in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which will rehabilitate trails and protect archaeological and natural resources on Santa Cruz Island. The project will be carried out in partnership with the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Great Basin National Park* - The Source Weekly published [an article](#) about the Worthy Garden Club's purchase of Wintercreek Nursery, which propagates native plants. They are expanding their outreach to partner with Oregon State University - Cascades and the National Park Service in an effort called the East Cascades Native Plant Hub. They currently have sagebrush steppe restoration projects lined up in Craters of the Moon, John Day Fossil Beds, Great Basin, and several parcels of private land. Source: *Source Weekly*
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - Union Carbide Corporation, the owner of the large industrial site slated to be sold to Camden County for the proposed Spaceport Camden has stated that they are backing out of their agreement. The county has acquired the necessary permits to purchase the land, but concerned citizens and groups forced a public referendum on the project, and the vote came out with 72% opposing the project. Union Carbide has said this referendum repudiates the land purchase. County officials have insisted they still have a binding contract to purchase the site. In the meantime, county officials are trying to have the referendum declared invalid by the Georgia Supreme Court. The NPS has previously come out publicly against the project due to its potential hazards and the visual and sound impacts on the park. Source: [Georgia Public Broadcasting](#)
- *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* - The *Columbian* ran [an article](#) focused on the Kids Dig program, in which adult archaeology students lead school children in helping out with ongoing excavations at the park. Source: *The Columbian*
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - A new \$161 million project to rehab the northern section of the parkway broke ground on July 18. A variety of federal and locally elected leaders participated in the groundbreaking, including NPS Director Chuck Sams and Federal Highway Administration Associate Administrator for Federal Lands Tim Hess. It is one of the largest infrastructure investments to be funded thus far by the Great American Outdoors Act. Construction will occur in phases, starting with a temporary road widening in the median and on two bridges between Route 123 and Spout Run. The project is anticipated to be completed in late 2025. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve* - A four-part docuseries on HBO and HBO Max, *Edge of the Earth*, premiered July 12. The show features four groups of athletes embarking on four never-before-accomplished endeavors, and the first episode featured three athletes attempting a descent on Mount Bertha that had never been snowboarded or skied before. Source: [KINY](#)
- *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve* - The park has initiated a new environmental inspection program aimed at assessing large cruise ship compliance. Independent inspectors will board ships unannounced to assess wastewater management, emissions, marine mammal protection, and compliance documentation. The

program is funded entirely by the cruise industry. Previously, NPS managers used reports from the State of Alaska's Ocean Ranger program, but it was dissolved. The park hopes the state will eventually reestablish the program. Source: [Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve](#)

- *Glacier National Park - National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) about the park's new GIS-based story map that better documents the areas of the park that are managed for wilderness character. The project was supported by the Glacier National Park Conservancy and Wild Tribute, a national parks apparel company. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Glacier National Park* - The park announced the start of a project to rehabilitate 13 bridges throughout the park. The project is being funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and will take place over the next two years. The first construction began on two Inside North Fork Road bridges on July 18. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - The *Daily Inter Lake* published [a profile](#) about new superintendent David Roemer and his priorities at the helm of the park. Source: *Daily Inter Lake*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area - The Guardian* published [an article](#) documenting the effects of the ongoing drought and low lake levels on hydropower for millions of consumers. Source: *The Guardian*
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - The park celebrated the opening of the Presidio Tunnel Tops, which are built on top of the highway tunnels connecting the city of San Francisco to the Golden Gate Bridge. The project was a 30-year effort by local leaders to do seismic retrofits and increase city greenspace along the section of highway. The project cost \$118 million, over \$98 million of which was raised by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. It was built by Swinerton Builders, and includes a welcome plaza with food and visitor service, a campfire circle, picnic grounds, a nature playscape and field station, paths, and gardens. Many local and federal dignitaries attended the opening celebration, including Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife for the Department of the Interior Shannon Estenoz and Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi. Source: [PR Newswire](#), [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - *Grand Canyon News* ran [a profile](#) about Rader Lane, a night sky ranger at the park who recently talked with SpaceX Crew-2 astronauts about the importance of night skies. Source: *Grand Canyon News*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - The park, in partnership with the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, have started their third year of restoration work on the Teton Crest Trail. There will be intermittent 30-minute closures on a section of trail near

Paintbrush Divide on specific days in July and August. Crews will also be working on the Static Peak Trail, rehabilitating historic stone walls. Much of the trail was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)

- *Harry S. Truman National Historic Site* - The City of Independence donated land to the NPS so that it can build a new visitor services center and park headquarters for the park. It is located next to the city's transit hub and across the street from the historic firehouse that the city has let the NPS use for over 38 years. Source: [Harry S. Truman National Historic Site](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - On July 12, the Trust for Public Land transferred ownership of 26 square miles of land at Pohue Bay and its surroundings to the park. The area is rich in endangered and rare endemic species, and is also culturally significant to Native Hawaiians. The area is currently closed to visitors while the park consults with experts and residents to understand the resources. This is the largest addition to the park since 2003 and increases the park's square mileage by 5%. The parcel was purchased for \$9.4 million with funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and a donation from the Wyss Foundation. The Trust for Public Land also acknowledged decades of advocacy work by the local community to keep the area from being developed. Source: [KWXX](#)
- *Hopewell Cultural Historical Park* - The *Chillicothe Gazette* published [an article](#) about "a day in the life of a ranger" at the park. Source: *Chillicothe Gazette*
- *John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site* - On July 18, the park announced that they will continue to be closed until Spring 2023 due to ongoing renovations and exhibits maintenance. However, the park is doing extensive programming off-site, including talks at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, neighborhood tours, and "origins tours" of the Fitzgerald and Kennedy families. Source: [John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site](#)
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - The park's environmental education program has been awarded the 2021 Southeast Regional Excellence in Education Award. They were recognized for reaching out to over 65,000 local students through custom Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) programs, which they offered virtually. As part of their efforts, they partnered with Expeditions in Education to create a high-quality, high definition film about the park. Source: [Mammoth Cave National Park](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - The park announced the beginning of a rehabilitation project on Stevens Canyon Road. The road will be closed for a section Monday through Thursday through September 5. On weekends, there will be traffic delays due to a single lane closure. Construction will continue after September, and details will be released later this year. This multiyear project is expected to last through

Summer 2024. It is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)

- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On July 19, the park announced that they will accept 2023-24 Commercial Use Authorization applications for guided backpacking, drive-in campground use, guided bicycle tours, guided day hiking, and single trip guides for climbing, starting on September 1. 2023-2025 CUA applications for guided winter day and overnight use will start on March 1. Special Use Permits in lieu of a Commercial Use Authorization will have applications due on October 1. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration completed an air tour management plan for the park on July 18. The plan authorizes up to one air tour per year on a defined route over the park. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - The Natchez Trace Compact, which is the official marketing arm of the parkway, recently won the National Scenic Byways Foundation Partnership Award. The Compact consists of a group of NPS representatives and destination marketing organization members who meet quarterly to discuss marketing. Their award recognized their efforts to partner together during the pandemic to come up with a recovery strategic plan that embraced socially distanced tourism opportunities. Source: [The Natchez Democrat](#)
- *Nez Perce National Historical Park, Yellowstone National Park* - The *Idaho Capital Sun* published [an article](#) chronicling the journey that ~800 Nez Perce took in hopes of evading the U.S. Army and establishing a new homeland in 1877. Many of the sites mentioned are part of Nez Perce National Historical Park and Yellowstone was also part of their route. Source: *Idaho Capital Sun*
- *Olympic National Park* - The NPS and Federal Aviation Administration completed an air tour management plan for the park on July 19. The plan authorizes up to 64 air tours per year on a defined route. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Oregon National Historic Trail* - From July 8-16, the trail hosted the 2022 American Solar Challenge, a multi-day challenge in which college teams design, build, and then drive solar-powered vehicles across the country. Source: Green and Grey Report (July 18), [National Park Service Facebook page](#), [American Solar Challenge](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* - On July 18, the NPS hosted a somewhat-tense virtual meeting to discuss the park's plan to reopen Beach Drive to commuter traffic. It has been closed since the pandemic to allow people to socially distance more effectively. A draft environmental assessment, released earlier this month (and currently under public comment; see below), is recommending that Beach Drive reopen to cars for most of the year on weekdays and be closed on the weekends and in the summer

months, as it was pre-pandemic. A previous public comment period had about 45% of comments in support of keeping the road closed permanently. The park explained during the meeting opening up the road to traffic actually "creates a deterrent" for people creating social trails through the woods and its associated impacts; other measures, such as signage, have been ineffective deterrents. Some attendees were upset that commuters are being favored over pedestrians, while neighbors of the park expressed interest in getting commuters off their streets.

Source: [DCist](#)

- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - The NPS has released a Finding of No Significant Impact for the Woolsey Fire Disaster Recovery Project. Alternative 2, the preferred alternative, was selected, which will replace facilities at Paramount Ranch, Rocky Oaks, and Peter Strauss Ranch. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
- *Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River* - The Upper Delaware Council has formed a subcommittee to explore the possibility of allowing cell phone towers in the river corridor to give better emergency coverage. The subcommittee will produce a position paper that will inform the possibility of installation along the corridor. Telecommunication towers and antennae are not currently classified as "special use" under the River Management Plan Land and Water Use Guidelines, but the plan predates cell phones (1986) and council members noted that the protection for scenic vistas may compete with the mandate to prevent river accidents and minimize hazards. Source: [Pocono Record](#)
- *Washita Battlefield National Historic Site* - The park opened up two new interpretive exhibits at their visitor center about army surgeons and clay ponies created by the public to honor the pony herd at Chief Black Kettle's camp. Source: [Washita Battlefield National Historic Site](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - Char Miller, a professor of environmental history at Pomona College, had [an op-ed](#) published in the *Los Angeles Times* arguing that installing temporary sprinkler systems to protect giant sequoias is short-sighted and that land managers need to make sometimes-unpopular decisions to better manage forests and embrace a long-term climate change future. Source: *Los Angeles Times*
- *Yosemite National Park* - KCET ran [an article](#) about how a 1907 ban on vehicles in the park mobilized a movement of auto club enthusiasts that convinced park managers and the Secretary of the Interior to remove the ban in 1914. The sudden influx of vehicles and the associated fees those visitors paid helped enable the creation of the National Park Service. Source: *KCET*

Personnel Changes

- *Denali National Park* - Brooke Merrell was selected as the new superintendent.

Brooke was most recently the deputy superintendent and acting superintendent at the park. She is the first woman to hold the superintendence at the park in its history. She has over a decade of NPS experience. Source: [National Park Service Region 11](#)

- *Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site, Gloria Dei Church National Historic Site, Independence National Historical Park, Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial* - Amnesty Kochanowski has been selected as the parks' new deputy superintendent. She has over 20 years of NPS experience, most recently as the superintendent at Devils Tower National Monument. Source: [Independence National Historical Park](#)
- *South Atlantic - Gulf Region (Region 2)* - Mark Foust has been selected as the regional director. He has over 35 years of NPS experience, most recently as superintendent at Buffalo National River. He will begin his new role on August 14. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

Park People

Here we honor deceased park employees, as well as important news about Coalition Members and other current and former NPS employees or volunteers. People are listed alphabetically by last name.

Deceased

- Marjorie Ellen (King) Epps, 89, passed away on July 8. She and her husband Carl worked in Big Bend National Park. Source: [KCSB](#)
- Rodney James Radtke, 69, passed away on July 2. He worked for the NPS in Yosemite National Park, starting in 1980. Source: [Leader-Telegram](#)

Retired

- Bill Kaage will retire at the end of July after 39 years with the federal government, the last eight as the chief for the NPS Division of Fire and Aviation. He also worked at the Clearwater National Forest, Everglades National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and the Pacific West Region of the NPS, and served on many of the national interagency fire groups. Source: [National Park Service Fire and Aviation Management](#)
- Prusik, a lead sled dog from Denali National Park who also sired the park's 2021 litter, has retired from the park. The dog was nine years old and ran a total of 11,707 miles in the park. He was adopted by two residents in Anchorage. Source: [Denali National Park Facebook page](#), [Fairbanks Daily News-Miner](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Antietam National Battlefield* - Public comment is now open on a Landscape Management Plan, which would amend part of the park's General Management

Plan from 1992. [Comments](#) are open until August 8. Source: [Antietam National Battlefield](#)

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for the two parks. [Comments](#) have been extended until August 4. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
- *Crater Lake National Park, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Lava Beds National Monument, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to implement an annual pass that will give visitor access to all four parks. It would be implemented starting on January 1, 2023. [Comments](#) are open until August 21. Source: [Lava Beds National Monument](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - Public comment is now open on a Community Access Plan to enhance the visitor experience. [Comments](#) are open until September 16. Source: [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The NPS has issued a Request for Expression of Interest for creative ideas for re-envisioning the use of facilities adjacent to the Washington Sailing Marina on Daingerfield Island. The facility is 13,662 square feet and includes seating and a snack bar. Concept ideas may be [submitted](#) until September 19. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - The NPS and U.S. Geological Survey have opened up public comment on a proposal to repair, replace, relocate, or remove infrastructure damaged in the 2018 eruption and summit collapse on Kīlauea volcano. [Comments](#) are open until July 31. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - Public comment is now open on an environmental assessment to allow plant gathering for traditional purposes by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Native Americans. [Comments](#) are open until July 28. Source: [ABC57](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to close a part of Beach Drive from Memorial Day to Labor Day, in addition to the normal closures on holidays and weekends. [Comments](#) are open until August 11. Source: [WJLA](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment is now open on a plan to build a staff housing complex, replace a water well, and build new utilities in the 2020 East Troublesome Fire burn scar. 18 historic buildings were destroyed in the fire, many of which provided housing for seasonal employees. [Comments](#) are open until July 31. Source: [CBS News](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposed \$15

expanded amenity fee to provide voluntary fast pass gate transponders for those with valid annual or lifetime passes. [Comments](#) are open until July 31. Source: [Estes Park Trail Gazette](#)

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Public comment is now open on a KNP Complex Wildfire Tree Hazard Mitigation Environmental Assessment. [Comments](#) are open until August 21. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)
- *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument* - Public comment is now open for the development of a park General Management Plan. [Comments](#) are open until August 19. Source: [Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument](#)
- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - The park is starting a wilderness eligibility assessment of lands. The public is invited to give public comment to inform the assessment via email or mail. Source: [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#)
- *Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools (special resource study)* - Public comment is now open on a special resource study on sites associated with American businessman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. The study will examine national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management of 14 sites associated with Rosenwald. [Comments](#) are open until July 31. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *New national wildlife refuge* - On July 13, the Department of the Interior announced the establishment of the Lost Trail Conservation Area in northwest Montana. It is the 568th unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and is the culmination of a 20-year locally-led effort. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service worked in partnership with the Trust for Public Land and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to purchase the 38,052-acre conservation easement from Southern Pine Plantations Montana utilizing funding from the Great American Outdoors Act and Land and Water Conservation Fund. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Indigenous co-management of Bears Ears* - *High Country News* published [interviews](#) with four Indigenous leaders about how they envision the co-management of Bears Ears National Monument (a unit of the Bureau of Land Management) will be implemented. The Bears Ears Commission is composed of five Tribes who will work with the BLM and U.S. Forest Service to manage the monument. Source: *High Country News*
- *Engagement session about Tribal homelands* - On July 19, the White House Council on Native American Affairs convened its third engagement session with representatives from Tribal and Native Hawaiian community leaders. This session was focused on Tribal homelands initiatives, including land trusts, treaty rights, protection of sacred sites, and co-stewardship policies. Source: [Department of the](#)

Interior

- *Mining reform open to public* - On July 13, the Department of the Interior announced public listening sessions hosted by the Interagency Working Group on Mining Regulations, Laws, and Permitting. The group is gathering information to develop recommendations to improve federal hardrock mining regulations, laws, and permitting processes. [Public comments](#) can also be made until August 30. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Abandoned mine program funding guidance finalized* - On July 21, the Department of the Interior finalized guidance for eligible states and the Navajo Nation to apply for \$725 million in first-year funding for reclaiming abandoned mine lands. The program, established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, will grant \$11.3 billion in funding over 15 years. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Offshore wind energy in Gulf of Mexico* - On July 20, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management identified two potential wind energy areas in the Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf. The BOEM is seeking [public comments](#) on the two projects, due August 19. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

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

Senate Actions

July 13 – The Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for Fiscal Year 2023 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior.

July 20 – The Senate failed to agree to the motion to proceed to consideration of S. Con. Res. 43, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2023 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for Fiscal Years 2024 through 2032, by a vote of 34 yeas to 63 nays.

July 21 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered favorably reported the following business items, among others:

- S. 557, to establish a pilot program for native plant species, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
- S. 1344, to redesignate the Pullman National Monument in the state of Illinois as the Pullman National Historical Park, with amendments.
- S. 1718, to amend the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park Establishment Act of 2000 to provide for additional areas to be

- added to the park, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
- S. 1769, to adjust the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
 - S. 2367, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land in Frederick County, Maryland, for the Historic Preservation Training Center of the National Park Service.
 - S. 2708, to provide for greater consultation between the federal government and the governing bodies and community users of land grant-mercedes in New Mexico, to provide for a process for recognition of the historic-traditional uses of land grant-mercedes.
 - S. 3046, to codify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct certain landscape-scale forest restoration projects, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
 - S. 3129, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of the Gila River system in the State of New Mexico as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over certain federal land in the state of New Mexico, with an amendment. Section 3 of the bill would transfer 440 acres of land from the Gila National Forest to the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, which is administered by the NPS.
 - S. 1341, to establish the New Philadelphia National Historical Park in the state of Illinois as a unit of the National Park System, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
 - S. 3185, to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to extend the exception to the closure of certain roads within the Recreation Area for local businesses.
 - S. 3240, to waive the application fee for applications for special use permits for veterans' special events at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs.
 - S. 3307, to modify the boundary of the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in the state of Missouri, with amendments.
 - S. 3338, to revise the boundary of the Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park in the state of Missouri, with amendments.
 - S. 3667, to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish within the National Park Service the United States African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program.
 - S. 3685, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the John P. Parker House in Ripley, Ohio, as a unit of the National Park System.
 - S. 4114, to amend Public Law 99-420, regarding a permanent boundary for Acadia National Park, to provide for the conveyance of certain federal land in the state of Maine for use for affordable workforce housing, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
 - S. 4121, to designate the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial in Bedford Heights, Ohio, as a national memorial. The memorial would not be a unit of the

National Park System and federal funds could not be spent on the memorial.

- H.R. 1931, to provide competitive grants for the promotion of Japanese American incarceration education as a means to understand the importance of democratic principles, use and abuse of power, and to raise awareness about the importance of cultural tolerance toward Japanese Americans, with an amendment.
- 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. 6201, to extend the authority for the establishment of a commemorative work to honor enslaved and free Black persons who served in the American Revolution.
- H.R. 6434, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish, within the National Park Service, the Japanese American World War II History Network.

House Actions

July 13 – The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on the following, among other bills:

- H.R. 2794, to provide for the protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and interconnected federal lands and waters, including Voyageurs National Park, within the Rainy River Watershed in the state of Minnesota, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 6364, to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to extend the exception to the closure of certain roads within the Recreation Area for local businesses, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 6442, to include Tribal governments and quasi-governmental entities as eligible entities with whom the National Park Service can enter into cooperative management agreements. The bill was amended in the committee to also include public universities and public utilities.
- H.R. 6936, to provide for the issuance of a semipostal to benefit programs that combat invasive species.
- H.R. 7496, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to install a plaque at the peak of Ram Head in the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John, United States Virgin Islands, to commemorate the slave rebellion that began on St. John in 1733.
- H.R. 7693, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the National Park Foundation's matching funding through 2030 and to increase the authorized amount to \$15 million.

H.R. 2794 and H.R. 6442, was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 6364, H.R. 6936, H.R. 7496, and H.R. 7693 were ordered reported, without amendment.

July 14 – The House passed H.R. 7900, to authorize appropriations for Fiscal Year 2023 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, by a vote of 329 yeas to 101 nays. The complete text of the amended bill was unavailable as of press time. If any additional matters affecting the National Park Service are identified, they will be shared in

a future report. As passed by the House, the bill includes the following two amendments that were adopted that concern the NPS:

- An amendment that expresses the sense of Congress that the Port Chicago 50 should be exonerated of any charges brought against them in the aftermath of the deadliest home front explosion in World War II.
- An amendment that rescinds twenty Medals of Honor awarded to the members of the United States Army 7th Cavalry for killing hundreds of unarmed Lakota women, children and men on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, which later became known as the Wounded Knee Massacre site, a National Historic Landmark.

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

- H.R. 1256, to direct the Department of the Interior to remove the brass plaque bearing the name Senator Francis G. Newlands from the grounds of the memorial fountain located at Chevy Chase Circle in the District of Columbia.
- H.R. 6438, to direct the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site known as Dearfield, in Weld County, Colorado.
- H.R. 6353, to authorize the National Service Animals Monument Corporation to establish a commemorative work on federal land in the District of Columbia to commemorate the heroic deeds and sacrifices of service animals and handlers of service animals in the United States.
- H.R. 6611, to authorize the Embassy of France in Washington, DC, to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs to honor the extraordinary contributions of Jean Monnet to restoring peace between European nations and establishing the European Union, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 6270, to authorize the Thomas Paine Memorial Association to establish a commemorative work on federal land in the District of Columbia in honor of the philosopher and patriot, Thomas Paine.
- H.R. 6799, to direct the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the John P. Parker House in Ripley, Ohio, which was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1997.
- H.R. 7618, to designate the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial in Bedford Heights, Ohio, as a national memorial. The memorial would not be a unit of the National Park System and federal funds could not be spent on the memorial.
- H.R. 7912, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing a network of locations associated with lynchings in the vicinity of Memphis, Tennessee, as a unit of the National Park System.
- H.R. 8086, to establish the César E. Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park in the states of California and Arizona.
- H.R. 8258, to provide exceptions from permitting and fee requirements for content creation, regardless of distribution platform, including still photography, digital or analog video, and digital or analog audio recording activities, conducted on land

under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, and for other purposes.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Norton, Wild, Wenstrup, Brown of Ohio, Cohen, Ruiz, Keating; Kym A. Hall, National Capital Regional Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

July 19 – The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

- H.R. 4404, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Kissimmee River in the state of Florida as a component of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, by a 2/3 vote of 377 yeas to 45 nays.
- H.R. 7693, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the National Park Foundation's matching funding through 2030 and to increase the authorized amount to \$15 million, by a 2/3 vote of 397 yeas to 22 nays.

July 20 – The House passed H.R. 8294, making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, by a vote of 220 yeas to 207 nays. As passed by the House, this bill included the text of H.R. 8262, the FY23 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. For a list of the funding levels affecting the National Park Service, see the [Coalition Report of July 13, 2022](#).

During House consideration of H.R. 8294, the following amendments were adopted that affect the NPS:

- An amendment to designate \$3 million in funds for the Historic Preservation Fund with the intent of enhancing activities for the preservation, restoration, and maintenance of nationally significant sites, artifacts, and structures through competitive grants at the local, state, and federal levels focusing on projects involving Historically Black Colleges and Universities, sites and stories linked to the Civil Rights movement, landmarks associated with communities that are historically underrepresented, and sites related to the histories of Indigenous peoples.
- An amendment that increases funding for wildland fire management by \$1,000,000 with the intent of supporting the Joint Fire Science Program, and which decreases funds for the Secretary of Interior - Departmental Operations by the same amount.
- An amendment that designates \$5 million in both the Operation of the National Park System account and the National Forest System account to support work to reduce the risk of catastrophic fires killing giant sequoias.
- An amendment to designate an additional \$4 million from the Office of the Department of the Interior Secretary to emphasize the importance of the 9/11 Memorial Act Grant Program.

The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on the following bills, among others:

- H.R. 6353, to authorize the National Service Animals Monument Corporation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs, and

for other purposes.

- H.R. 6438, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the site known as "Dearfield" in the state of Colorado.
- H.R. 6799, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the John P. Parker House in Ripley, Ohio, as a unit of the National Park System.
- H.R. 7618, to designate the Kol Israel Foundation Holocaust Memorial in Bedford Heights, Ohio, as a national memorial. The memorial would not be a unit of the National Park System and federal funds could not be spent on the memorial.

H.R. 6353, H.R. 6438, H.R. 6799 and H.R. 7618 were ordered reported, without amendment.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Assateague Island National Park

Horses escape to mainland

On July 13, two wild horses who were already in "an excited and agitated state" became blocked by visitors and illegally parked vehicles. Without a manner to retreat toward the island, they fled west over the Route 611 Verrazano bridge to the mainland. The two horses were from the Maryland herd and are known as Adrianna's Happy Camper and Starlight. Staff from the national park and state park safely corralled the horses about a half-mile from the bridge on the mainland, then trailered them back to the island. No horses or humans were injured in the incident. A horse has only crossed the bridge one other time in recorded history and the park has reminded the public to obey all traffic rules and give horses at least 40 feet of space. Source: [Assateague Island National Park](#)

Badlands National Park

Hiker passes away from heat

On July 20, a 22-year-old and one other person were hiking together on "an unmarked trail" in the park when they ran out of water. The park temperature had been in the upper 90s and low 100s that week. The individuals called one of their parents for help, and the parents called the NPS. The 22-year-old eventually collapsed and passed away from suspected dehydration and exposure, while the other individual was flown to a Rapid City hospital and placed under observation for the same ailments. The Pennington County Sheriffs Office originally announced on Twitter that the individuals had been following "a social media challenge" to visit that place, but they later corrected that information, and said the sister of the deceased individual stated they were on a college graduation celebration trip and were following the trail tracks on a hiking app. Source: [KHQA](#), [Pennington County Sheriffs Office Twitter](#)

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

White-nose syndrome fungus found

On July 21, the park announced that lab tests conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey confirmed that *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (Pd) was found on a bat captured at the park. PD is an invasive fungus that causes white-nose syndrome in hibernating bats, which is fatal in over 90% of exposed populations and spreads very quickly. Though the syndrome hasn't yet been observed, detection of the fungus usually precedes confirmation of the disease by a year or two. Source: [Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site](#)

Big Bend National Park

Bear activity closes trail

On July 17, the park closed the Window Trail to public use due to significantly increased bear activity within the narrow trail corridor. The closure is to protect both bears and people. NPS biologists are monitoring the bear activity and will open it as soon as it declines to normal levels. Source: [Big Bend National Park](#)

Big Bend National Park

Deceased hiker

On July 21, Big Bend's Communications Center received notice of a fatality on the Chimneys Trail. Rangers responded and found a deceased 75-year-old a half-mile from the trailhead. There was "no obvious cause of death," but the park reminded the public to be cautious about heat. Temperatures exceeded 104 degrees that day. Source: [Big Bend National Park](#)

Canyonlands National Park

Visitor dies on short hike

On July 17, an individual went on a short hike from the Elephant Hill trailhead in the Needles District. The hiker was reported overdue and a search was initiated, utilizing search and rescue teams from Canyonlands and Mesa Verde National Parks, as well as San Juan County. Crews found the individual deceased near the trailhead on July 19. San Juan County Sheriffs Office is investigating the incident and authorities have not announced the official cause of death, but the park has reminded the public to prepare for extreme heat if hiking this time of year. Source: [KSL](#)

Delaware Gap National Recreation Area

Teenager drowns

On July 24, a teenager was swimming near the Ames-Jennings picnic site at the park and family members saw the individual go under. The swimmer was not wearing a personal flotation device. They called 9-1-1. Rescuers from Blue Ridge Rescue Squad, Sandyston Township Volunteer Fire Department, Bushkill Volunteer Fire Department, Bushkill EMS,

New Jersey State Police, and Sussex County responded. The individual's body was recovered by NPS divers that afternoon. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Waterline breaks

On July 13, a waterline break near Ribbon Falls on the North Kaibab Trail triggered the loss of chlorination and pressure for pumping to water spigots along the North Kaibab corridor. As a result, the water system violated a drinking water requirement for more than 4 hours and may have exposed visitors to water-born diseases. Water utility operators are assessing the damage and water is not available at Manzanita Rest Area, Roaring Springs, or Cottonwood Campground.

Later, at least four leaks were found along the Transcanyon Pipeline on the north Kaibab and Bright Angel trails, resulting in diminished water resources and the implementation of Level 2 water conservation measures. These measures include disposable dishes and utensils at concessions operation and home conservation measures on the South Rim. Water on the North Rim is unaffected. Source: Grand Canyon National Park ([7/13](#), [7/22](#))

Grand Canyon National Park

Lightning causes wildfire

On July 17, lightning started the Dragon Fire five miles west of the North Rim Grand Canyon Lodge. As of July 24, the fire was 1,025 acres with 47 personnel assigned. Fire managers are buffering containment lines and monitoring fire activity, while letting it burn to support the ecosystem. The Tiyo Point Trail is currently closed. Source: [St George News, Inciweb](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Flood damage

On July 12, the Porters Gap area received over eight inches of rain over the course of several hours. The area had already received five inches of rain over the previous week, which had saturated the soils. The rain caused flash flood conditions along the Middle Prong of the Little Pigeon River, resulting in road washouts and culvert damage along Porters Creek Road, and washed out sections of the Ramsey Cascades Trail. The park temporarily closed some roads, trails, and facilities in the Greenbrier area of the park to motorists and pedestrians. Part of the closure was lifted on July 15. However, another three inches of rain fell on July 21, creating additional road damage, including water below the road surface that has undermined its stability. The Greenbrier area is now closed to all use. Engineers will assess road stability and make recommendations for repair. Source: Great Smoky Mountains National Park ([7/13](#), [7/15](#), [7/18](#), [7/21](#))

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

National Guard rescues ill hiker

On July 19, a hiker at the backcountry LeConte Lodge on Mount LeConte was reported to have "life-threatening illness" needing immediate medical attention. A Tennessee National Guard medical flight crew was dispatched, but due to thick cloud cover, they could not reach the LeConte Lodge. Rescuers on the ground were able to transport the hiker down the Alum Cave trail to get below the cloud layer, where the aircraft could pick up the hiker via hoist. Cloud cover continued to delay the efforts, but eventually a break in the clouds allowed for successful evacuation and the patient was brought to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville. Source: [U.S. National Guard](#)

Haleakalā National Park

Hikers with hypothermia

On July 21, a group with three adults and two children at the Kapalaoa Cabin in Haleakalā Crater called for a rescue. They were suffering from various stages of hypothermia and dehydration. Rangers arrived on scene and provided the group with warm blankets, water, and food. One of the adults was unable to walk out of the crater and was carried three miles to the trailhead by NPS staff, where they received medical attention. Source: [Haleakalā National Park](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Sea arch damaged, may fall soon

On July 20, the park reported [on its Facebook page](#) that the iconic Hōlei Sea Arch lost a key part of its base due to "historic" 20-25-foot swells coming off Hurricane Darby and is now at risk of collapse. Source: [The Sacramento Bee](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Heat-related rescue

On July 4, a 57-year-old hiked several miles along the Boy Scout Trail before suffering a heat-related emergency. The individual called 911 and a helicopter crew, Air Rescue 308, initiated an extensive search. They eventually located the individual, who was laying down, and they then lifted the individual 175 feet into the aircraft and flew to the trailhead. Medics administered first aid and evaluated the individual, who was then transported to the hospital for further treatment and care. Source: [KESQ](#)

Mesa Verde National Park

Lightning causes three fires

On July 22, a dry lightning storm started the Long, Moccasin, and Soda Fires. The Mesa Verde Engine Crew was able to contain the Moccasin Fire at 0.1 acres. The Soda Fire consists of a single tree in an inaccessible area, so the park is monitoring it for growth. Two single-engine air tankers laid retardant around the Long Fire and a helicopter dropped water to prevent spread. On July 23-24, a helicopter shuttled firefighters from Mesa Verde

and San Juan National Forest to the Long Fire, and between their work and some rain on July 24, it is now 100% contained at 24 acres. Source: [Mesa Verde National Park](#)

Olympic National Park

Climber found deceased

A 38-year-old began a solo backpacking trip on July 16, on a route from Royal Basin to Home Lake with plans to climb Mount Mystery, Hall Foss Peak, and Little Mystery. The individual was reported missing after not returning from the three-day trip. Search and rescue teams from Olympic National Park and Olympic Mountain Rescue, as well as an NPS helicopter searched for two days. Staff on the helicopter found the individual deceased on the southern end of the Mount Mystery, approaching the Del Monte ridgeline. The Jefferson County coroner will determine the cause and date of death.

Source: [U.S. News and World Report](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Lightning injures climber

The week of July 17, a rock climber "in remote wilderness" in the park was seriously injured by lightning. One of the other members of their party activated a satellite device to request help, and an NPS helicopter team utilized a short-haul line to rescue the individual. The patient survived and is now in stable condition. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Facebook page](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Toxic algal mats blooming

On July 22, the park reported that there are toxic algal mats in the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River downstream of the park boundary. The park is investigating whether or not there is also toxic algae inside the park and visitors are advised to know signs of algal mats and how to keep themselves and pets safe. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Facebook page](#)

Shenandoah National Park

DOI Secretary breaks leg

On July 17, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland broke her leg while hiking in the park. She was treated with help from park staff, U.S. Park Police, and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Source: [NBC News](#)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Fall on glacier

On July 11, a 65-year-old sustained lower leg injuries after a ground-level fall on the Root Glacier. NPS staff and volunteers from the search and rescue team responded to the

scene to extricate the patient via a litter. The patient was transferred to an ambulance in Chitina for transport to advanced medical care. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

Yosemite National Park

Individual indicted for assault on officer

On July 3, 2022, two family members engaged in a violent altercation in Housekeeping Camp. As law enforcement rangers tried to subdue one of the individuals, they refused to comply, resulting in a violent confrontation with one officer. The individual was eventually subdued after striking the ranger multiple times. The individual was placed in a patrol car for transport, but then slipped out of the restraints and became violent again. The rangers stopped the vehicle to restrain the individual and another ranger was headbutted. On July 14, a federal grand jury returned a two-count indictment for assaulting a federal officer.

Source: [The United States Attorney's Office: Eastern District of California](#)

Yosemite National Park

Employee charged with filming other employee in shower

An individual, a law enforcement officer in the park, was using a "community shower" on July 4, when they noticed an iPhone camera peaking over the side of the shower, pointed toward them. The individual shouted, got dressed, and utilized their dog to search the grounds for the suspect. The individual found a suspect hiding under an NPS vehicle, and the suspect allegedly told the individual "he just couldn't help himself." On July 19, the individual was charged with one count of filming with intent to violate a person's privacy and one count of committing an obscene act to breach the peace." The suspect is a maintenance employee. A plea has not yet been entered. Source: [The Union Democrat](#)

Zion National Park

Lightning causes wildfire

On July 20, lightning started the Kolob Upper Fire adjacent to the Kolob Terrace Road, about 15 miles north of Highway 9. As of July 23, the fire was 100% contained at 17 acres. Firefighters from the NPS, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Hurricane Valley Fire, and State of Utah responded. Source: [The Spectrum](#), [Zion National Park](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Updates on wildfires*
 - *Denali National Park and Preserve* - Structure protection tasks have been completed for the Starr Fire and fire managers continue to monitor and assess activity by air. As of July 22, it is 205 acres and smoldering with no fire growth. There are six other fires in the region, just outside the park, that are combined with the Starr Fire to be called the Paradise Complex. All of

those fires are smoldering and not showing any new growth. Source: [Alaska Fire Information](#)

- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - As of July 19, the Power Line Fire was 100% contained at 42.5 acres. Source: [KHON](#)
 - *Yosemite National Park* - As of July 24, the Washburn Fire was 79% contained at 4,856 acres with 1,330 personnel assigned. Wawona and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias continue to be closed. Highway 41 is open with no stopping or parking from the southern boundary to Yosemite West. Source: [Inciweb](#), [Yosemite National Park](#)
- *Guadalupe Mountains National Park* - Wilderness use permits are now being issued for overnight camping. They had been closed since mid-April due to extreme fire danger conditions. Source: [Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On July 13, a 42-year-old pleaded guilty to interfering with a federal communications system. Under the terms of a plea agreement, prosecutors will recommend no more than ten months in prison at a sentencing that will take place on October 7, 2022 (the judge, however, may impose any sentence up to the statutory maximum). The case stems from an incident in the park that occurred August 29-31, 2021 ([Coalition Report, September 8, 2021](#)). The individual took methamphetamine, arrived at a stranger's home with several guns and handed the stranger a letter with concerns about political events and difficulty getting ammunition, claiming there would be a revolution. The individual then drove their partner to Olympic National Park, where the perpetrator felled a tree to block a road. The individual told their partner that they would die in the "revolution," causing that person to call 9-1-1. The perpetrator threw a can of soup at them, cutting their leg. The perpetrator then stormed into the woods with nine firearms and 3,500 rounds of ammunition. The park evacuated the area and began a search for the individual. That afternoon, the individual disabled the Blue Mountain radio repeater site. Two days later, a drone located the individual in the park, and the person shot at the drone. Ultimately, law enforcement was able to negotiate a surrender with no injuries to anyone. Source: [The United States Attorney's Office: Western District of Washington](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - In the [July 13 Coalition Report](#), we erroneously reported that two separate falls took place on a snow couloir in the Ptarmigan Fingers area. The press release that had been put out by the park was unclear about the nature of the incident and more details have now been reported. On July 10, a married couple, 61 and 59 years of age, was climbing together in the easternmost chute of the Ptarmigan Fingers snow couloirs when both tumbled nearly 1,000 vertical feet down the couloir. Both wore helmets and crampons and carried ice axes. They had tried to self-arrest, but were unable to stop the fall. They both came to a stop about 100 feet from the bottom of the couloir. The 61-one-year old had a broken femur. The 59-year-old had nine broken ribs, fractured vertebrae, and a broken sternum. The 59-year-old helped the other climber with extra layers to

insulate them from the snow, then "bushwhacked over talus and downed trees" to reach a camping party of two people about two miles away. The camping party went to the individual on the snow and helped insulate them further from the snow. One of the individuals in the camping party was able to reach their spouse, who was able to call the NPS to initiate a rescue. The other member of the camping party also triggered the SOS feature on a satellite device. The two protected the individual in the snow from rain and sleet and monitored the patient's condition. Two NPS staff arrived on scene and called in a Colorado National Guard Blackhawk helicopter, which loaded the individual into a litter and brought the individual to Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland. While that rescue was happening, the 59-year-old started feeling significant pain from their injuries and began screaming for help. Another camping party at Odessa Lake heard the individual and was able to provide a tent and sleeping bag and aid. Other members of the park's search and rescue team arrived on scene and spent the night with the individual. A helicopter from Northern Colorado Med Evac was able to take the patient to the hospital the next morning. Source: [The Colorado Sun](#)

- *Yellowstone National Park* - On July 13, the park opened 93% of roadways and 88% of the backcountry in the aftermath of the historic flooding. Bicycles are allowed on limited portions of the North and Northeast entrance roads. On July 21, the park began allow bicycling, hiking, and fishing between Tower Junction and Slough Creek and will begin instituting a day-use reservation system for vehicles in the area on August 1. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

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- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann
- Issue Contributors: Bill Walters

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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