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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Coalition Actions

The Coalition submitted comments on the Caneel Bay Redevelopment and Management Plan Newsletter at Virgin Islands National Park (VIIS):

<https://protectnps.org/2022/03/07/40682/>

Coalition member and former Superintendent Bruce Noble submitted an op-ed to *The Daily Sentinel* on the reality of locality for federal workers in Colorado, a challenge for numerous federal employees who go without locality pay in pricey national park areas across the country, like Grand Teton, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Parks:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/03/08/member-op-ed-the-reality-of-locality-for-federal-workers-in-colorado/>

The Coalition submitted comments on the Revised Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Wears Valley Mountain Bike Trail System within Section 8D of the Foothills Parkway portion of Great Smoky Mountains National Park:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/03/09/coalition-comments-wears-valley-mountain-bike-trail-revised-environmental-assessment/>

The Coalition sent a letter to Edward Keable, superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park, expressing our concern over the lack of a public comment opportunity prior to the park's decision to increase the cost of overnight backcountry permits. The park already has multiple user fees and some of the highest fee rates within the system:

<https://protectnps.org/2022/03/11/coalition-sends-letter-regarding-grca-backcountry-permit-fees/>

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.

- *New National Park Service site* - On March 18, President Joe Biden signed the Amache National Historic Site Act, officially designating it as a site of the National Park System. Source: [KRDO](#)
- *Director Sams looking to boost Indigenous input in public lands* - In a congressional committee hearing, NPS Director Chuck Sams said that he is committed to boosting the role Native people play in managing public lands, including incorporating traditional knowledge into management, signing more cooperative agreements with Tribes, and increased consultation. Source: [Cherokee Phoenix](#)
- *Historic Year for Federal HTC* - The NPS released a report that found that federal tax incentives for rehabilitating historic buildings was the highest ever reported, \$7.16 billion in rehabilitation expenses. Source: [Novogradac](#)
- *Poll finds Americans believe climate change is hurting national parks* - A poll conducted for the National Parks Conservation Association found that 88% of those surveyed believe climate change is negatively impacting national parks. 43% said they are very likely to support efforts to reduce climate change, while 83%, regardless of political affiliation, would be more likely to support a congressional representative that supports a bill that would reduce the impacts of climate change on national parks. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *NHAs struggling to meet goals* - *Living Landscape Observer* published [an article](#) about the failure of the National Park Service to live up to the goals laid out in the 2006 document, "Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas," even though NHAs have doubled since that time. The program struggles to have enough federal funding or a standardized designation and evaluation process that would alleviate community concerns and streamline expectations and objectives. Source: *Living Landscape Observer*
- *New Netflix series about national parks around the world hosted by President Obama* - On April 13, a 5-part series called "Our Great National Parks," will premiere on *Netflix*. It is being produced in conjunction with Freeborne Media and High Ground Production, which is former President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama's production company. President Obama narrates and hosts the show. Source: [Travel + Leisure](#)
- *"Is National Park Status Always a Good Thing?"* - *Conde Nast Traveler* published [an article](#) this week that questions whether changing a park's status/name to "National

Park" is beneficial or harmful to the park and local communities. Source: *Conde Nast Traveler*

Around the Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order.

- *Appomattox Court House National Historical Park* - The NPS, in collaboration with New South Associates, Inc., are seeking descendants or people with knowledge of individuals interred in the Robinson Cemetery and the Raine Cemetery, including an area marked "slave plot" on historic maps. Source: [Appomattox Court House National Historical Park](#)
- *Bandelier National Monument* - The park will be working on constructing a new parking lot at the Tsankawi Unit and the mesa top parking lot near the main entrance from June through mid-December. It will happen concurrently with nearby highway improvements by the State of New Mexico. The Tsankawi Unit will be closed while the project is underway. Construction and partial closures are also scheduled for amphitheater parking across from Juniper Campground and adjacent to the Frey Trailhead this summer. Source: [Bandelier National Monument](#)
- *Big Cypress National Preserve* - Burnett Oil Co. has announced that it has withdrawn its oil drilling permit requests in the park until further notice. This comes on the heels of a decision by the NPS that a more thorough environmental impact statement will be needed before their permit applications would be approved or denied. The company has stated they will withdraw applications until the project is further along in the design process to adequately assess permitting criteria. Source: [Florida Political Review](#)
- *Boston National Historical Park* - The park is receiving more than \$25 million from the Great American Outdoors Act to restore the 1902 Dorchester Heights Monument tower and the Thomas Park area. The rehabilitation is expected to take 18 months and will include improvements to masonry, roofing, HVAC, plumbing, electrical systems, and signage. It is unclear when construction will begin. Source: [Boston National Historical Park](#)
- *Cane River Creole National Historical Park* - The NPS' National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom accepted Magnolia and Oakland Plantations as two new sites in the program. Source: [Cane River Creole National Historical Park](#)
- *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail* - The Corps Network has named Kalen Anderson as one of four Corps Members of the Year for service corps programs across the country. Kalen served as an AmeriCorps member with the Werowocomoco Ancestral Lands program at the Chesapeake Trail. Source: [Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail](#)
- *Chaco Culture National Historical Park* - Tracy Bodnar, Board President of the

Chaco Culture Conservancy and a former NPS employee, wrote [an op-ed](#) in the *Albuquerque Journal* in support of President Joe Biden's 20-year moratorium on oil and gas leasing in the 10-mile buffer around the park, and arguing for permanent protection for the area. Comments on the buffer zone are open until April 6. Source: *Albuquerque Journal*

- *DC Area Parks* - U.S. Representative Jody Hice (R-GA), ranking member of the House Oversight and Reform Committee's Government Operations panel, sent a letter to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland on March 15, expressing concerns about the state of operations, following the management advisory report issued by the Inspector General office last month (reported in the Coalition Report, 3/9/22). Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *Denali National Park* - The NPS finalized approval on a plan to make improvements to the Pretty Rocks Bridge and Polychrome Road. They will begin construction in Summer 2022, and the whole project is expected to take two years. The first phase has received \$25 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Alaska Native News](#)
- *Everglades National Park* - Two new studies by the U.S. Geological Survey (and supported by NPS staff) showed that invasive tegu lizards from South America are negatively impacting native ground-nesting animals in the Greater Everglades ecosystem. The lizards have adapted to hibernate in the cooler northern climates. Source: [U.S. Geological Survey](#)
- *Fort Vancouver National Historic Site* - The park has received \$15.2 million in Great American Outdoors Act funding to renovate Building 993 in the east Vancouver Barracks. The project will focus on sustainability, energy efficiency, and accessibility. The project is expected to be complete in Spring 2023. Source: [Stars and Stripes](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On March 21, the Devil's Den closed for rehabilitation work to address erosion and safety issues. It will be closed for five to six months. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve* - A new study by NPS biologists shows that the 2016 Northeast Pacific marine heatwave had heavy effects on the humpback whale populations of Southeast Alaska waters, which has had lingering effects on the greater marine food web. Source: [Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - After two public reviews, the park has decided to increase parking fees at two lots in the Presidio, Battery East and West Bluff, starting on April 1. This is unrelated to a separate review that included consideration of changing fees at eight coastal parking areas, which will not go forward as proposed. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The park will repave roads and parking areas within Mather Campground from early June through October. They will work one loop at a time so that some campsites remain open for reservation and first-come, first-served availability. The \$3.9 million project is being funded by Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and Cyclic Maintenance funding. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park* - Interior Secretary Deb Haaland visited the park and discussed the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman, as well as the DOI's efforts to center equity and justice in its work. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Jewel Cave National Park* - Black Hills Parks and Forests Association celebrated the completion of a 2-year, \$2 million elevator modernization project to improve visitor safety in the park. Source: Public Lands Alliance newsletter
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - *Travel + Leisure* ran [a profile piece](#) on Minvera Hamilton Hoyt, a conservationist who was influential in getting the park established in 1936. Source: *Travel + Leisure*
- *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve* - In September 2021, NPS staff found a 54-inch hunting bow preserved in a lake in the park. It was sent to an NPS research facility in Anchorage for analysis and was recently radiocarbon dated between 1506 and 1660. Despite being found in the traditional Dena'ina homeland, the bow is dissimilar to traditional Dena'ina bows, and more similar to Yup'ik style bows. Source: [Newsweek](#)
- *Mesa Verde National Park, Yucca House National Monument* - *USA Today* ran [a profile piece](#) on Kayci Cook Collins and her journey to becoming a superintendent after watching several generations of men in her family work in parks. Source: *USA Today*
- *Minidoka National Historic Site* - *KIVI* ran [a short profile](#) about Emily Teraoka, the Director of Interpretation and Education and Lead Park Ranger for the park. Source: *KIVI*
- *Mount Rushmore National Memorial* - In a letter to the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the NPS denied Governor Kristi Noem's permit application for a 2022 Mount Rushmore fireworks celebration on July 4. The fireworks celebration was rejected in 2021 and is still under litigation in federal court. Source: [South Dakota State News](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) visited the park on March 19. They spoke about

investments in the park and efforts to mitigate the dangers of abandoned mines in the region. Source: [WVVA](#)

- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - Members of the California Coastal Commission are considering reversal to their approval of the park's 2021 General Management Plan after the park asked to delay submitting reports to the commission about addressing water pollution and climate impacts caused by cattle ranching. The park has asked for the delay because the matters are now the subject of federal court litigation. Source: [The Mercury News](#)
- *Redwood National Park* - The NPS, in conjunction with its partner, Redwood State Park, is conducting a pilot permit program for the Gold Bluffs Beach day-use area from May 1 to September 30. Source: [Redwood National Park](#)
- *Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site* - The park is starting preservation and restoration work on the charging bridge and blast furnace to improve safety and the condition of those features. Work will continue through mid-summer. Source: [Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site](#)
- *Springfield Armory National Historic Site* - The Main Arsenal building has had its exterior repointed and cleaned. The project cost \$650,000 and was contracted to Contracting Specialists, Inc. Further preservation projects this year will include interior painting and a second phase of restoring the historic tower clocks. Source: [Springfield Armory National Historic Site](#)
- *Statue of Liberty National Monument* - Ferry service from Liberty State Park to Liberty and Ellis Islands resumed on March 12 for the first time since January 3. It had been shut down due to budgetary considerations around keeping the site clear of snow and ice. As the weather warms, the service is available again. Source: [Jersey City Times](#)
- *Thomas Edison National Historical Park* - On March 12, the park went cash-free. Visitors may pay by credit or debit card in-person or ahead of time on [recreation.gov](#). Source: [Thomas Edison National Historical Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On February 19, an angler caught a smallmouth bass in the Gardner River just outside the park. It is an invasive species and biologists in the park are concerned about the ramifications of a population of smallmouth bass on park ecosystems. Scientists believe that low water and warmer temperatures have allowed them to get closer to the park than in previous years, and it is possible that someone may be planting the fish. The park has asked anglers to kill and report any smallmouth bass caught in the park when fishing season opens Memorial Day weekend. Source: [Post Register](#), [Yellowstone National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* ran [an article](#) outlining the

history of schooling in the park. Source: *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*

- *Yosemite National Park* - The *Peninsula Clarion* published [a first-hand account](#) of a participant in the Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program, which takes entry-level firefighters to "journey level" (qualified Firefighter Type 1). Source: *Peninsula Clarion*
- *Zion National Park* - *PBS Utah*, in collaboration with Zion Forever, published [an hour-long film special](#) about the history, art, and culture of the park. Source: National Park Foundation Community Partnerships newsletter

Personnel Changes

- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* - Mark Dowdle was selected as the new superintendent. Mark has 22 years of NPS experience, most recently as deputy superintendent of the Outer Banks Group of national park sites in eastern North Carolina. He starts his new role on April 10. Source: [National Park Service Region 11](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- Randall "Rand" Paul Bauman, 72, passed away on March 10. He worked in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for many years, including on historic restoration projects. Source: [Legacy/The Record-Journal](#)
- Russell "Russ" Warn Bill, 80, passed away on March 15. He volunteered for the Trails and Rails program through the NPS. Source: [Legacy/The Telegraph](#)
- Jerry Lee Gummow, 85, passed away on March 15. Jerry worked on roads and as a firefighter in Yellowstone National Park. Source: [Weekly Mailer](#)
- William "Bill" R. Orlando, 68, passed away on February 26. Bill worked for the NPS for over 20 years, including as an interpreter, a law enforcement officer, and a Civil War reenactor at Antietam National Battlefield and Chesapeake and Ohio National Historical Park. He retired in 2003. Source: Rick Erisman, [The Journal](#)
- Mary Catherine Shipman, 76, passed away on March 2. She spent many years working federal jobs, including with the National Park Service, Internal Revenue Service, and Supreme Court. Source: [Legacy/Roanoke Times](#)
- Eric Trapp, 44, passed away on March 11. He worked briefly for Isle Royale National Park. Source: [The Daily Mining Gazette](#)

- Jean Van Tatenhove, 64, passed away on February 11. She spent 31 years working for the NPS, including at Channel Islands National Park and Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway. She was a recipient of the Freeman Tilden Award. Source: [The Mining Journal](#)

In the News

- Jason Wilmot, who worked for a decade at Glacier National Park on trail crews and wildlife surveys and projects and a summer as a backcountry ranger in Katmai National Park, has been selected as the new Blackrock District Ranger for the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Source: [Buckrail](#)
- A new book, *Requiem for America's Best Idea: National Parks in the Era of Climate Change*, has been posthumously published. Michael Yochim, the author, worked for the NPS for several decades, including in Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Sequoia, and Grand Canyon. The book includes his reflections on how climate change is affecting parks, as well as his battle with ALS, which he succumbed to on February 29, 2020. His friend William R. Lowry edited his work and has brought the book to publication, in accordance with Yochim's wishes. Source: [St. Louis Public Radio](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *National Park Service* - Public comment is now open on proposed regulations that would modernize and streamline concessions contracting under the new Visitor Experience Improvements Authority given to the NPS by Congress. [Comments](#) are open until March 28. Source: [NPS Office of Communications](#)
- *Appalachian National Scenic Trail* - Civic engagement is now open on a Visitor Use Management Plan for Virginia's Triple Crown. There is [a story map](#) describing the project in-depth. [Comments](#) are open until March 31. Source: [WSLS](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is now open on the replacement or rehabilitation of the Ocracoke Light Station due to the damage from recent storms and the threat of future storm damage. [Comments](#) are open until April 13. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - Public comment is now open on a fire management plan. [Comments](#) are open until April 17. Source: [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park* - Public comment is now open on a General Management Plan Amendment. [Comments](#) are open until March 30. Source: [Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park](#)
- *Fort Monroe National Monument* - Public comment is open on a Rapid Visitor Use

Assessment for Area 4 of North Beach, also known as Dog Beach. The area is currently under the control of the U.S. Army, and would include areas needing site remediation before it could be added to the park. The assessment will inform the level of cleanup needed to prepare the site. [Comments](#) are open until March 31. Source: [Fort Monroe National Monument](#)

- *Great Basin National Park* - Public comment is now open on upgrades to the Lower Lehman Campground, including adding new sites, reconstructing the potable water line, and updating infrastructure. [Comments](#) are open until April 13. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park* - Public comment is now open on potential alternatives to be considered for an air tour management plan by the NPS and Federal Aviation Administration. [Comments](#) are open until April 1. Source: [Haleakalā National Park](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - Public comment is now open on potential alternatives to be considered for an air tour management plan by the NPS and Federal Aviation Administration. [Comments](#) are open until April 1. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is now open on the Alagnak Wild River Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan. A [storymap](#) on the project is available. [Comments](#) are open until April 19. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is now open on options to repair or replace Fryingpan Creek Bridge. [Comments](#) are open until April 9. Source: [Yahoo! News](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - Public comment is now open on a proposal to relocate backcountry camps along the Brush Creek Trail and construct additional campsites for Pacific Crest Trail hikers. [Comments](#) are open until April 6. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve* - Public comment is now open on an update to the park's fire management plan. [Comments](#) are open until April 15. Source: [Mail Tribune](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment is now open on infrastructure repairs and upgrades to Moraine Park Campground, Beaver Meadows Entrance facilities, and park housing units on High Drive. [Comments](#) are open until April 8. Source: [Estes Park News](#)
- *Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway* - Public comment is now open on a land exchange of federally owned lands for privately owned lands to resolve

encroachment and ingress/egress issues. Comments are open until April 30 and can be submitted by mail to park headquarters. Source: [Burnett County Sentinel](#)

- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Public comment is now open on a plan to plant giant sequoia seedlings in areas that burned severely during the 2020 Castle Fire. [Comments](#) are open until March 25. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - Public comment is now open a livestock management plan for the park. [Comments](#) are open until April 15. Source: [Sidney Herald](#)
- *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* - Public comment is now open on a Special Use Permit application for non-exclusive use of Slaven's Roadhouse from October 1, 2022 through February 1, 2023. Comments must be submitted by mail by May 5. Source: [NPS Region 11](#)
- *Emancipation National Historical Trail (proposed NPS site)* - Public comment and outreach questions are now open on a feasibility study for the trail, which would follow the 51-mile route from Galveston to Houston, commemorating Juneteenth, when the last of the slaves in the United States were emancipated. [Comments](#) are open until March 31. Source: [E&E News](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Court rules that climate change can be considered in policy decisions* - On March 16, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit overruled a local Louisiana judge who tried to ban the federal government from considering climate change when making policy decisions about oil and gas drilling leases in federal waters. Source: [New American Journal](#)
- *White House working on interagency effort to protect Indigenous sites* - The White House Council on Native American Affairs convened an engagement session with Tribal and Native Hawaiian Organization leaders to implement a 2021 MOU among eight federal agencies to ensure stewardship of Indigenous sites. The group came up with goals to establish an interagency working group, integrate consideration of sacred sites early in decision making, regulatory, and consultation processes, and to enhance public outreach on maintaining the integrity of sacred sites. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *DOI seeks members for wildland commission* - The Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Homeland Security through the Federal Emergency Management Agency are accepting applications for members to the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *New USFWS Director sworn in* - On March 8, Martha Williams was sworn in as

Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. She has been serving as Principal Deputy Director with the delegable authority of the Director since January 2021. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Secretary Haaland highlights equity and inclusion at SXSW* - On March 16, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland presented at South by Southwest about the Department of the Interior's efforts at increasing equity and inclusion. 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

March 11 – President Joe Biden signed into law H.J. Res. 75, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022 (Public Law 117–95). This law extends funding for all federal agencies through March 15, 2022.

March 15 – The president signed into law H.R. 2471, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for providing emergency assistance for the situation in Ukraine (Public Law 117–103). This law provides funding for all federal agencies for the remainder of the current FY22, including the National Park Service. (See below under House Actions on H.R. 2471 for further information about provisions affecting the NPS.)

Senate Actions

March 8 – The Senate passed S. 66, to require the Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia to develop a plan for reducing, mitigating, and controlling harmful algal blooms and hypoxia in South Florida.

March 8 – The *Committee on Energy and Natural Resources* ordered favorably reported, among others, the nomination of Sara C. Bronin, of Connecticut, to be Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

March 10 – The Senate passed H.J. Res. 75, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022. This bill extends funding for all federal agencies through March 15, 2022. The bill then went to the president to be signed into law.

March 10 – The Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House of Representatives to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 2471 by a vote of 68 yeas to 31 nays. (See below under House Actions on H.R. 2471 for further information about provisions affecting the NPS.)

House Actions

March 8 – The House agreed to pass H. Con. Res. 70, amended, condemning threats of violence against historically Black colleges and universities ("HBCUs") and reaffirming support for HBCUs and their students, by a vote of 418 yeas with none voting "nay".

March 8 – The *Committee on Natural Resources* held a hearing entitled "Examining the History of Federal Lands and the Development of Tribal Co-Management." Testimony was heard from Charles Sams III, Director, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

March 8 – The *Committee on Science, Space, and Technology* held a hearing entitled "Federal Climate Adaptation and Resilience for the 21st Century." Testimony was heard from Richard Spinrad, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce; Ingrid Kolb, Director, Office of Management, and Chief Sustainability Officer, Department of Energy; Joel Carney, Assistant Administrator, Office of Strategic Infrastructure, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and Alfredo Gomez, Director, Natural Resources and Environment, Government Accountability Office.

March 9 – The House passed H.R. 2471, to measure the progress of post-disaster recovery and efforts to address corruption, governance, rule of law, and media freedoms in Haiti, with an amendment to the Senate amendment. This bill was used as the vehicle by which the House and Senate passed funding for all federal agencies for the remainder of the current FY22, including the National Park Service. There were several votes on passage of individual divisions of this bill, but the vote on Division G, which included funding for the National Park Service, was passed by 260 yeas to 171 nays, with one voting present. The bill now returns to the Senate for a vote on the House amendments.

As passed by the House, the bill has the following funding levels for the National Park Service:

A total of \$3.265 billion in discretionary appropriations for the NPS in FY22, an increase of \$142.3 million from FY21, but \$232.2 million less than the president's budget request of \$3.497 billion.

The bill allocates funding as follows:

- Operation of the National Park System - \$2.767 billion, which is an increase of \$78.7 million above FY21, but \$210.3 less than the president's budget request. The bill includes the \$60 million request to fund fixed costs. Unfortunately, several increases for natural resource protection programs were not funded.
- National Recreation and Preservation - \$83.9 million, an increase of \$9.73 million above FY21, but \$9.3 million below the president's budget request. Included in this amount is \$27.1 million for National Heritage Areas.

- Historic Preservation Fund - \$173 million, which is an increase of \$28.8 million above the FY21 level, and \$21.2 million above the president's budget request. Included in this amount is \$10 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities; \$21.7 million for African American Civil Rights Grants; \$26.5 million for Save America's Treasures Grants; \$10 million for Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants to underserved communities; \$10 million for grants related to the 250th anniversary of the country's founding; and \$15.2 million in congressionally directed spending for projects on the National Register of Historic Places or a National Historic Landmark related to African American civil rights.
- Construction - \$225.9 million, which is an increase of \$2 million above the FY21 level, and \$52.6 million less than the president's budget request.
- Centennial Challenge - \$15 million, which is the same as FY21 and the same as the president's budget request.

In addition to the funding shown above, the bill includes these additional authorizations:

- Sec. 116 authorizes the conveyance of land and infrastructure for the purposes of the Long Bridge project between Virginia and the District of Columbia.
- Sec. 118 extends the authority for one year of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to charge fees for commercial vehicles to use Route 209.
- Sec. 119 extends the authorization of appropriations, or raises the ceiling on these authorizations for several National Heritage Areas whose authority expired at the end of FY21.
- Sec. 120 authorizes a study of the 1965 Voting Rights March as a possible addition to the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, as well as possibly making this trail a unit of the National Park System.
- Sec. 421 provides an extension through October 1, 2023, of the authority to collect fees under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.
- Sec. 428 provides certain limitations on oil and gas development near Chaco Culture National Historical Park.

The conference report directs the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to annually make available on the agencies' websites, a list of the projects and activities funded with receipts from the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Along with the discretionary appropriations noted above, the NPS will receive \$1.25 billion in mandatory appropriations in FY22 from the Legacy Restoration Fund of the Great American Outdoors Act to help address the NPS deferred maintenance backlog.

The bill also provides \$447.3 million in mandatory appropriations from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for federal land acquisition, state assistance, and various grant programs. The bill divides the funding as follows:

- State Conservation Grants - \$208 million
- LWCF Outdoor Recreation Legacy Grants - \$110 million
- State Conservation Grants Administration - \$12 million

- American Battlefield Protection Program - \$20 million
- Acquisition Management - \$14.5 million
- Recreational Access - \$14.5 million
- Emergencies, Hardships, Relocations, and Deficiencies - \$2.5 million
- Inholding, Donations, and Exchanges - \$7 million
- Federal Land Acquisitions - \$58.8 million

March 9 – The House passed H.J. Res. 75, making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, by voice vote. This bill would extend funding for all federal agencies through March 15, 2022 to give the Senate time to pass, and the president to sign H.R. 2471, above, since the previous continuing resolution expires on March 11, 2022.

March 15 – The House passed the following:

- H.R. 268, to provide for the boundary of the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park to be adjusted, to authorize the donation of land to the United States for addition to that historical park.
- H.R. 1908, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Ka'ena Point National Heritage Area in the state of Hawaii.
- 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.
- H.R. 2899, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating areas within the island of Guam as a National Heritage Area.
- H.R. 3113, to require the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works to digitize and make publicly available geographic information system mapping data relating to public access to federal land and waters for outdoor recreation, by a vote of 414 yeas to 9 nays.

March 16 – The House passed the following:

- H.R. 3197, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the City of Eunice, Louisiana, certain federal land in Louisiana, by a vote of 422 yeas to 4 nays. The bill removes some parcels of land from the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.
- H.R. 4380, to designate the El Paso Community Healing Garden National Memorial, by a vote of 403 yeas to 25 nays. The bill states the memorial will not be a unit of the National Park System, nor require or authorize federal funds to be expended for the memorial.
- 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, by a vote of 406 yeas to 16 nays.

March 16 – The *Committee on Education and Labor* held a markup on the following, among other bills, and the bills were ordered reported as amended:

- H.R. 2499, the "Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2021." The bill provides federal workers compensation to firefighters who contract certain illness as a result of their service.
- H.R. 6087, the "Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act." The bill would cover, for purposes of workers' compensation, services by physician assistants and nurse practitioners provided to injured federal workers.

March 16 – The *Committee on Oversight and Reform: Subcommittee on Environment* held a hearing entitled "Fighting Fire with Fire: Evaluating the Role of Forest Management in Reducing Catastrophic Wildfires." Testimony was heard from Randy Moore, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; and public witnesses.

March 17 – The *Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife* held a hearing on several bills, including:

- H.R. 6491, the "Salmon Focused Investments in Sustainable Habitats Act." The bill includes the National Park Service among federal agencies that are required to identify salmon conservation areas and salmon strongholds.
- H.R. 6987, to establish programs to reduce the impacts of vessel traffic and underwater noise on marine mammals, and for other purposes.

Testimony was heard from Representative Larsen of Washington; Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Deputy Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce; and public witnesses.

March 17 – The *Committee on Oversight and Reform* held a hearing entitled "HBCUs at Risk: Examining Federal Support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities." Testimony was heard from Michelle Asha Cooper, Acting Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Department of Education; Sean Haglund, Associate Director, Office for Bombing Prevention, Department of Homeland Security; Ryan T. Young, Executive Assistant Director, Intelligence Branch, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice; and public witnesses.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Blue Ridge Parkway

Rock slide across highway

On March 9, a rock slide resulted in a blockage of both lanes between Mount Mitchell and Craggy Gardens Visitor Center. The debris took several days to clean up and 16 miles of

highway were closed during that time. Source: [Charlotte Observer](#)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Vandalism in restrooms

Since August 25, 2021, the park has documented six separate acts of destructive vandalism at the restrooms adjacent to the Ocracoke Discovery Center. They have also found drug paraphernalia inside the restrooms. There was some concern that the first acts in Summer 2021 were related to the "Devous Licks" TikTok challenge in which students film themselves stealing or vandalizing items in public. The NPS is asking the public for any information they may have regarding the incidents. Source: [Ocracoke Observer](#)

Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Private burn turns into wildfire

On March 19, a controlled brush pile burn on private land escaped containment and quickly spread into the park. As of March 21, the Veterans Lake Fire was estimated at 3200 acres with 40% containment, with response from nine local agencies. Local areas have been evacuated and closures are in effect for much of the park. Source: [Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Erosion causes road closure

On March 17, the NPS closed a 4.9-mile section of Route 209/Federal Road, between Raymondskill Road and Route 739, due to increased erosion between the road and the Delaware River. The road will remain closed until more assessments can be made and safety measures can be put in place. Source: [Lehigh Valley Live](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Sick hiker rescued by helicopter

On March 16, a National Guard helicopter responded to reports of a sick hiker who could no longer stand. The hiker was air lifted from Double Spring Gap Shelter to the University of Tennessee Medical Center. Source: [WBIR](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Visitor missing

On March 14, a 64-year-old parked at the Bypass Bridge parking area near Hoover Dam to take photographs. The visitor did not return to the vehicle and is not carrying a phone or identification. The NPS is seeking information from the public to help locate the missing person. Source: [National Park Service Investigative Services](#)

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

Vandalism to historic structures

Between March 12 and March 17, suspects broke into the San Juan Church and Concepcion Convento and caused considerable damage, including carving names and dates into the entry door of one of them. They also attempted to break into the Cocepcion Church, as well, but they were unsuccessful. The NPS is asking for any information the public may have regarding the incident. Source: [News 4 San Antonio](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - On March 1, a 39-year-old was indicted by a federal grand jury in connection with the December 2021 arson incident at Round Spring Visitor Contact Station. The building was a total loss and a 2011 Chevrolet Silverado belonging to the NPS was stolen. Source: [Fox 2 Now](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - Giant Forest has now fully reopened for the first time since the KNP Complex Fire swept through the area in September 2021. It had previously been open on a limited basis since December. The Generals Highway between the two parks also reopened for the first time since the fire. Source: [Fox 40](#), [Los Angeles Times](#)

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- Editor: Katie Wallace
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- Issue Contributors: Bill Walters, Sandy Rabinowitch, Rick Erisman, Cheryl Schreier

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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