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The Coalition Report

Wednesday, July 24, 2024

Coalition Actions

The Coalition joined with several other organizations in [a letter](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency applauding its partial disapproval of Arizona's Regional Haze State Implementation Plan for the second implementation period. The letter also urges further improvements before it finalizes its proposal.

We joined with 82 other groups in [a letter](#) to the House of Representatives, urging them to oppose H.R. 8998, the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025 due to anti-environmental policies.

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.

- *2024 Director's Management and Administration Awards* - The NPS recently announced its annual excellence awards for management and administration, including customer service, innovation, efficiency, and information technology service. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *UNESCO nomination for civil rights sites* - On July 16, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland announced the authorization of the NPS to prepare a "potential nomination" for 11 U.S. civil rights movement sites in six states and Washington,

DC, to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Nine of the eleven sites are managed by the NPS (and the NPS generally handles UNESCO nominations for the U.S.). Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *AI-assisted wildland firefighting* - *The Idaho Capital Sun* published [an article](#) about efforts to utilize Artificial Intelligence to monitor landscapes for wildfires. CalFire, with support from Pacific Gas and Electric, has been piloting AI-assisted systems that report emerging fires before 911 calls come in 30% of the time. Source: *Idaho Capital Sun*
- *Satellite-assisted wildland firefighting* - On July 23, the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture signed an agreement with the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration to use its Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite - R series data to quickly detect and report wildfire starts. The project was supported by \$20 million in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Dragonfly mercury study* - On July 16, new research was published in *Environmental Science and Technology Journal* showing how mercury moves through the environment by measuring levels in dragonfly larvae. In addition to breaking ground on a more effective way to measure mercury than prior methods, the study found that desert environments have higher mercury levels than previously thought. The ongoing study is being conducted nationwide, in collaboration between the U.S. Geological Survey and National Park Service. Source: [U.S. Geological Survey](#)
- *Project 2025's plan for DOI* - *High Country News* published [an article](#) about the 920-page policy plan called "Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise," written by Project 2025, a coalition of over 50 right-wing organizations. The article focuses on actions related to the environment, including changes to energy policy, a weakening of the National Environmental Policy Act, reducing national monuments, seeking repeal of the Antiquities Act, weakening endangered species policies, removing protections for wetlands, and reducing the size and scope of the Environmental Protection Agency. Source: *High Country News*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Acadia National Park* - The Friends of Acadia announced a \$10 million campaign for seasonal park staff housing at Harden Farm in Bar Harbor and Dane Farm in Seal Harbor (Maine). It is expected to provide housing for about 60 employees. The "Raise the Roof" campaign has already raised \$7.5 million, and once they reach the \$10 million goal, they will "unlock" an additional \$10 million, including \$5 million in Centennial Challenge Funds. Source: [Mount Desert Islander](#)

- *American Battlefield Protection Program (an NPS-administered program)* - On July 10, the NPS awarded \$1.2 million in Preservation Planning Grants for eight projects in six states. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Arches National Park* - On June 21, the park was named a Leave No Trace Gold Standard Site, honoring its efforts at training staff and community partners, implementing Leave No Trace ethics into programming and management, and including LNT messaging in its materials and signage. Source: [Arches National Park](#)
- *Blackwell School National Historic Site* - On July 17, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland formally established the park, which was authorized by the Blackwell School National Historic Site Act, signed by President Joe Biden in October 2022. Source:
- *Buffalo National River* - The park will soon begin a project to stabilize the Beaver Jim Villines Boyhood Home in Ponca. A tree fell on the home in 2022 and compromised the integrity of the structure. The damaged roof and adjoining lean-to sections of the building will be removed, while the log portion of the building and chimney will remain. The Historic Preservation Center is sending a team to assess and rehabilitate the structure this fall and winter. Source: [Buffalo National River](#)
- *Capitol Hill Parks* - On July 13, the NPS, National Council of Negro Women, and local public officials commemorated the 50th anniversary of the statue of Mary McLeod Bethune at Lincoln Park, honoring her life and legacy. Source: [The Washington Informer](#)
- *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* - On July 16, the *Journal of Geophysical Research - Atmospheres* published research by Colorado State University that shows that high ozone concentrations at the park that frequently exceed Environmental Protection Agency health standards are likely caused by oil and natural gas development in the Permian Basin and surrounding region. Oil and gas development activity in the region has increased five-fold over the last decade. Source: [Phys.org](#)
- *Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park* - *The Winchester Star* published [an article](#) about Superintendent Jim Northup and Site Manager Amy Bracewell, who are both a year into their roles at the park. The article discusses their efforts at improving park systems and visitor interface. Source: *The Winchester Star*
- *Channel Islands National Park* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about the Channel Islands fox, which experienced the fastest endangered species mammal recovery in history due to the systematic killing of over 5,000 feral pigs, starting in 2004. Source: *SFGate*
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - On July 13, the park

announced that it soon will begin dredging Fletchers Cove to improve access and restore boating and fishing on the Potomac River. The project is being funded by park visitor rec fees. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)

- *Dry Tortugas National Park* - Brett Koch, the new chief ranger at the park (see "Personnel Changes" below), was recently selected for the Southeast Region's 2023 National Ranger Excellence Award for his efforts supporting asylum seekers and coordinating rescue efforts with partner agencies for several waves of migrant landings at the park. Source: [Dry Tortugas National Park](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The Friends of Mount Vernon Trail received the NPS Impact Award for Excellence in Volunteerism in the Team Category for their 2023 efforts engaging 1,465 volunteers and completing 864 trail enhancements to improve user safety and experience. Source: [ALXnow](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On July 29, the park will begin a project to repave park roads in the Culp's Hill and Spangler's Spring areas, Coster Avenue, and Benner Hill. The project is expected to take three months. Temporary closures will be in place. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On July 18 and 19, the park and Gettysburg Foundation hosted a delegation from Sekigahara Battlefield in Japan, a Sister Park to Gettysburg. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - This month, the park will begin a \$48.6 million renovation of the main prison building at Alcatraz, including strengthening structural elements and resolving deterioration related to "aging and weather impacts." The project will be executed by Tutor Perini Corp. It is expected to last through 2027, and there may be some noise and temporary closures of "small areas." The park doesn't expect major disturbances for visitors. This is the second phase of a \$63.6 million Great American Outdoors Act project. Source: [SFGate](#), [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Point Reyes National Seashore* - New research by the NPS and Point Blue Conservation Science has identified the top three threats to northern spotted owls in Marin County, California: climate change, competition with barred owls, and severe wildfire. The assessment also recommends conservation strategies, including habitat protection, managing barred owls, abating noise disturbance in nesting environments, and community education and outreach. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grant Program* (an NPS-administered program) - On July 9, the NPS announced the award of \$10.7 million for 15 projects in eight states to repair historic structures on the campuses of Historically Black

Colleges and Universities. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Ice Age National Scenic Trail* - The Ice Age Trail Alliance announced that Algoma, Wisconsin, now is an official Ice Age Trail Community, the 22nd such community to earn an official designation. Just over three miles of new trail will be opened through town, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 25. Source: [Green Bay Press Gazette](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - On July 18th, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources dedicated its second "Shipwreck Nature Preserve" at the location of the *Muskegon*, just offshore of Mount Baldy, which is in Indiana Dunes. Its status as an official preserve "helps to promote the importance of shipwrecks as scientific, cultural, and recreational resources for our state and region." During the dedication, the IDNR, NPS, and Indiana University Center for Underwater Science visited the site to install a mooring buoy, place a bronze commemorative plaque, and collect underwater photos and footage. Source: [Indiana Dunes National Park](#)
- *Japanese American Confinement Sites Grants* (an NPS-administered program) - On July 11, the NPS announced \$3.3 million in JACS grants to support nine preservation, restoration, and education projects related to the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - Anna Marini, the park's preventative search and rescue coordinator, was selected for the NPS Director's Visitor Safety Achievement Award for her efforts expanding the PSAR program at the park, including over 83,000 visitor contacts and 3,100 volunteer hours, as well as support of other parks' PSAR start-up initiatives. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#)
- *Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site* - The park has debuted a special museum exhibit, "The Patter of Little Feet: A Longfellow Childhood," featuring toys, clothing, and drawings from the six Longfellow children's early years. Source: [Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site](#)
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument* - The *Clarion Ledger* published [a photo collage](#) of the park and many of its historical items. Source: *Clarion Ledger*
- *Minidoka National Historic Site* - On July 5 and 6, the park and Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee hosted the annual pilgrimage. About 250 survivors and descendants attended. Events included a day of education and a day of reflection. Source: [KTVB](#)
- *Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial* - On July 17, the Secretary of the Navy, Carlos Del Toro, announced the full exoneration of the remaining 256

defendants of the 1944 Port Chicago courts-martial for disobeying orders to return to dangerous working conditions after the explosion that killed 320 people. The General Counsel of the Navy "concluded that there were significant legal errors during the courts-martial." Source: [U.S. Navy](#)

- *Redwood National and State Parks* - The park recently signed an Annual Funding Agreement with the Tribal Council of the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation for an initiative called "Xaa-tr'vlh-nvt-tr'e-yu'" ("Women in Fire"). The initiative will support Tolowa Dee-ni' women entering and progressing in wildland fire careers in the park and utilizing traditional ecological knowledge in fire management. Source: [Redwood National and State Parks](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park* - The *New York Times* published [an article](#) about a recent cultural burn by the Tule River, North Fork Mono, and Tübatulabal Tribes in the Alder Creek Grove, located in Giant Sequoia National Monument (managed by the U.S. Forest Service, adjacent to Sequoia and Kings Canyon). The article references the Castle, Windy, and KNP Complex Fires (that affected both NPS and USFS land) and includes a quote from Superintendent Clay Jordan. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Statue of Liberty National Monument* - The park and its partner, The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., recently began a project to renovate and expand the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration. The project will include updated exhibits, new public programming spaces, accessibility upgrades, improved HVAC systems, and better wayfinding. The project will be phased so that most of the museum will continue to be open to the public. The Kitchen and Laundry Building currently is closed. Source: [Statue of Liberty National Monument](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - On July 10, a black bear was sighted in the northern area of the park. This is a rare sighting due to the lack of forests in that area of North Dakota. The bear was believed to be a sub-adult, actively in search of a new habitat or mating partners. It is possible it came from as far away as the Bighorn Mountains of Montana. Source: [InForum](#)
- *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument* - On July 12, the park announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for its General Management Plan. Source: [Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - From July through October, the park and contractors will continue a project to remove invasive hybrid cattails, which have been outcompeting native plant communities. The cattails have invaded about 500 acres of wetlands in the park. Some noise impacts will occur due to the specialized grinding machine, and treatment areas will be blocked off with booms. The project is being funded by the NPS, Outdoor Heritage Fund, Minnesota Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund, The Voyageurs Conservancy, National Park

Foundation, and Clean Air Act Settlement Fund. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)

- *Weir Farm National Historical Park* - A impressionist painting of Weir Farm, "Tree Looking Towards Burlingham House," by 2019 Artist-in-Residence Alissa Siegal, was selected for the Department of the Interior Museum's collection. Source: [Weir Farm National Historical Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - The San Francisco Zoo recently released 118 Yosemite toads by helicopter to a meadow in the park. The toads are a federally threatened species, and much of their habitat was destroyed in the Rim Fire in 2013. The zoo's conservation team has been raising them from the tadpole stage. It was the first release in a planned five-year project, done in partnership between the NPS, Yosemite Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Geological Survey, San Francisco Zoo, America's Keystone Wildlife, and Wildlife Restoration Foundation. Source: [KMPH](#)
- *Zion National Park* - On July 17, the park announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for the South Entrance Redesign. Source: [Zion National Park](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Chickasaw National Recreation Area* - Devon Bradley was selected to be the new superintendent, which also includes overseeing the superintendent of Washita Battlefield National Historic Site and supporting operations at the (privately-owned) Oklahoma City National Memorial. Devon has one year of NPS experience, most recently as the facility management deputy chief at Grand Canyon National Park and as acting superintendent at Chickasaw. His previous experience was with the Marine Corps and the Department of the Army. He will begin his new role in August. Source: [Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)
- *Dry Tortugas National Park* - Brett Koch was selected to be the new chief ranger. Brett has worked for the NPS for many years, most recently as a law enforcement ranger at Dry Tortugas since 2018. Brett is the recent recipient of the NPS Southeast Region National Ranger Excellence Award (see "Around the Parks" above). Source: [Dry Tortugas National Park](#)
- *George Washington Carver National Monument* - Kevin Young was selected to be the new superintendent. Kevin has 13 years of NPS experience, most recently as the superintendent at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site and acting superintendent at George Washington Carver National Monument. He will start his new role later this summer. Source: [George Washington Carver National Monument](#)
- *Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park* - Reginald "Reggie" Chapple was selected to be the new superintendent. Reggie has 12 years of NPS experience, most recently as the acting associate director of partnerships and civic engagement

for over three years, as well as an 8-month special assignment as the senior advisor for strategic partnerships at the Department of the Interior. Reggie begins his new role on August 25. Source: [Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park](#)

- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - Jody Lyle was selected to be the new superintendent. Jody has worked for the NPS for 32 years, most recently as deputy superintendent and acting superintendent at Santa Monica Mountains. She starts her new role on July 28. Source: [National Park Service Pacific West Region \(Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12\)](#)

Park People

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

Deceased

- Melinda "Mindy" S. DeCesar passed away on July 8. Mindy worked for the NPS for many years, including at Virgin Islands National Park, Redwood National and State Parks, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. She retired from the NPS in 2012. Source: [NRVNews](#)
- Donald "Don" Lee Kristensen, 87, passed away on June 22. Don worked as a plumber in Yellowstone National Park for a time. Source: [KBZK](#)
- Joseph Andrew "Andy" Rogers, 58, passed away on July 14. Andy has worked for the NPS for the last 15 years. Source: [The Coastland Times](#)

In the News

- Costa Dillon is teaching a six-week online class for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon University called "An Introduction to the National Park System." Costa worked for the NPS for 35 years, including as a superintendent, the chief of training and employee development, and the head of the Albright Training Center. He is the recipient of the Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award and National Parks Conservation Association Stephen Mather Award. Source: [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Carnegie Mellon University](#), Rog Umwood
- Bob Stanton, NPS Director from 1997 to 2001, was interviewed by the National Association for Interpretation in its "Heritage Leadership series." Source: [National Association for Interpretation](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Anacostia Park* - Public comment is [open through August 30](#) on revised design concepts for the park, including better transportation access, flood resilience, and visitor amenities. Source: [Anacostia Park](#)
- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through July 29](#) on a proposal to increase wilderness permit fees for Black Canyon of the Gunnison and group campsite fees for Curecanti. Source: [Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#)
- *Buffalo National River* - Public comment is [open through July 31](#) on an Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Source: [Buffalo National River](#)
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - The NPS, Federal Highway Administration, and the Georgia Department of Transportation are proposing to construct two additional bridges at the I-285/Chattahoochee River crossing to accommodate new express lanes. Public comment to the Georgia Department of Transportation is [open through July 29](#). Source: [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)
- *Chiricahua National Monument* - Public comment will open August 1 through August 30 on an Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. [Editor note: No link is currently available; it will be published in the August 7, 2024 Coalition Report.] Source: [Chiricahua National Monument](#)
- *Dinosaur National Monument* - Public comment is [open through August 7](#) on a proposal to demolish and replace the condemned Yampa District Multi-Operations Building. The building was condemned due to shifting subsurfaces that caused foundation movement and a failure of supporting walls. Source: [Dinosaur National Monument](#)
- *First State National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through August 1](#) on a comprehensive trail plan for the Brandywine Valley unit of the park. Source: [First State National Historical Park](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through August 15](#) on a plan to rehabilitate the parking lots at Stinson Beach. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - Public comment is [open through August 12](#) on "draft desired conditions for the park and specific management areas" with regards to growing visitation. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Public comment is open through August 21 on the construction of nine miles of new parkway from Wears Valley to the Gatlinburg Spur (the Foothills Parkway Section 8D). Source: [Great Smoky](#)

Mountains National Park

- *Historic Context Study and Survey Report of Great River Road* - Public comment is [open through August 30](#) on the study, which would determine an 11-mile eastern Louisiana corridor's eligibility for potential National Historic Landmark district designation. Source: [Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve](#)
- *John P. Parker House Special Resource Study* - Public comment is [open through September 8](#) on a Congressionally-mandated special resource study of the home of abolitionist and entrepreneur John P. Parker to evaluate its potential as an NPS site. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through July 24](#) on a Chilkoot National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan. Source: [Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park](#)
- *Padre Island National Seashore* - Public comment is [open through August 4](#) on a management plan for increasing numbers of feral pigs at the park.
- *Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore* - Public comment is [open through August 9](#) on a plan to replace platforms and steps at the Miners River and base of Miners Falls. Source: [Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore](#)
- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - Public comment is [open through August 17](#) on a plan to resume the collection of park entrance fees. Fees were suspended in 2017 "due to the lack of basic infrastructure and other visitor services beyond the existing entrance station." Source: [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Wolf lawsuit* - On July 2, a group of six conservation organizations filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its recent decision to not protect wolves in the northern Rockies under the Endangered Species Act. The agency decision stated that wolves are no longer in danger of extinction. The plaintiffs claim that the agency failed to properly analyze threats to wolves and use the best available science. Source: [The Telegraph](#)
- *Upper Colorado ecosystem funding* - On July 22, the Department of the Interior announced a funding opportunity for projects that restore habitats and assist species recovery in Upper Colorado River Basin areas affected by drought. The funding comes from the Inflation Reduction Act. Eligible recipients are public or Tribal entities, or partners to those entities that can implement the project. Applications are due September 27, 2024. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Condor investigation* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Utah Division of

Wildlife Resources announced that they are seeking information related to the death of two California condors by firearm in a remote area southeast of Cedar City, Utah. One occurred in 2002, and the other occurred last month. It is "unclear if the two incidents are connected." California condors are federally listed as endangered. Source: [St. George News](#)

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director of legislative and congressional affairs for the National Park Service, and Chris Soller, former superintendent of Fire Island National Seashore and legislative specialist for the National Park Service.

House Actions

July 8 - The House passed H.R. 5443, the Accelerating Appraisals and Conservation Efforts Act (AACE) Act. The bill relaxes requirements for the Department of the Interior in appraising and valuing real property for transactions over which Interior has jurisdiction.

July 9 - The House Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on several bills, including H.R. 7976, the "Civil War Defenses of Washington National Historical Park Act"; and H.R. 8012, the "Jackie Robinson Commemorative Site Act." Testimony was heard from Representatives Miller-Meeks, D'Esposito, Waltz, and Norton; Chris French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Mike Caldwell, Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, U.S. National Park Service, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

July 9 - The Committee on Appropriations held a markup on several Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations bills, including the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY25, which was ordered reported, as amended.

July 11 - The House filed a Report for H.R. 8998, making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related agencies for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Acadia National Park

Kayaker fatality

On July 13, a 73-year-old went kayaking alone from the end of Seely Road in Bar Harbor, Maine. After failing to return, a family member notified the Bar Harbor Police Department. Personnel from the Maine Marine Patrol, U.S. Coast Guard, and NPS initiated a search. NPS staff found the individual's deceased body in the water near the Thrumcap, a small island near their put-in. The individual was wearing a life jacket. Their kayak was not

found. The individual will be examined by the Office of Chief Medical Examiner's Office.

Source: [State of Maine Department of Marine Resources](#)

Bandelier National Monument

Water main break

On July 12, a water main broke at the Tsankawi Unit. The park was closed temporarily while the issue was fixed. It reopened later that day. Source: [Bandelier National Monument Facebook page](#)

Big Thicket National Preserve

Hurricane

In early July, the park was impacted by strong wind and rain during the Hurricane Beryl event. As of July 16, the park was still working to clear downed trees and assess other potential hazards. The Birdwatchers, Woodlands, and Big Sandy Trails are closed until crews can clear them. Source: [Big Thicket National Preserve](#)

Canyonlands National Park

Hiker fatalities

On July 12, a 52-year-old and 23-year-old (parent and adult child) got lost and ran out of water while hiking on the Syncline Trail in temperatures over 100F. They sent a 911 text asking for help. Personnel from the NPS and the Bureau of Land Management Moab District Helitack responded and initiated a search. The two individuals were found already deceased. The Utah Department of Public Safety also supported the incident. The NPS and San Juan County Sheriff's Office are investigating the incident. Source: [Canyonlands National Park](#)

Cape Cod National Seashore

Erosion

On July 23, the park announced that the Bartlett House, located on the bluffs overlooking Coast Guard Beach in Eastham, Massachusetts, is no longer inhabitable due to erosion, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The house was previously seasonal employee housing and recently became a short-term vacation rental. Under Title V of the McKinney-Vento Act, outside eligible organizations may take ownership of excess and surplus federal properties to support individuals experiencing homelessness. Expressions of interest to remove and take ownership of the structure may be filed with the HUD, starting on July 29. If there are no expressions of interest, the NPS will demolish the structure. Source: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Kayaking fatality

A 72-year-old launched a kayak from the beach near Ramp 43, east of the Cape Point Campground near Buxton, North Carolina. Bystanders reported seeing the kayak capsize while attempting to ride a wave 50 yards from the beach. The bystanders swam out, pulled the individual from the kayak, brought them back to the beach, and began CPR. Personnel from the NPS, Dare County Emergency Medical Service and Sheriff's Office, and Hatteras Island Ocean Rescue also responded. Resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is investigating the incident. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

Illegal hunting

On April 16, two individuals pleaded guilty to the illegal taking of wildlife. Both individuals were involved in the take of two white-tailed deer that were transported from Tennessee into Georgia. Charges included hunting in a closed area, hunting without a license, falsifying records, violating the Chronic Wasting Disease Restriction, firearm possession by a prohibited person, providing a false statement, and destruction of a natural area. The investigation "spanned several years and involved multiple interviews, hours of surveillance, and a search warrant." Both individuals were issued fines (unspecified). The area around Lookout Creek and Lookout Valley "has seen an increase in illegal hunting activity" recently, and the park asks that visitors report any illegal hunting activity by calling 911. Source: [Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Emergency aircraft landing

On July 2, a small private airplane was flying from Pahrump, Nevada, to Ridgecrest, California, when it started experiencing engine trouble over the southern end of Death Valley. The pilot changed course for the nearest airstrip, Maury Sorrells Shoshone Airport, but was not able to make it. Instead, the aircraft landed on California Highway 178, west of Salsberry Pass in Bradbury Wash. Personnel from Inyo County (CA) Sheriff, Caltrans, and California Highway Patrol responded and safely escorted the aircraft off the highway onto a wide shoulder. The plane was later removed by trailer. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Power outage in heat wave

On July 13, a powerline leading to Furnace Creek Visitor Center, Cow Creek, and Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station failed due to "localized intense wind associated with a thunderstorm." Hotels, restaurants, and gas stations in the park did not lose power. Southern California Edison was able to supply a large generator, allowing the visitor center to reopen on July 15. Employees, their families, and pets were evacuated to nearby hotels. The park has experienced several heat records recently and is trending for the hottest July on-record. Southern California Edison was able to use a helicopter to replace

a downed pole, and power was fully restored on July 16. Source: Death Valley National Park ([press release](#), [Facebook post](#))

Death Valley National Park

Truck fire

On July 15, a large stake-bed truck ignited on fire after its brakes overheated while descending Towne Pass on CA0190 during 120F temperatures. Personnel from the NPS, San Bernardino County (CA) Fire Protection District, Beatty (NV) Fire Service, and Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District Fire responded to the incident. Due to low staffing levels, response was delayed, with the first engine on site 90 minutes after it was reported. The truck was destroyed in the fire. The driver was uninjured. It is the fourth vehicle to catch fire while descending Towne Pass this year. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Hiker rescue

On July 18, two individuals started hiking the Badlands Loop at about 9:30 AM, when temperatures were about 110F. The group got lost for a time. Eventually, one of the individuals was unable to continue walking. The other person returned to the Zabriskie Point parking lot to request help. Due to the lack of cell phone signal, a bystander drove five miles to report the medical emergency at Furnace Creek Visitor Center at 11 AM. In the meantime, bystanders carried the distressed individual, now unconscious, toward the parking lot. NPS staff arrived on scene and cooled the individual in an ambulance. They drove the individual to a landing zone at 3,000 feet of elevation, where it was cool enough for a Mercy Air helicopter to land safely. The helicopter transported the individual to Centennial Hills Hospital in Las Vegas. Source: [Sierra Wave Media](#)

Denali National Park and Preserve

Emergency aircraft landing

On July 12, a flightseeing tour lost power and was forced to make a landing adjacent to the Tokositna Glacier. The plane had nine people on board, including the pilot. No injuries were reported. It landed in an area of "thick alder bushes" near the toe of the glacier, near Mt. Goldie. An NPS helicopter was able to land nearby and shuttle the pilot and passengers to a flat area on a gravel bar at the base of the glacier. An HH-60 helicopter from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, an R44 helicopter from Talkeetna Air Taxi, and the park's A-Star helicopter were able to transport the group to Talkeetna, Alaska. Emergency medical personnel met the group in Talkeetna, and all declined medical treatment. The park is working with the National Transportation Safety Board to investigate and remove the airplane from the site. Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#)

Fire Island National Seashore

Ocean rescues

On July 14, lifeguards made "over a dozen rescues and swimmer assists" near the Sailors Haven and Barrett Beach locations. A "deeper swell" created rip currents that fatigued swimmers and pulled many offshore. Source: [Fire Island National Seashore](#)

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Carbon monoxide

On July 17 at about 12:45 AM, a privately-owned houseboat reported a possible carbon monoxide poisoning incident while moored in Face Canyon, near buoy 24. NPS staff responded and provided medical support on scene. A total of 21 patients were identified. Classic Air Medical dispatched three medical helicopters and Intermountain Life Flight dispatched two medical helicopters. Three adults and two children were flown to the St. George Regional Hospital for further treatment. The remaining 16 patients were treated and released on scene. The NPS and Coconino County (AZ) Sheriff's Office are investigating the incident. It is the third carbon monoxide-related incident that NPS staff have responded to this month. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Waterline failure

On July 15, park staff attempted to re-pressurize the Trans Canyon Waterline after it had been shut off for repairs. The action caused the line to break. Mandatory water conservation efforts are in effect on the South Rim. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Rockslide

On July 16, a rockslide came down near the tunnel on the Gatlinburg Spur "after a brief rain shower." Staff from the NPS and a private company, Blalock, worked to clear the road the following day. Source: [Knox News](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Fire risk closures

On July 16, the park closed Mauna Loa Road to vehicles from the gate past Kīpukapuāulu to Mauna Loa Lookout, as well as the Hilina Pali Road from Maunaiki Trailhead to Hilina Pali Lookout, due to elevated fire risk. Pedestrians and bicyclists may continue to utilize both roads, and "backcountry permit holders will be provided access to trailheads." Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Increased seismic activity

On July 22, the park experienced a sudden increase in earthquakes and ground

deformation in the East Rift Zone of Kīlauea. The park closed several roads and trails for public safety. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

Isle Royale National Park

Wolves get human food

Recently, wolves were able to obtain food and garbage in and around Rock Harbor and campgrounds on the east end of the island. As a result, on July 13, the park implemented new food storage guidelines, outlined in the park compendium. These include never leaving food unattended and storing all food and scented items in campsite shelters, lockers, or in a hanging sack ten feet off the ground. The park is also working to increase hazing efforts, install electric fencing around dumpsters, increase trash pick-up, replace equipment with "bear-proof style trash cans," and post more educational signage for visitors. Source: [Isle Royale National Park](#)

Rocky Mountain National Park

Cardiac rescue

On July 15, a group of hikers found an 80-year-old unresponsive on the Lawn Lake Trail, roughly five miles from the trailhead. They used a satellite communication device to request help and performed CPR on the individual. The park's search and rescue team arrived on scene and provided further care. A Colorado Army National Guard helicopter from Buckley Space Force Base was able to use a hoist mechanism to extract the individual and bring them to Upper Beaver Meadows, where they were transferred to a Med Evac air ambulance and flown to further emergency care. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

Drowning

On July 7, a 37-year-old on a rafting trip on the Delaware River went for a swim without a life jacket in the area of 2362 State Route 97 in Pond Eddy, New York. The individual submerged and did not return to the surface. Personnel from New York State Police Liberty and Port Jervis Fire and Rescue responded. The individual was located in the water and removed from the river. They were declared deceased at the scene. It is the 79th drowning victim in the Upper Delaware since recordkeeping started in 1980. Source: [Tri-County Independent](#)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Collapsing ground

In early July, a park geologist observed new areas of ground subsidence around Bonanza Mine in the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark. This is possibly due to collapsing underground excavation related to the mine. The park has installed additional signage to highlight unstable areas and urges visitors to exhibit caution while visiting the

area and other former mines. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Threatening statements from concession employee

On July 9, a concession employee that worked at the Roosevelt Lodge was charged with disorderly conduct for making several comments related to gun violence. The individual was report as making statements that "the next mass shooting will be here [at the Roosevelt Lodge]." This was several days after a 28-year-old concession employee was killed by law enforcement after threatening a mass shooting at the Canyon Lodge, then spraying bullets at the building (see [7/10/24 Coalition Report](#) and "Follow-Ups on Previously Reported Incidents" below). The Roosevelt Lodge was evacuated and the individual was detained while their cabin and vehicle were searched. "Nothing of note" was found. Another employee reported that on July 5, just a day after the Canyon Lodge incident, the suspect violated an employee dining room rule, and when another employee approached them about it, the suspect got angry, threw their tray, and made comments about a mass shooting. The suspect is being held without bail. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Fishing closures

On July 15, the park closed the Madison River, Firehole River, Gibbon River, and most of their associated tributaries due to warm water temperatures and low river flows, which are stressful conditions for fish. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Vehicle crashes into thermal feature

On July 11, a vehicle with five occupants accidentally drove off the roadway and into the Semi-Centennial Geyser thermal feature near Roaring Mountain. All five occupants exited the vehicle on their own. All individuals were transported by ambulance to a nearby hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. On July 12, law enforcement rangers closed both lanes of the roadway for about two hours while the car was winched from its location nine feet below the surface. The thermal feature has "acidic and hot surface water temperatures (ranging around 105 degrees Fahrenheit)." Hanser's Automotive, the U.S. Water Rescue Dive Team, HK Contractors, Resource Technologies Incorporated, and Yellowstone Park Service Stations supported the removal of the car. The incident is under investigation. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Hydrothermal explosion

On July 23, a "localized hydrothermal explosion" occurred near Sapphire Pool in Biscuit Basin. No injuries were reported and damage is still being assessed. Biscuit Basin,

including the parking lot and boardwalks, is temporarily closed for safety. The Grand Road remains open. Staff from the NPS and U.S. Geological Survey will monitor conditions and reopen the area once deemed safe to do so. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yosemite National Park

Bear run-in

On July 7, a 33-year-old individual embarked on a 50-mile trail run from their home in June Lake, California, to Yosemite Valley. In their last mile, they saw a "large dark shape" coming at them, then felt "some sharpness" in their shoulder and a rough shove. They then saw headlamps and heard people yelling, "bear." The bear had been tagged and had a GPS collar affixed earlier that morning after it was observed with human food at the Cathedral Beach picnic area, several miles away in Yosemite Valley. Before the runner ran into the bear, it had also found a bag of trash in the Upper Pines Campground and ran with it onto the Happy Isles road, where they had their collision. The collision with the runner knocked the bag of garbage from the bear's mouth, and the bear began approaching the runner. The runner yelled and hit their trekking poles on the pavement, and people in a nearby campground also began shouting and banging pots and pans. The bear then moved away. The individual had "two substantial and bloody scratches," and tears to clothing and their running vest. An ambulance responded and bandaged the individual up, but they declined further medical care. A park spokesperson said, "biologists do not consider this encounter to be a predatory attack." Source: [USA Today](#)

Wildfires

- *Denali National Park and Preserve*
 - On June 21, the Foraker Fire was discovered burning near the Foraker River drainage on the south side of the Alaska Range. It was believed to have started with a lightning strike. On June 22, the fire entered park boundaries. As of July 8, the fire was estimated at 5,873 acres. The fire is being monitored. There currently are no "identified values" designated for protection. Source: [Alaska News Source](#), [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#)
 - On June 27, the Grizzly Fire was discovered, believed to be lightning-caused. As of July 11, the Grizzly Fire was believed to be 32,196 acres. The fire is being monitored with support from the Bureau of Land Management - Alaska Fire Service. Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#), [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#)
 - On June 30, the Riley Fire started one mile north of the park's entrance. The park closed that afternoon and visitors and park staff were evacuated. On July 6, residents of the Campus Housing area of the park were allowed to return to their homes. On July 10, the park reopened. As of July 14, it was 436 acres and 100% contained. The Horseshoe Lake Trail and Mount Healy Overlook Trail reopened on July 14, while the Riley Creek Campground and Day Use Area reopened on July 15. Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#), [Anchorage Daily News](#)

- *El Malpais National Monument*
 - The Encerrita Fire is located approximately 15 miles south-southwest of Grants, New Mexico. It was caused by lightning on June 15. As of July 11, the fire was 2,499 acres and 91% contained, with 4 personnel assigned. The Continental Divide Trail and Zuni-Acoma Trail in the park are both closed. Source: [Inciweb](#), [El Malpais National Monument](#)
- *Haleakalā National Park*
 - On July 10, the Crater Road Fire started around mile markers eight, nine, and ten on the Haleakalā Highway. As of July 22, it had burned about 574 acres and was 80% contained. The fire is adjacent to the park, and the park remains closed. Source: [The Maui News](#), [KITV](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve*
 - The American Creek Fire is located in the hills south of Nonvianuk Lake and north of Lake Coville near American Creek. As of July 23, it was estimated at 4,651 acres, with "no fire activity visible." It was likely lightning-caused. The fire is being monitored.
 - The Naknek Lake Fire is located approximately nine miles west of Dumpling Mountain and two miles south of Naknek Lake. As of July 23, it was estimated at 26 acres. It was likely caused by lightning. The fire is being monitored. No structures are currently threatened.
 - Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#), [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#)
- *Noatak National Preserve* - On June 13, two fires were observed in the park by the Galena Fire Management Zone Office:
 - The Tututalak Fire is located 32 miles northeast of Noatak Village and 4 miles of the Kelly River and Noatak River confluence. As of June 21, the Tututalak Fire was estimated at 8,533 acres.
 - The Urgoon Fire is located 22 miles northeast of Noatak Village and 8 miles south of the Kelly River and Noatak River confluence. As of July 23, the Urgoon Fire was 6,083 acres.
 - Both fires are being monitored by the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center by aviation overflights. There currently are no threats to people, property, or Native allotments. Smoke is present in the Lower Noatak River area, and the Eli and Agashashok River drainages. Source: [Noatak National Preserve](#), [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - On July 23, the park closed Cascade River Road, Cascade Pass Trail, and the Johannesburg Cross-country Zone due to the nearby Pincher Two Fire, located on the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#)
- *Tonto National Monument* - On July 11, lightning started the Black Fire, in the

Superstition Wilderness south of Theodore Roosevelt Lake on the Tonto National Forest. The fire is approaching Tonto National Monument. The public information officer for the incident management team stated that protecting the national monument is one of their highest priorities. The park currently is closed. As of July 22, the fire was 11,162 acres and 85% contained, with 222 personnel assigned.

Source: [AZCentral](#), [Inciweb](#), [Tonto National Monument](#)

- *Yosemite National Park* - On July 13, thunderstorms developed over the park, igniting nine lightning-caused fires:
 - The Aspen Fire was located one mile west of Aspen Valley. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
 - The Cascade Fire is located south of Tioga Road, west of Yosemite Creek. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Dewey Fire was located southwest of Dewey Point. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
 - The Dog Leg Fire was located northeast of Crane Flat, near Unicorn Creek. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
 - The Grove Fire was located northwest of Crane Flat near the Tuolumne Grove Road. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
 - The Harden Fire was located northwest of White Wolf, west of Harden Lake. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
 - The Indian Fire is located south of Tioga Road, west of Lehamite Creek. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Porcupine Fire is located north of Tioga Road, southwest of Wegner Lake. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Smith Fire was located southeast of Smith Peak. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 100% contained.
- On July 16, several more thunderstorms caused lightning strike fires.
 - The Dorothy Lake Fire is just south of Dorothy Lake. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Eagle Creek Fire is east of Lukens Lake Trail and west of Yosemite Creek. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.
 - The Wegner Fire is located near Mount Hoffman. As of July 17, it was 0.1 acres and 0% contained.

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area* - On July 19, U.S. Representative Matt Cartwright, Pennsylvania State Senator Rosemary Brown, and Pennsylvania State Representative Tarah Probst announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the NPS have reached a compromise to reopen Route 611 in the park. The route has been closed since a December 2022 rockslide along Mount Minsi (reported in many *Coalition Reports*, most recently [1/24/24](#), [2/7/24](#), and [6/12/24](#)). The compromise includes the installation of a temporary, free-standing rockfall barrier, which will allow two-way traffic flow while a more permanent solution is reached. The NPS has confirmed an expedited permitting process for

the temporary barrier. PennDOT estimated an eight-to-ten-week process to complete the project once permits are finalized. Source: [U.S. Representative Matt Cartwright](#)

- *Grand Teton National Park* - The individual that illegally landed a helicopter on the west shore of Jackson Lake in June 2023 (see [7/26/23 Coalition Report](#)) pleaded guilty to not carrying their pilot's license and illegally operating an aircraft on NPS land. The individual was fined \$5,550 and will serve two years unsupervised probation and a two-year ban from Grand Teton. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On July 12, the park released a letter from Superintendent Mike Gauthier expressing gratitude to the many individuals and agencies who have supported the June 9 Las Vegas Boat Harbor Marina fire incident (see [6/12/24 Coalition Report](#)) and its aftermath. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - On July 18, the park announced that the Drakesbad Guest Lodge and Warner Valley Campground will remain closed for the 2024 season due to ongoing repairs from the 2021 Dixie Fire. Both the NPS and Snow Mountain, LLC, have been working together to restore the area and open it to visitors, but the damage "is extensive and repairs have taken longer than expected." Day use in Warner Valley and the local trails is open. Source: [Lassen Volcanic National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - More details have been released concerning the July 4 shootout between a 28-year-old concession employee and NPS law enforcement, resulting in the fatality of the suspect and an injury to a ranger (see [7/10/24 Coalition Report](#)). The 28-year-old held a hostage at gunpoint in a residence in Canyon Village and said they planned to carry out a mass shooting in the park. The person who had been held hostage was eventually able to leave the situation and alerted authorities. Rangers "spent the next several hours" trying to find the suspect, eventually locating them outside the Canyon Village dining area, where 200 people were dining inside. The suspect shot a barrage of bullets at the service entrance of the building with a semi-automatic rifle. Law enforcement rangers opened fire, and the suspect died at the scene. The injured ranger was taken to a nearby hospital and has since been released. Canyon Lodge was closed through July 10 for investigation. The law enforcement rangers involved in the shooting are on paid administrative leave while the investigation is ongoing, per NPS policy. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is conducting the investigation. Source: [ABC7](#)

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- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann, Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Dan Sakura, Rog Umwood

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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