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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

Coalition Actions

The Coalition's former chair Phil Francis joined a *National Parks Traveler* podcast to discuss recent news from the National Park System, including the new deferred maintenance figure: <https://protectnps.org/2022/05/16/npt-the-national-park-systems-crippling-maintenance-backlog/>

The Coalition signed on to a number of protest letters regarding onshore oil and gas lease sales in June:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/05/18/coalition-joins-protest-of-june-2022-competitive-oil-and-gas-lease-sale-parcels/>

We submitted comments regarding Off Road Vehicle use at Fire Island National Seashore:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/05/19/coalition-comments-on-fire-island-national-seashore-off-road-vehicle-civic-engagement-newsletter/>

The Coalition signed on to a letter sent in support of the National Park Foundation Reauthorization Act of 2022, urging the Senate Energy Natural Resources Committee and House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee to swiftly move the bill and ensure final passage:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/05/24/coalition-signs-on-in-support-of-the-npf-reauthorization-act/>

We also joined comments on the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's

Proposed Regional Haze State Implementation Plan (SIP):

<https://protectnps.org/2022/05/25/coalition-submits-comments-on-alaska-regional-haze-plan/>

We continued our virtual Hill visits the past two weeks, meeting with staff from the offices of Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Jon Tester (D-MT), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN).

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 Director testifies before House about NPS budget request* - On May 18, National Park Service Director Chuck Sams testified in front of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies to answer questions about the NPS budget request for Fiscal Year 2023. In particular, he highlighted prioritizing racial equity, climate change, conservation, and science-based decision making. Source: *Green and Grey Report*, [House of Representatives](#)
- *NPS ordered by court to re-look at e-bikes* - A federal judge ruled that the NPS "acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner" when acting NPS Director P. Daniel Smith issued a 2019 directive ordering parks to treat e-bikes as equivalent to traditional bicycles without engaging in an environmental assessment. The court is requiring the NPS to reconsider the subsequent Final Rule on e-bike use to determine the proper level of National Environmental Protection Act compliance, adequately document its reasoning, and provide public input opportunities. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *PWR cultural resource stewardship awards* - The Pacific West Region (Regions 8, 9, 10, 12) has recognized three employees for their dedication to preserving park cultural resources. Craig Kenkel (Point Reyes) was given the Award for Park Superintendent for developing a formal government-to-government partnership with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. Keith Park (John Muir NHS, Eugene O'Neill NHS, Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front NHP, Port Chicago Naval Magazine NM) was given the Award for Facility Maintenance Specialist for his 13 years of work as a horticulturalist and arborist working with underserved communities and providing technical assistance for NPS units and non-profits in the region. Anna Tamura (regional planning portfolio manager) was given the Award for Cultural Resource Specialist for her work co-founding the Japanese American Confinement Sites Working Group, updating terminology guidance around Japanese American incarceration, and supporting the establishment of Amache National Historic Site. Source: [National Park Service Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12](#)

- *\$1 million in battlefield grants awarded* - On May 18, the NPS announced \$1 million in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to the three entities that will protect 65 acres of American Revolutionary War and Civil War sites. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *\$9.8 million toward orphaned mining wells in parks* - The NPS has received \$9.8 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to plug, remediate, and reclaim abandoned oil and gas well sites in seven national parks: Channel Islands, Jean Lafitte, Cuyahoga Valley, Big Thicket, Guadalupe Mountains, Glen Canyon, and Gauley River. This is part of a larger \$250 million effort to clean up 277 high-priority orphaned wells and well sites across all federal public lands. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *\$7.27 million in rural historic preservation projects* - The NPS has awarded \$7.27 million in Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants to 11 recipients in 10 states. The program is focused on supporting economic development in rural areas through the preservation of historic buildings. Funding comes through the Historic Preservation Fund, appropriated from Congress from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *New brownfield reclamation grant program* - On May 23, recipients were announced for a new grant initiative to help communities transform brownfield areas (land suspected of being contaminated by hazardous waste or industrial pollutants) into community assets, such as parks, green space, or community gardens. The program is developed by the NPS' Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, funded by the EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, and administered by Groundwork USA. In this inaugural round, \$194,839 was granted to five Groundwork community partners. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Climate change effects on seaside parks* - *National Parks Traveler* ran [an article](#) outlining the challenges and mitigation efforts around climate change at coastal national park units. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *How national park sites lose NPS status* - *Fox 59* ran [an article](#) outlining the various ways parks have been decommissioned as NPS units over the years. Source: *Fox 59*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Antietam National Battlefield* - A maintenance action team from the NPS' Historic Preservation Training Center is rehabilitating the exterior of the Piper House. The \$426,000 project is funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and is being carried out with support from the Youth Conservation Corps through Conservation Legacy. The exterior work is expected to be finished in September. NPS Director

Chuck Sams and Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Shannon Estenoz visited the park on May 26 to learn more about the project and the Historic Preservation Training Center, as well as to visit Antietam National Cemetery. Source: [Herald-Mail Media](#)

- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - Joe Branch Road has been repaired and reopened to vehicular traffic. Significant rainfall in February 2020 and March 2021 caused a large culvert to fail and washed a section of road away. Source: [Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area](#)
- *Boston Common (City of Boston Parks & Recreation, National Historic Landmark, Freedom Trail Site)* - On May 20, construction began on the Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Regiment Memorial in the park. The \$3 million restoration project is a partnership between the National Park Service, City of Boston, Friends of the Public Garden, and Museum of African American History. Source: *Green & Grey Report*, [Friends of the Public Garden](#)
- *Curecanti National Recreation Area* - The Elk Creek Marina at Blue Mesa Reservoir announced that they will remain closed for the 2022 summer boating season due to low lake levels and the probability that water will need to be released to Lake Powell. The NPS boat ramps at the marina will be open, but slip rentals, boat rentals, gas, the tackle shop, and Pappy's Restaurant will not be available. Source: [9News](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - The park has issued a prospectus for a concession contract to operate lodging, food and beverage, retail, fuel sales, and other visitor services at Stovepipe Wells Village. The prospectus was issued on May 19 and will be open until October 7. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - On May 27, the park began requiring reservations and fees of \$16 per night for the 62 primitive river campsites along the Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)
- *Delaware Gap National Recreation Area* - The park is conducting a dye tracer study along U.S. Route 209 near mile marker 17 to determine the pathway water takes underground to try to determine whether groundwater is affecting landslides along this section of road. Visitors may notice bright florescent yellow-green water. The dye is biodegradable, non-toxic, and non-persistent. Source: [Delaware Gap National Recreation Area](#)
- *Dinosaur National Monument* - The NPS and the Utah National Guard have entered into a partnership in which the National Guard will carry out construction-related training activities from 2022-2025 to support NPS deferred facilities maintenance needs and improve the visitor experience. The first stint will take place from June

6-15, in which the National Guard will rehabilitate and improve accessibility at the restrooms at Split Mountain Campground, replace several cattle guards in the park, rehab the Rainbow Park entrance road, and fabricate several road gates that will be installed at a later date. Material costs for the projects will be funded by the NPS.

Source: [Dinosaur National Monument](#)

- *Everglades National Park - National Parks Traveler* ran [an article](#) chronicling the NPS' decades-long effort to eradicate invasive Brazilian pepper trees. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Fire Island National Seashore* - The NPS is considering a proposal to allow cars to drive on the island. It would give a single unlimited permit to all full-time Fire Island households. Currently, regulations cap the number of full-time resident permits at 145 and don't allow any residents to drive during the summer. A decision is expected in late 2023 or early 2024. It was not disclosed whether there will be a public comment process or when. Source: [WSHU](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - The Navajo Nation Council has publicly requested that Superintendent William Shott and NPS Director Chuck Sams better communicate and consult with the Tribe about requested and needed improvements to the Antelope Point Marina through the impacts of record-low water levels on Lake Powell. The Tribe is concerned about the effects on the local economy, jobs, and public safety. The park has thus far denied all requests for improvements at Antelope Point due to continued drops in water levels. Source: [Navajo-Hopi Observer](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - The park has launched an Alternative Anchoring Pilot Program to try to resolve an issue of boaters illegally "pin anchoring," consisting of drilling into sandstone outcroppings. This causes resource damage, as well as a safety issue for swimmers, particularly as lake levels get lower. The program includes issuing a commercial use authorization for large inflatable anchors called "Beach Bags" that allow boats to anchor to slickrock or sandy shores. The program will also include more education and enforcement efforts. Source: [KSL News Radio](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - The United States Park Police Fraternal Order of Police has publicly stated that visitors should stay away from the various units of the park, calling them "not safe" right now due to low staffing rates. A park spokesperson disputed the assessment and said the parks remain open and the safety of the staff and visitors is a high priority. Source: [SFist](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - This summer, the Jackson Lake Lodge will get a new roof, restoration of its exterior concrete walls, drainage improvements, and restoration of its original stain color, all with an eye toward preservation in alignment with its status as a National Historic Landmark. The multi-million-dollar project is

being funded by the Grand Teton Lodge Company, and the historic preservation has been supported by the NPS, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, and the University of Pennsylvania. HPZS architectural firm conducted the design and will support construction, which is being led by Bulley & Andrews. The lodge will remain open, though there may be impacts to noise levels and viewsheds.

Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *Grand Teton National Park* - The park is starting habitat restoration projects in the southern part of the park this year as part of its multi-year effort to turn former livestock pastures back into native sagebrush steppe habitat. The park receives financial support for this program from the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, Teton Conservation District, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Alpyn Beauty. The project has been ongoing since 2007. Currently, the park is focused on 90 acres in the South Slough unit west of Mormon Row and 10 acres in the McBride unit south of the Jackson Hole Airport and east of North Spring Gulch Road. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument, Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, Minidoka National Historic Site* - Georgia State University ran [a profile](#) on museum curator Alexander Kim, his career path, and his work preserving resources. Source: *Georgia State University News Hub*
- *Haleakalā National Park* - NPS staff and interns planted several hundred "mintless mint" (*Phyllostegia haliakalae*) between March and May on the lower shelf of the Kīpahulu Valley Biological Preserve. The rare endemic plant was thought to be down to 50 individuals in the wild. The new plants were grown in the park nursery over the last two years. Source: [Maui News](#)
- *Harpers Ferry National Historical Park* - The park has permanently closed the Maryland Heights parking areas due to serious safety concerns around illegally parked vehicles blocking emergency access. Following safety analysis and public outreach and comments, the park weighed several alternatives and decided to close the parking lot indefinitely. Source: [Harpers Ferry National Historical Park](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - KTLA-TV Los Angeles ran [an article](#) about the challenges to the endangered desert tortoise in the park and the NPS' efforts to monitor and protect them. Source: *KTLA-TV Los Angeles/MSN*
- *Keweenaw National Historical Park* - The park's Advisory Commission has announced \$124,902 in funding for 14 projects benefiting building preservation, museum collections, interpretation, accessibility, and landscape preservation in the park. Source: [Keweenaw National Historical Park](#)
- *Lincoln Memorial* - On May 22, the NPS and the Lincoln Group held an event to honor the centennial of the dedication of the memorial. The Washington Post

published [an article](#) chronicling the segregation present at the 1922 dedication and the censoring of the only Black speaker that day, Tuskegee Institute head Robert Russa Moton. Moton's great grandson and his family were present at the ceremony as an act of redress and speakers talked about the success and ongoing struggles of equality in the U.S. Source: *The Washington Post*

- *Morristown National Historical Park* - The park's multimillion-dollar roadway improvement project has expanded to include a parking lot at Jockey Hollow and public access roads in the New Jersey Brigade area. The work is part of a \$4.1 million roadway improvement project being funded through the Federal Lands Transportation Program, which will replace, repair, or install roads, culverts, drainpipes, traffic control gates, striping, signage, counters, and traffic calming measures. The project has been underway since April 11 and is expected to conclude in late September. Source: [Morristown National Historical Park](#)
- *San Juan Island National Historical Park* - During the May 18 meeting of the San Juan Island National Monument Action Committee (the Monument is a unit of the Bureau of Land Management adjacent to the NPS unit), several members of the public stated concern for visitors crowding and stressing out a local den of foxes. The new monument manager and the BLM district manager both relayed that they are working on the problem and also coordinating with the NPS unit on appropriate outreach, education, and presence. Source: [The Journal of the San Juan Islands](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - The park's administrative headquarters, which it has sublet from the City of Thousand Oaks for 25 years, will end its contract at the end of 2023. The U.S. Government Accountability Office wanted a 10-year contract, and the city was only willing to offer five years. The NPS will need 20,000 square feet of space to continue operations locally. Source: [Thousand Oaks Acorn](#)
- *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument* - The park has begun construction on 2.5 miles of new boundary fencing in the park's South Unit to help deter prohibited activities in the park and increase public awareness of the site. The fence will have a series of horse gates for equestrians. Construction is expected to last through February 2023. Source: [Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - An agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the State of Wyoming has been created to better protect big game migratory corridors on private lands around the park. The "Partnership to Support Big Game Working Lands Conservation in Wyoming" includes investments in agricultural land protection and restoration, as well as better utilization of habitat leases through Farm Bill conservation title programs. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On May 27, NPS staff and political dignitaries

celebrated the completion and reopening of the Tower-Roosevelt to Chittenden Road, a two-year, \$28 million project funded by the Great American Outdoors Act.

Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Outer Banks Group (Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Wright Brothers National Memorial)* - Robin Snyder was selected as the new deputy superintendent. Robin has 27 years of NPS experience, most recently as the superintendent of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park and Booker T. Washington National Monument. Source: [The Outer Banks Voice](#)

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

- David G. Barker, 71, passed away on May 17. David was a stone mason, specializing in historic restoration, and he worked on many historical buildings and monuments and trained others as a contractor for the NPS. Source: [The Evening Sun](#)
- Gary Brown, 85, passed away on May 8. Gary worked for the NPS for 35 years, including assignments in Carlsbad Caverns, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Point Reyes, Denali, and Rocky Mountain. Several of those positions were as chief ranger or assistant chief ranger. He was considered a bear management expert, serving on the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee at Yellowstone and writing several books about bears. Source: Tony Sisto, [Dokken Nelson Funeral Service & Crematory](#)
- William "Bill" Brown, Jr., 89, passed away on February 17. He grew up in Yosemite National Park and worked on the park trail crew during high school and college. Source: [ParkRecord](#)
- Takeko "Take" Miyatake, 94, passed away on May 4. Take was a prisoner at the Manzanar incarceration center during World War II, and later worked with a group of other incarcerated to design and construct a scale model of the camp that is displayed in the Manzanar National Historic Site visitor center. Source: [The Rafu Shimpō](#)
- David Walter Peters, 86, passed away on May 15. He worked at Mesa Verde National Park for a time. Source: [Legacy/Quad-City Times](#)
- Luman Fay "Pink" Pinkerton, 87, passed away on May 12. Luman worked at Yellowstone National Park for a time. Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)

- Sarah Geneva "Gee" Phillips, 91, passed away on May 19. She volunteered for the NPS at Great Smoky Mountains National Park for over 26 years. Source: [Dayton Daily News](#)

In the News

- Amanda Chen has won the 2022 First Prize Graduate Student Paper Award from the Archaeological Institute of America. She has worked as an archaeologist with the NPS. She just completed her PhD at the University of Maryland and will start this fall as Assistant Professor of Roman Art and Archaeology at Kansas City Art Institute. Source: [Archaeological Institute of America](#)
- Steve Elkington was honored in [an article](#) in the Federal News Network's "May We Say Thank You" series. He worked for the NPS for 36 years, retiring in 2014. He worked in Washington, D.C. and Cuyahoga Valley as a landscape architect, and on behalf of the National Trails System. Source: [Federal News Network](#)
- Bill Hafker, a Coalition member and 36-year employee of ExxonMobil, had [an op-ed](#) published in *ImpactAlpha*, calling for oil and gas companies to more thoroughly adopt emissions-reduction goals, back political candidates that support carbon fees and taxes, and focus expenditures on clean energy technology. Source: *ImpactAlpha*, Bill Hafker
- Diane Taliaferro has been selected as the new Forest Supervisor of the Shoshone National Forest. She has many years of experience working with the U.S. Forest Service, and also worked for the NPS in Alaska for a time. Source: [County 10](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Badlands National Park* - Public comment is open on a proposed emergency road repair at Cedar Pass. [Comments](#) are open until June 11. Source: [Badlands National Park](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is open on lighthouse repair and landscape improvements. [Comments](#) are open until June 22. Source: [Island Free Press](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is open on the construction of a multi-use path along Lighthouse Road. [Comments](#) are open until June 22. Source: [Island Free Press](#)
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - Public comment is open on an Environmental Assessment for the rehabilitation of the Paces Mill site. [Comments](#) are open until June 8. Source: [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)

- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - Public comment is open on a Development Concept Plan for White's Ferry, which is aimed at improving recreation in the area. [Comments](#) will be open until June 11. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Gateway National Recreation Area* - Public comment is open on a Stewardship Plan for the East and West Pond area of the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. [Comments](#) are open until June 7. Source: [Gateway National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - Public comment is open on an environmental assessment for the protection and management of winter habitat for bighorn sheep. [Comments](#) have been extended to remain open through June 20. Source: [Wyoming Public Radio](#), [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Public comment is open on proposed improvements to the Gatlinburg Spur. [Comments](#) are open until June 5. Source: [Smoky Mountain News](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - Public comment is open on a project to improve the water treatment system for Lost Creek Group Campground and Volcano Adventure Camp. [Comments](#) are open until June 19. Source: [Lassen Volcanic National Park](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - Public comment is open on a suicide deterrent strategy for the Double Arch Bridge over Highway 96. [Comments](#) are open until June 17. Source: *WMOT*
- *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* - Public comment is open on a Special Use Permit application for non-exclusive use of Slaven's Public Use Cabin for subsistence purposes from October 1-February 1 in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. Comments can be submitted by mail to the park until July 25. Source: [Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve](#)
- *Zion National Park* - Public comment is open on a redesign of the Zion Canyon South Entrance to improve visitor circulation and wayfinding, modernize facilities and infrastructure, improve visitor safety, protect resources, and address accessibility issues. [Comments](#) are open until June 17. Source: [St. George News](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement backed by funding* - The Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement Agreement, approved by Congress in 2020, is now being funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to ensure the Navajo Nation has adequate drinking infrastructure and the right to use 81,500 acre-feet of water per year from the San Juan River. Over \$200 million in federal funding will be provided, matched by \$8 million in Utah state funding. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *First-ever California offshore wind lease sale* - The Department of the Interior announced next steps and public comments for offshore wind lease sales in two regions of the Outer Continental Shelf offshore of California, the first-of-its-kind on the West Coast. One lease would be near Morro Bay, while two other leases would be in the Humboldt Wind Energy Area. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Draft guidance for abandoned mine grant program* - On May 23, the Department of the Interior released draft guidance and opened up public comment for the first \$725 million in funding available to reclaim abandoned mine lands under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

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

New Public Laws

May 12 – The president signed into law S. 270, to amend the Act entitled "Act to provide for the establishment of the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in the State of Kansas, and for other purposes" to provide for inclusion of additional related sites in the National Park System (Public Law 117–123).

Senate Actions

May 16 – The Senate passed S. 1596, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. The proceeds of the coin sales would go to the Friends of the World War II Memorial to help the National Park Service maintain the memorial.

May 19 – The Senate passed:

- H.R. 3525, to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture. The bill now goes to the president to be signed into law.
- S. 2490, to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas.

May 19 – The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for Fiscal Year 2023 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior.

May 25 – The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs ordered favorably reported the following bill, among others:

- S. 1116, to amend Chapter 81 of Title 5, United States Code, to create a presumption that a disability or death of a federal employee in fire protection activities caused by any of certain diseases is the result of the performance of such employees' duty.

May 26 – The Senate agreed to S. Res. 654, designating June 2022 as "Great Outdoors Month"

House Actions

May 18 – The Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the National Park Service. Testimony was heard from Jessica Bowron, Comptroller, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and Charles F. Sams III, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

May 24 – The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on H.R. 2794, the "Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention Act." The bill would withdraw over 234,000 acres of land within the Superior National Forest from mining and other activities that could impact the quality of air and water within the Rainy River Watershed, which also flows through Voyageurs National Park. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Baltimore-Washington Parkway

Road rage suspects sought

On May 20, a vehicle with two occupants was involved in a series of road rage incidents, including one where the passenger brandished a handgun. The U.S. Park Police is looking for any information the public may have about the suspects or incidents. Source: [U.S. Park Police](#)

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area

Theft of government property

On May 27, two individuals broke into the Blue Heron Train Depot, causing significant damage and stealing government property. Surveillance footage captured the individuals and their vehicle/trailer, and fingerprints were recovered from the scene of the crime. The NPS is asking the public for any information they might have about the incident. Source: [Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area](#)

Buffalo National River

Multiple incidents at same time

On May 18, several incidents took place at the same time. Visitors at Kyles Landing river access reported a person upriver having a seizure. While the patient was being assessed, seizures began again and NPS staff and Newton County Sherriff's Office coordinated a helicopter transport to a local hospital. While rangers responded to Kyles Landing, they came across another emergency on Highway 7, north of Jasper. A vehicle was on the side

of the road with its 44-year-old driver slumped over the wheel. A Newton County Deputy made contact and determined the driver had passed away from an apparent medical issue. Several hours later, a missing canoer was found deceased (see below). Source:

[KNWA](#)

Buffalo National River

Canoe accident leaves one deceased

On May 16, two canoers fell into the river near Clabber Creak Shoal, downriver from the Rush access. One of the paddlers was able to get to the canoe and place it upright. A search for the other paddler, a 56-year-old, was conducted for three days, and included personnel from the NPS, Buffalo Rangers, state and local law enforcement, multiple fire departments, Mennonite Disaster Service, and Christian Aid Ministries. On May 18, the victim was found deceased by two people fishing near the confluence with the White River. Source: [KY3](#), [Springfield News-Leader](#)

Denali National Park

Climber falls through ice bridge

On May 17, a 43-year-old climber fell through a weak ice bridge into a crevasse at the base of Mount Hunter's North Buttress. A teammate of the victim notified mountaineering rangers at the Kahiltna Basecamp, who skied to the site of the accident. One ranger rappelled into the crevasse as deep as possible and found that the ice bridge had filled the narrow crevasse with a large volume of snow and ice about 80 feet below the glacier surface, impeding the ranger from descending further. The climber is presumed dead due to the fall distance and the amount of snow and ice in the crevasse, and NPS staff will investigate whether or not a body recovery is possible. Source: [Fort Worth Star-Telegram](#), [Denali National Park](#)

Fort Donelson National Battlefield

Fledgling bald eagle falls from nest

On May 26, one of the park's two fledgling bald eagles died after an apparent fall from its nest. The fledgling was found on the ground, appearing "listless and exhausted." The individual was secured and transferred quickly to the care of an officer from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but it perished from its injuries shortly after leaving the park. Its remains, pending no finding of disease, may be used for continued benefit at the National Eagle Repository, which stores and distributes deceased golden and bald eagles to Native Americans and Alaska Natives for ceremonial and educational purposes. The eaglet was a product of the park's famous nesting pair, which has birthed and raised 33 eaglets in the park since 2004. Source: [Fort Donelson National Battlefield](#)

Great Sand Dunes National Park

Lightning causes fire in park

On May 18, a lightning strike in the park along Highway 150 ignited the Medano Fire. Fire crews were able to contain the fire at 306 acres. The park was closed for two days and is now open. Source: [KDVR](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Small fire contained, 2 suspects arrested

On May 26, two 18-year-old campers ignited dry brush, starting a fire they could not contain, near the intersection of Elk Trail and San Andreas Road in Yucca Valley. The Elk Fire burned about 263 acres, including part of the northwest corner of the park, before it was contained by fire crews. Deputies caught the two campers when they observed a car driving away from the scene as they arrived. The two individuals were arrested and are being held on bail. No structures were damaged in the fire. Source: [NBC Los Angeles](#), [KESQ](#)

Katmai National Park

Bear selfie visitors receive prison time

In 2018, three visitors left the designated brown bear viewing platform and entered a closed area in the Brooks River below Brooks Falls to take selfies. They were captured on the park's bear cam. The three pled guilty to entering a closed area. On May 16, each were each sentenced to 7- to 10-day jail terms and one year of probation, and a collective \$9,000 in fines, which will go to the Katmai Conservancy for use in the park. Source: [Gear Junkie](#), [The U.S. State Attorney's Office - District of Alaska](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Visitors getting stuck in mud

The NPS has issued a warning that the newly exposed shoreline is both difficult to navigate and has a high proportion of mud that may cause vehicles, vessels, or people to get stuck. Several pictures of people and vehicles stuck in the mud were shared on social media. Source: [Fox 5 Vegas](#)

Lincoln Memorial

Graduation celebration trashes monument

On May 20, a local university graduation celebration left litter, broken bottles, and spilled wine and champagne across the steps of the memorial, necessitating its closure for several hours to clean and secure safety. Source: [WJLA](#)

Rocky Mountain National Park

Avalanche kills 1, injures 2

On May 29, three climbers were caught in a rockfall and avalanche near the Dreamweaver Couloir on Mount Meeker. NPS staff responded, with support from the Colorado Search

and Rescue Association, Flight for Life, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, Front Range Rescue Dogs, MedEvac, and the Colorado National Guard. The rescue was hindered by "winter-like weather conditions." One climber was found deceased in the avalanche debris. One of the other climbers sustained "minor injuries," while the third was freed from the debris by a helicopter using a winch-operated cable and was flown to the Medical Center of the Rockies. Source: [ABC News](#)

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

Person pleas guilty to murder of partner

On May 20, 2020, a 30-year-old met up with their partner at the Buck Hollow Access area. The couple had an argument "about their children and their federal stimulus check," and the suspect fatally stabbed the other several times in the chest. On May 10, 2022, the suspect pleaded guilty to one count of murder in the second degree. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office - Western District of Missouri](#), [Sacramento Bee](#)

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

Person pleas guilty to lying and resisting arrest

On July 13, 2021, NPS law enforcement rangers were investigating and clearing an illegal campsite near the Pulltite section of the park, when they were approached by a 49-year-old who claimed ownership of some of the objects. The suspect gave a fictitious name, date of birth, and social security number, then quickly drove away. The suspect was pursued by NPS rangers and Dent County Sheriff's Office deputies for 30 miles before surrendering. The individual had an active warrant for arrest, and admitted to giving false identification because of the warrant. On May 16, the individual pled guilty to felony counts of making a materially false statement and resisting arrest, and received concurrent prison terms of 54 and 48 months, with two years intensive supervised release. Source: [Ozark National Scenic Riverways](#)

Pecos National Historical Park

Park closes due to nearby fire

On May 21, the park closed due to the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fires. The Hermits Peak Fire began on April 6 as a result of a prescribed fire on the Santa Fe National Forest. The Calf Canyon Fire was also a prescribed pile burn that had concluded in January, but remained dormant as a holdover fire ("zombie fire") under the surface through three winter snow events before reigniting on April 19. A significant wind event on April 22 caused significant spread and it merged with the Hermits Peak Fire. As of May 29, the park remained closed and the fire was 314,228 acres, 50% contained, with 3,001 personnel. Nearly 1,100 fire personnel are staying inside the park currently. Source: [Pecos National Historical Park](#), [Inciweb](#), [Accuweather](#), [Pecos National Historical Park Facebook](#)

Rocky Mountain National Park

Visitor dies after falling into waterfall

On May 19, a 21-year-old visiting Adams Falls fell into the waterfall and was found deceased. The victim's body was recovered that evening. The cause of the fall has not been reported, but the NPS reminded the public to stay back from water sources and be careful around slippery rocks. Source: [Miami Herald](#)

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Person arrested for stockpile of Molotov cocktails

On May 21, a visitor approached an NPS ranger, saying they had found eight Molotov cocktails in a wooded area next to a trail. The ranger located the devices and notified the Los Angeles Police Department and Fire Department arson investigators. Officers responded and recovered the incendiary devices and gasoline containers. Evidence at the scene led investigators to the arrest of a 34-year-old. Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

Sequoia National Park Visitor indicted on knife assault

On May 16, 2022, a 28-year-old entered a camper van and attempted to stab the occupant. The occupant was able to defend themselves and the suspect fled in a car that was stolen from a repair shop. When the NPS attempted to arrest the suspect, the suspect refused to comply, and a taser was deployed to take them into custody. The suspect has been charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, and failure to obey a lawful command. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office - Eastern District of California](#)

Virgin Islands National Park Federal prosecutors move to drop charges

On April 4, two individuals were charged with making materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements, interfering with agency functions, and violating public use regulations by failing to maintain a 12-foot distance from other vessels. During a preliminary hearing for one of the individuals on May 12, the ranger who filed the affidavit that led to the charges, contradicted themselves, and the federal prosecutor has moved to drop the charges. The other accused individual also intends to challenge the charges in a preliminary hearing with the same ranger. Source: [The Virgin Islands Daily News](#)

Voyageurs National Park Flooding closes trails and campsites

On May 23, due to historic high-water levels in the Rainy Lake Watershed, the park has closed backcountry trails, campsites, day-use sites, and boat rentals through June 1. Boat tours are also closed through June 12. Source: [MinnPost](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Wounded grizzly bear euthanized

Around May 21, a 3-year-old grizzly bear was attacked and wounded by its mother and the mother's mate. The younger bear was not killed, but was "suffering in an awful way," so NPS staff put the young bear down. It is believed that the mother was trying to frighten the bear away from the area, but when the male bear entered the altercation, the attack intensified. It is mating season and food sources are also scarce this time of year. Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Bandelier National Monument, Valles Caldera National Preserve*, - On May 27, parts of Bandelier reopened after almost of a month of closures due to the Cerro Pelado Fire. The Pueblo Loop Trail, Falls Trail to Upper Falls, Frey Trail, Tyunyi Overlook Trail, and Tsankawi Trail are now open. All other areas remain closed. Valles Caldera remains closed. As of May 2, the Cerro Pelado Fire was 45,605 acres, 95% contained, with 388 personnel. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#), [Inciweb](#)
- *Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Carlsbad Caverns National Park* - Further fire restrictions at Guadalupe Mountains were enacted on May 23, including the closure of all trails in the Wilderness, the McKittrick Canyon Road and Visitor Center, the Dog Canyon developed area (including the campground), and the Frijole Ranch Road, Campground, and Museum. The Salt Basin Dunes trail and Pine Springs area remain open. At Carlsbad Caverns, further fire restrictions were enacted on May 25, including the closure of the Wilderness Area and all backcountry areas to day use, closure of Yucca Canyon and Slaughter Canyon access roads, and prohibition of open flames and cooking stoves throughout the park. The main park road and visitor center, Chihauhuan Desert Nature Trail, Walnut Canyon Overlook Trail, and Rattlesnake Springs remain open. All previous closures in both parks also remain in effect. Source: [Carlsbad Caverns](#), [CBS4 Local](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park* - A 61-year-old who went missing after reportedly going for a jog in the Pipiwai trails area on May 1 remains missing. A severe storm hit that morning, with several "serious and dangerous flash flood events." The individual was spotted on the park's security cameras the day they went missing. Family members and volunteers continue to search for the individual. Source: [Maui News](#), [KHON2](#)

Acknowledgments

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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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