



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

The Coalition is now accepting nominations for the **George Hartzog Award**, given each year for an individual who demonstrates outstanding support for the mission of the National Park Service or National Park System. Nominations for this award are open to all Coalition members.

Make a Nomination

[See past Harzog Award recipients.](#)

Coalition Actions

The Coalition joined five other conservation organizations in [filing an amicus brief](#) in opposition to data center development near Manassas National Battlefield Park.

We submitted [comments](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency protesting its approval of Ohio's highly flawed and problematic regional haze plan.

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.

- *Best practices for renewable energy in parks* - On October 1, the Federal Energy Management Program released a report, "Best Practices for Renewable Energy Installations in the National Parks." Source: [Federal Energy Management Program](#)
- *GAO report on foreign-produced drones* - The U.S. Government Accountability Office recently released a report, "Federal Lands: Effects of Interior's Policies on Foreign-Made

Drones" that highlights how a 2020 ban on procuring new drones from "adversary nations," including industry leader DJI (which is made in China), drives up costs and lowers the quality of drone footage. This has limited the ability of many agencies across the Department of the Interior from executing important tasks, including wildfire prevention, search and rescue, scientific research, and public education. Source: [DroneDJ](#)

- *Federal contractor minimum wage* - On September 30, the Labor Department set the minimum wages for federal contractors, increasing the topline wage to \$17.75 per hour and setting \$9.30 per hour as the wage for tipped workers. These apply to federal contracts that were signed, renewed, or otherwise extended after January 30, 2022. The changes will go into effect on January 1, 2025. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *\$1 million from NPF for rivers and trails* - On October 2, the National Park Foundation announced the award of over \$1 million in grants for units related to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Source: [National Park Foundation](#)
- *Climate change migration* - Grist published [an article](#) titled, "Climate change is destroying American homes. Who should have to move?" The article highlights the tensions between private homeowners and attempts at "managed retreat" from areas vulnerable to climate change. The article argues for a consideration of relocations as part of a broader nationwide effort to reduce climate change vulnerability, and references the National Park Service's framework to prioritize diversity over a hierarchy of worth. (The article notes this framework was started under the Obama administration, then halted under the Trump administration and not picked up by the Biden administration.) Source: *Grist*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Acadia National Park* - On October 8, the park and Friends of Acadia held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of an eight-bedroom seasonal housing unit at Dane Farm in Seal Harbor, Maine. The next phase of the housing project will construct 28 bedrooms at Harden Farm in Bar Harbor, Maine. The project is being funded by the NPS' Housing Improvement Program and Centennial Challenge Program, the Friends of Acadia, and the National Park Foundation. Source: [Acadia National Park](#)
- *Buffalo National River* - On October 4, the NPS cancelled its solicitation for a concession business opportunity for canoe and kayak rental with shuttle services. It was canceled due to Executive Order 14026, which increases the minimum wage for federal contractors. "With concessioners being defined as federal contracts, the minimum franchise fee for this business opportunity needs to be revisited to allow for a reasonable opportunity for profit." A new prospectus is expected to be released later this year. Source: [Buffalo National River](#)
- *Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network* (an NPS-administered program) - On October 4, the NPS announced the award of \$1.2 million in grants for 14 projects that

"highlight the natural, cultural, recreational, and historical significance of the Chesapeake region." The grants are funded through annual appropriations from Congress. Source: [National Park Service - Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)

- *Colonial National Historical Park* - The park will soon finish the first phase of repairs to the Colonial Parkway. In November, the park will begin the second phase of repairs. Some closures and detours will be in place at various times. The \$123 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. The full project is expected to be completed by June 2026. Source: [Colonial National Historical Park](#)
- *Crater Lake National Park* - On October 9, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the Crater Lake newt (also known as the Mazama newt) may qualify for protections under the Endangered Species Act. Introduced non-native crayfish have decimated the populations of newts at the lake. A yearlong review of the USFWS has begun and will determine final protections for the newt. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#)
- *Fort Larned National Historic Site* - The park recently finished a historic preservation project on the Quarter Master building, Commissary/Arsenal, and the Commanding Officer's Quarters. The work included new cedar shingles, repaired windows and doors, new paint, restored porches, and tuck pointing of historic stone masonry. The project was led by the NPS' Maintenance Action Team from the Historic Preservation Training Center, and funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Fort Larned National Historic Site](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - On October 3, the NPS announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for a "multimodal connection" from Crystal City to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, as well as roadway improvements at the airport to improve safety, wayfinding, and traffic congestion. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - *The Japan Times* published [an article](#) about George Masa, a Japanese immigrant and photographer in the early 20th century who was "an instrumental player" in the creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Source: *The Japan Times*
- *Ice Age National Scenic Trail* - On June 1, the NPS and several partners held a ribbon cutting for the renaming of the Glacial Passage Area in Cross Plains, Wisconsin. The area connects lands managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Dane County (WI), the NPS, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. A new sign was installed and the groups celebrated the cultural, recreational, and natural significance of the area. Source: [Ice Age National Scenic Trail](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - On September 23, a contractor with Berglund Construction was doing rehabilitation work on the Good Fellow Lodge when they discovered a sealed copper box in the foundation of the lodge. It was a time capsule from January 1941 that included an edition of *The Gary Post-Tribune*, an American flag, and a memo from the

Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation about the time capsule. The Good Fellow Lodge served as a youth camp for children of U.S. Steel employees through 1976. Source: [WGN9](#)

- *Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve* - In early September, assessment began on a project to reclaim seven oil and gas well sites in the Barataria Preserve. The project is being funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve](#)
- *Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey published a new study that documents the effects of groundwater demand in communities local to the park. The study found “several correlations that are statistically significant and hydrologically plausible” between groundwater uptake outside the park and the amount and quality of groundwater within the park. Source: [U.S. Geological Survey](#)
- *Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area* - On October 3, the NPS finalized a Finding of No Significant Impact for a project to replace docks and fuel systems and rehabilitate parking areas at Seven Bays Marina. Construction is expected to begin in Summer 2025. Source: [Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area](#)
- *Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative* (an NPS-administered program) - On October 4, the NPS, in partnership with the Jefferson National Parks Association, announced the award of \$186,756 in Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative grants for 11 projects in seven states. Federal funding was established by Congress through Public Law 103-433, and is administered through JNPA. Source: [Gateway Arch National Park](#)
- *Manassas National Battlefield Park* - On October 14, the park began offering two new manually-powered all-terrain wheelchairs to visitors. They are available free for check-out on a first-come, first-served basis from the Henry Hill Visitor Center. Source: [Manassas National Battlefield Park](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On August 27, a civil engineer utilized survey-grade GPS units to measure the height of Mount Rainier and found that the point previously considered the highest on the mountain, Columbia Crest, has melted enough that a location on the southwest rim of the summit crater is now the high point. The survey also found that Mount Rainier is about ten feet shorter than it used to be, now clocking it at 14,399.6 feet. The measurement was done on personal time and is not considered “official.” Source: [Seattle Met](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On October 15, the NPS opened a prospectus for a 10-year concession for up to three operators to provide interpretive transportation services within National Mall and Memorial Parks. Proposals are due by January 10, 2025. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)
- *Petrified Forest National Park* - In July and August, yellow-billed cuckoo birds were observed and heard in the park. The bird is listed as threatened and had not been seen in

the park since the 1980s. Source: [Petrified Forest National Park](#)

- *Prince William Forest Park* - On October 9, the NPS announced a prospectus for a 10-year concession managing the Prince William Forest RV park, including campground services and amenities, retail, propane and firewood sales, and laundry services. Proposals are due on December 9. Source: [Prince William Forest Park](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - On October 7, the park began a project to replace a vault toilet at the Bierstadt Lake parking area on Bear Lake Road. The parking area will remain closed for the duration of the project, which is expected to last six weeks. The project is being funded by visitor recreation fees. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)
- *Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program* (an NPS-administered program) - The program announced its 2024 cost-share grant awards for four projects, totaling just over \$89,000. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - On October 5, the park began to implement plans to remove wild horses from the park, starting with a group of 15 individuals. This is a scaled-back effort from its original proposal to remove the entire 200-individual herd. The 15 individuals “include mares that haven’t responded to contraceptives the park administers to limit breeding, and their offspring.” Other individuals in the herd will be fitted with GPS collars for monitoring. The plan to remove wild horses from the park has been controversial, with many thousands of public comments and heavy media attention (documented several times in the *Coalition Report*). The Medora, North Dakota, city council recently unanimously passed a resolution stating their objection to the current removal plan. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* published [an article](#) about the challenges and engineering solutions for building roads safely around hydrothermal areas in the park. Source: *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A new book, *A Place Called Yellowstone: The Epic History of the World's First National Park*, by environmental historian Randall K. Wilson, was published by Counterpoint. Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On October 11, the park finished a project to repair the accessible boardwalk ramp at Artists Paintpots. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Eisenhower National Historic Site, Gettysburg National Military Park* - Zachary "Zach" Bolitho was selected as the new deputy superintendent of the two parks. Zach has 24 years of NPS experience, most recently as the division lead of resource stewardship and planning at Eisenhower NHS and Gettysburg NMP. He started his new role on September

22. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#)

- *Fire and Aviation Management* - Chuck Russell was selected as the new wildland fire operations program lead for the division. Chuck has 33 years of wildland fire experience, most recently as the fire management officer for the NPS Alaska Region. He will start his new position on November 3. Source: [NPS Division of Fire and Aviation Management](#)
- *Pipe Spring National Monument* - Curlinda Blacksheep was selected as the park's new superintendent. She has many years of NPS experience, most recently as the NPS Fundamentals training instructor specialist at the Horace Albright Training Center. She will begin her new role on October 20. Source: [Pipe Spring National Monument](#)
- *Waco Mammoth National Monument* - Theresa Moore was selected to be the park's first permanent site manager. Theresa has 11 years of NPS experience, most recently as the visitor services manager of interpretation, education, volunteers, and fees at Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Source: [Concho Valley Homepage](#)
- *Washington's National Park Fund* - Steven "Steve" Dubiel was selected as the organization's new Chief Executive Officer. Steve most recently was the Community Investments & Engagement Section Manager at King County (WA) Parks. He began his new role in September. Source: [Washington's National Park Fund](#)

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

- Charles "Charlie" Edward Fullam, 77, passed away recently. Charlie worked in Yosemite National Park for 30 years, as an emergency dispatcher and a law enforcement ranger. For most of his career, he was stationed at Lake Eleanor. Charlie was a recipient of the park's Barry Hance Award. Source: [Legacy/Sonora Union Democrat](#)
- Kevin Grossheim, 55, passed away in the line of duty while working for the NPS at Voyageurs National Park (see "Incidents" below). Kevin worked for the NPS for 29 years, 23 of those at Voyageurs. Kevin was the recipient of the park's annual safety award earlier this year. Source: [KARE11](#)
- Esther M. Hendrickson, 64, passed away on September 28. Esther worked for the Youth Conservation Corps at Acadia National Park "early in her work career." Source: [The Lincoln County News](#)
- Stanton "Stan" LaWayne Jones, 81, passed away on September 23. After he retired, he and his wife Ruby "traveled and spent 15 years working for Xanterra in Yellowstone

National Park." Source: [Lake County News](#)

- William “Bill” Emil Malina, 88, passed away on October 6. Bill worked for the NPS for five summers, including time at Grand Teton National Park and Rocky Mountain National Park. Source: [WGEL](#)
- Kevin Meyer passed away recently. Kevin worked for several federal public lands agencies, including providing technical assistance for trail layout and design through the NPS’ Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program in Alaska. He is well known in the trail building community for a U.S. Forest Service book on hardening ATV trails. Source: John Quinley
- Ed Nelson, 79, passed away on September 20. Ed worked for the NPS at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks for many years, including as assistant fire management officer, park aviation manager, and on the NPS Type I team as an air operations specialist. Source: Tom Tschohl
- Peter “Jerry” Peterson, Sr., 89, passed away on September 10. Jerry worked for the NPS for many years, including time at Glacier National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway. He worked in a variety of jobs, including as an equipment operator and lead facility manager. Source: [KRTV](#)
- Marvin Russell Tucker, 85, passed away on September 29. Marvin worked for the NPS for 33 years. Source: [Legacy/Tharp Funeral Home & Crematory - Bedford](#)

In the News

- On October 8, the Bureau of Land Management published [a profile](#) of Vanessa Lacayo, currently the BLM Awards Coordinator. Vanessa previously worked as a public affairs specialist at the National Park Service. Source: Bureau of Land Management
- Jason Ramsdell is running for Grand County's (UT) District 2 Commissioner position in this fall's general election. Jason worked for the NPS for 30 years. Source: [The Times-Independent](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - Public comment [has been extended through October 20](#) on proposed land exchanges with private landowners for parcels located inside the boundary of the park. Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)
- *Fort Pulaski National Monument* - Public comment is [open through November 9](#) on a development concept plan for facilities and infrastructure at the park, particularly

deficiencies related to recent storms and continued sea level rise. Source: [Fort Pulaski National Monument](#)

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through November 15](#) on a proposal to change regulations about Off Road Vehicle use on shoreline access areas and unpaved roads in the Orange Cliffs Special Management Unit. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has opened public comment through October 21 on a revised recovery plan for the endangered sentry milk-vetch, which lives only in the Grand Canyon. Comments may be made by email to shaula_hedwall@fws.gov or by mail. Source: [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - The NPS, in coordination with Hawaiian Electric, has [opened public comment through October 23](#) on a proposed electrical line relocation project between Pi'i Mauna Drive and the park boundary near Old Volcano Road. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Kenai Fjords National Park* - Public comment is [open through October 22](#) on a frontcountry management plan, including visitor use at the Exit Glacier. Source: [Kenai Fjords National Park](#)
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - Public comment is [open through October 27](#) on a proposal to increase cave tour rates for youth under the age of six-years-old. The new ticket prices would begin non March 1, 2025. Source: [Mammoth Cave National Park](#)
- *National Heritage Areas* (an NPS-administered program) - Public comment is [open through November 25](#) on a feasibility study for the designation of Ka'ena Point as a National Heritage Area. Source: [Maui News](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - Public comment is [open through October 30](#) on a design concept for the proposed Fallen Journalists Memorial. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is [open through November 8](#) on a proposal to demolish “up to 19 historic structures and one modern addition to a historic structure.” This project will allow for upgrades to infrastructure at the park. There is [a storymap](#) available for the project. Source: Steve Hastings
- *Rock Creek Park* - The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority and NPS have [opened public comment through December 6](#) on a proposal to construct the Piney Branch Tunnel Project within Rock Creek Park, part of the larger DC Clean Rivers Project to better control stormwater and sewage overflow. Source: [Washington Citypaper](#)
- *Stones River National Battlefield* - Public comment is currently open on a trail plan for the

park. The public can view plans at in-person meetings on October 25 and 26, or can contact the park at stri_administration@nps.gov to receive an email copy of the plans and instructions for submitting comments. Source: [Stones River National Battlefield](#)

- *Valles Caldera National Preserve* - Public comment is [open through November 3](#) on a fire management plan. Source: [Valles Caldera National Preserve](#)
- *White Sands National Park* - Public comment is [open through October 24](#) on a proposed increase in fees for moonlight hikes, Lake Lucero tours, and astronomy programs. Source: [White Sands National Park](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *DOI guidance for legacy pollution* - On October 1, the Department of the Interior released draft guidance for how states can apply for \$40 million in Regulatory Improvement Grant funding to clean up unsafe orphaned oil and gas wells. The funding is available from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings, and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director 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.

Senate & House Actions

There is nothing to report, as both the Senate and House were either in Pro Forma Session or on recess during the last two weeks.

Incidents

Incidents are listed in alphabetical order by park.

Many Parks (see below)

Hurricane Helene & Hurricane Milton

Many parks were affected by Hurricane Helene, up and down the Eastern seaboard the week of September 22. Several parks were still in recovery when Hurricane Milton landed the week of October 6. The following updates are as of Monday, October 14. For the latest updates, please see each park's website.

- [Andrew Johnson National Historic Site](#): The park reopened, but “visitors should exercise caution as maintenance crews are still engaged in clean-up efforts.
- [Appalachian National Scenic Trail](#): There are a number of closures along the trail and assessments have still not been completed for many sections, particularly through Virginia

and North Carolina.

- [Blue Ridge Parkway](#): The full length of the parkway was closed due to damage from Hurricane Helene. One park report called it "catastrophic damage," while another documented "tens of thousands of trees across the roadway and nearly three dozen rock and mud slides." The NPS deployed its Eastern Incident Management Team to support recovery, including 214 NPS employees representing 57 national park units. On October 11, the parkway reopened milepost 0 to milepost 198 in Virginia. Source: [WSET](#), Blue Ridge Parkway ([10/8](#), [10/11](#))
- [Canaveral National Seashore](#): As of October 15, the park remains closed for cleanup and recovery after Hurricane Milton. Apollo Beach is expected to reopen with limited access on October 18.
- [Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site](#): The whole park remains closed due to impacts from Hurricane Helene.
- [Castillo de San Marcos National Monument](#) - The park was closed for safety assessments and storm debris from Hurricane Milton, and reopened on October 12.
- [Congaree National Park](#): Part of the Boardwalk is closed due to storm damage. Many other trails in the floodplain have trees down and require "advanced navigation" skills.
- [Cowpens National Battlefield](#): The whole park remains closed due to damage from Hurricane Helene.
- [Cumberland Gap National Historical Park](#): All bike trails and horse trails are closed. Many hiking trails have extensive trees down and "unpredictable hazards."
- [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#): On October 12, the park reopened for day-use visitors, front country camping, and Lands & Legacy Tours. As of October 11, all trails north of Stafford Beach campground remain closed until further assessments and clean-up.
- [De Soto National Memorial](#): The whole park remains closed due to damage from both hurricanes. Damage assessments and cleanup are underway.
- [Dry Tortugas National Park](#): Garden and Loggerhead Keys reopened on October 11. Mariners are advised to keep a lookout for marine hazards and missing navigation aids.
- [Fort Frederica National Monument](#): The park reopened to the public on October 12 after a three-week closure.
- [Fort Matanzas National Monument](#): The park is reopened after Hurricane Helene, then closed on October 7 for Hurricane Milton. It reopened on October 12. Ferry operations are canceled until further notice due to damage caused by Hurricane Milton. ([10/11 press release](#))
- [Fort Pulaski National Monument](#): The park closed on October 9 for Hurricane Milton and reopened on October 11.
- [Great Smoky Mountains](#): On October 11, the park announced that most trails on the Tennessee side of the park are open, while several trails on the North Carolina side are closed. The Cataloochee Valley remains closed due to Hurricane Helene impacts. The Balsam Mountain and Big Creek areas are also currently closed. ([10/11 press release](#))
- [Kings Mountain National Military Park](#): The whole park remains closed due to damage from Hurricane Helene.
- [Ninety Six National Historic Site](#): The whole park remains closed due to damage from Hurricane Helene.

- [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#): On October 13, Kingsley Plantation reopened. Cedar Point remains flooded.

Arches National Park

Hiker fall fatality

On October 8, a 68-year-old was near Black Arch Overlook on the Devils Garden Trail when they fell about 30 feet. Other visitors began CPR, and staff from the NPS, Grand County (UT) Sheriff's Office and EMS, Classic Air Medical, and the Utah Department of Public Safety responded to the incident. The individual was pronounced deceased at the scene. The incident is under investigation by the NPS and Grand County Sheriff's Office. Source: [Arches National Park](#)

Congaree National Park

Missing person

On October 3, a 28-year-old left their parent's house in Columbia, South Carolina, with no indication of anything amiss. Later that day, the parent received a message from one of the individual's friends saying that they received an SOS alert indicating the individual had gotten into a car crash. The parent attempted to reach the individual but was unsuccessful. The parent reported them missing on October 4. On October 5, the individual's car was located in Congaree at the Palmetto Trailhead. There were no signs of a car crash. The key was inside the car. The individual did not have needed medication with them. The NPS, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and Richland County Sheriff's Department conducted a search, including helicopters, boats, all-terrain vehicles, drones, and dogs. As of October 13, the individual had not been found. Source: [The Post and Courier](#), [NBC News](#)

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Algal blooms

On October 10, the park put out a press release warning visitors about algal blooms "scattered around Glen Canyon National Recreation Area." They have advised visitors to be aware and avoid recreating or taking pets to areas with "scummy waters." Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)

Grand Teton National Park

Support for Colorado technical rescue

On August 28, a hiker fell between 300 and 400 feet off Arikaree Peak, located in the Indian Peaks Wilderness of the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests to the south of Rocky Mountain National Park. The recovery efforts for the individual "went through a series of pauses...because of inclement weather and dangerous terrain." On October 3, ten agencies participated in a specialized search and recovery of the individual, including staff from Grand Teton National Park and Teton County (WY) Search and Rescue. They were able to offer "additional equipment and technical expertise" to the rescue. Other participating agencies included Grand County (CO) Sheriff's Department, Grand County Coroner's Office, Colorado

Search and Rescue, Boulder County, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, Alpine Rescue Team, Colorado Army National Guard, Med Evac, and the U.S. Forest Service. Source: [The Denver Post](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Multi-vehicle crash

On October 13, a three-vehicle crash occurred on Newfound Gap Road. Six people were injured in the accident, all reported to be adults. Two of the injured were taken to a hospital via ambulance. Source: [Sports Illustrated](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Algal blooms

The park has announced the observation of toxic algal blooms in several places on Lake Mohave. The toxin levels exceed safe levels for public contact, per metrics established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. Visitors are advised to avoid swimming and to keep pets from drinking from or swimming in the water. Source: [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#)

Mount Rainier National Park

Hiker fatality

On September 16, a 22-year-old went for a hike on "one of the trails in the Sunrise area of the park." On September 23, a welfare check was requested by their employer after they missed a few days of work. On September 26, the individual was found deceased from a fall, having died of "multiple blunt force injuries." The incident was deemed an accident. Source: [The News Tribune](#)

Voyageurs National Park

NPS staff fatality in rescue

On October 6, a group of three visitors put in a "distress call" near Birch Cove Island on Namakan Lake. NPS law enforcement ranger Kevin Grossheim, 55, responded in an NPS boat and took the three individuals aboard. While navigating winds over 40 miles per hour and five- to six-foot-tall waves, the boat overturned. The three visitors were able to reach safety, but Kevin was unaccounted for in the aftermath. The park conducted a three-hour search and found Kevin deceased. His body was recovered that afternoon. The NPS is investigating the incident. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#), [KARE11](#)

Zion National Park

Canyoneering fatality

On October 5, a group of four was canyoneering in Heaps Canyon when one of them, a 40-year-old, fell about 150-200 feet. Personnel from the Zion Technical Search and Rescue Team and the Washington County (UT) Sheriff's Office provided emergency medical care. The individual was extracted by a Utah Department of Public Safety (DPS) helicopter and brought to a landing site

near Watchman Campground. The individual then received medical care from Hurricane Valley Fire and Rescue and Intermountain Life Flight. However, the individual was pronounced deceased before they could be transported by air ambulance to a hospital. The following morning, October 6, two of the other members of the party were extracted by the DPS helicopter. Zion's SAR team assisted the final member of the party in rappelling down the canyon. The incident is under investigation by the NPS and Washington County Sheriff's Office. The Springdale Police Department also supported the incident. Source: [Zion National Park](#)

Wildfires

- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - On September 15, a wildfire started due to an eruption of Kīlauea volcano in the East Rift Zone. On October 8, the park closed the parking lot at Maunaulu and Nāpau Trail due to suppression efforts. On October 11, the Manaulu area and associated trails reopened. As of October 11, the fire was 78 acres and 70% contained. Source: Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park ([10/8](#), [10/11](#))
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - On October 10, a fire started due to a coal seam on U.S. Forest Service land adjacent to the park. 56 acres burned, eight of those in the park near Pasture 10. Later the same day, the fire was contained. Source: [KFYR](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - On October 10, the Presidio Trust and NPS announced that they had "lethally removed" a coyote that had been displaying "unusually bold behavior" toward both dogs and people unaccompanied by dogs (see [10/2/24 Coalition Report](#)). Source: [Presidio Trust](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On October 1, a 21-year-old was sentenced after pleading guilty to arson at a concessioner housing unit on May 18 (see [5/29/24 Coalition Report](#)). The individual pushed their way into their ex-partner's locked cabin while they were gone, poured a bottle of clear liquor on the bed, lit one of the resident's shirts on fire, then put it on the bed. The individual left the cabin as the bed began to burn. A bystander put most of the fire out before responders arrived, though the walls and ceiling were damaged by flames and smoke. The individual was sentenced to 20 months in federal prison, five years of supervised release, and over \$20,000 in restitution. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- *Katmai National Park and Preserve* - On October 7, the lower Brooks River corridor from Brooks Falls downstream to the elevated bridge and boardwalk reopened after a closure due to habituated bear behavior (see [10/2/24 Coalition Report](#)). One section downstream of the elevated bridge and boardwalk will remain closed due to the presence of a bear carcass, which is a concentrated food source for other bears. Source: [Katmai National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On October 2, after 11 days of searching, the park announced it has transitioned its search for a missing 22-year-old backpacker on Eagle Peak (see

[10/2/24 Coalition Report](#)) from "rescue" to "recovery" mode, with limited searching "as conditions warrant." Over 100 personnel participated in the search, including two helicopters, search dog teams, ground teams with spotting scopes, trackers, and a drone. On October 13, the park sent out a new aerial search "as areas of the park previously under snow have become visible in recent days." As of October 14, the individual had not been found. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#), [New York Post](#)

Corrections

In the 10/2/24 *Coalition Report*, we mistakenly identified Cumberland Gap National Historical Park in the Hurricane Helene incident list as the park with its shared first name (Cumberland Island National Seashore). Both parks sustained damage in the storm. Thanks to Linda Finn for bringing this to our attention.

Acknowledgments

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Amy Gilbert Fehir, Steve Pittleman, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Don Hellmann, Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Linda Finn, Steve Hastings, John Quinley, Tom Tschohl, Bill Walters

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to:

report@protectnps.org.

* * * * *

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."

To receive a copy of this free publication, [join or support the Coalition](#). Any current, retired, or former-salaried (GS, Wage System, Seasonal, Temporary, or SES) National Park Service employee or volunteer who served under a signed volunteer agreement can join the Coalition. Coalition supporters who do not qualify under those criteria [may also join](#) and receive the newsletter.

--- ### ---

Support the Coalition By Donating Today