



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Happy holidays from all of us here at the Coalition.

Coalition Actions

The Coalition and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility submitted [a letter](#) to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and House Committee on Natural Resources urging them to rescind their reported plan impose artificial limits on performance ratings for NPS employees, requiring the majority to be rated a “3” (out of 5), regardless of documented performance.

We joined the National Parks Second Century Action Coalition in submitting [comments](#) to the House and Senate Congressional Appropriations Committees to ask them to maintain NPS funding levels, prohibit reductions in force for the NPS, protect national parks from being sold, and to uphold efforts of accountability and transparency.

The Coalition submitted [comments](#) on the Bureau of Land Management Montana/Dakotas Office Second Quarter Oil and Gas Lease Sale plan, asking it to leave parcels adjacent to Theodore Roosevelt National Park unleased because of conflicts with conservation and multiple use, and citing that their analysis fails to accurately describe the effects of drilling operations near the park.

We joined three other conservation groups in [comments](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency urging it to withdraw its proposed approval of Alaska’s Regional Haze Statement Implementation Plan for the second planning period, arguing it violates the Clean Air Act and Regional Haze Rule, affecting Alaska’s public lands.

Coalition Executive Council member Elaine Leslie participated in [a panel with Climate Action Now](#), discussing how climate change is affecting wildlife.

The Coalition continues to make press releases and give statements to the media about the threats to the National Park Service. Recent work includes:

- [Retired Park Leaders: Lee Proposal Could “Gut National Parks” and “End the National Park Service As We Know It”](#), Coalition press release, picked up by many outlets
- [New US National Park Fees For International Visitors Draw Scrutiny](#), *Inside Climate News*
- [National Park Superintendents Ordered to Cap Employee Evaluations](#), *National Parks Traveler*
- [Cuts hurt Great Smoky Mountains National Park. What’s coming in 2026?](#), *Knox News*
- [Timed entry at Zion National Park is good for the park, its visitors, and neighboring communities](#) (op-ed by Coalition Member Donald Falvey), *The Salt Lake Tribune*

National/Regional NPS Updates

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

- *New guidance for employee reviews* - In a conference call on December 11, NPS Deputy Director of Operations Frank Lands told superintendents that 80% of their staff be rated at a 3 on a 1-5 scale, with only 1-5% rated at a 5. On December 12, the Interior Department stated that “there is no percentage cap” on certain performance ratings, and stated that “the goal of this effort is to ensure fair, consistent performance evaluations across all of our parks and programs.” The order may be a violation of the Code of Federal Regulations, which states that a forced distribution of ratings is illegal. The order could be an effort to align with an Office of Personnel Management proposal that states that future reductions in the federal workforce will be based on the weighted sum of the three most recent performance appraisals. [Editor note: See the Coalition’s statement on this issue above in “Coalition Actions.”] Source: [The Washington Post](#), [Government Executive](#), [KQED](#)
- *Lawsuit over removing public comment* - On December 18, the Center for Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit against the NPS and many other federal agencies arguing that the Trump Administration’s efforts to remove public comment from environmental reviews violates the National Environmental Policy Act, Council of Environmental Quality procedures, and the Administrative Procedures Act. Source: [Courthouse News Service](#)
- *End to hiring freeze* - On December 9, the Department of the Interior released a memo stating that it would lift the federal hiring freeze that has been in place since January. However, the Office of Personnel Management and Office of Management and Budget have stated that the Interior may hire “no more than one employee for every four employees that depart,” except for positions related to public safety. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)

- *Reclassification of locality pay* - On October 1, the Office of Personnel Management created new locality areas for the Federal Wage System. The Department of the Interior said that “most wage system employees will see a pay increase under the new structure. A small number of locations, including Yosemite [National Park], will see a decrease based on the updated OPM tables.” Source: [KQED](#)
- *Lawsuit over Trump’s image on parks pass* - On Dec 10, the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture, claiming that putting President Donald Trump’s image on the America the Beautiful Annual Pass violates the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. The statute requires public participation in the selection of annual pass photos. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *White House expansion lawsuits* - On December 12, the National Trust for Historic Preservation filed a lawsuit against the National Park Service (and other parties, including President Donald Trump) over the demolition of the East Wing of the White House in preparation for the planned ballroom expansion, claiming that the construction violates the Administrative Procedure Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. On December 16, a federal court judge rejected the request for an immediate stop to the construction, though the issue will still work its way through the courts. In the ruling, the judge "emphasized that the Trump Administration must meet its commitment to submitting finalized project plans to federal review panels by the end of December. On December 22, Public Citizen filed a lawsuit against the NPS and the Department of the Interior for failing to respond to a Freedom of Information Act request filed on October 22 for information on the ballroom construction contract. Source: [Politico](#), [Associated Press](#), [Construction Owners](#), [Public Citizen](#)
- *Plastic-free parks* - The 5 Gyres Institute put together its fourth annual [Plastic-Free Parks report](#), documenting efforts to track and remove microplastics from federal lands through targeted events and the TrashBlitz app. The results found that 85% of all trash was plastic, and 22% were food and beverage products. Source: *The 5 Gyres Institute*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Acadia National Park* - On December 18, the NPS announced the award of two contracts to complete employee housing projects at Harden Farm. King Construction of Machias, Maine, which constructed the first 28 bedroom facility on the site, will construct another 28 new bedrooms. McKenzie Construction and Site Development of Washington, DC, will construct the sewer system. The project is being funded by the Friends of Acadia, National Park Foundation, NPS Centennial Challenge and House Improvement programs, and funds from the Helium Act. Source: [Acadia National Park](#)
- *Anacostia Park, National Mall and Memorial Parks, Rock Creek Park* - President Donald Trump has alleged that the National Links Trust (NLT), a non-profit charged with managing

the East Potomac Golf Course, Langston Golf Course, and the Rock Creek Golf Course (all owned by the NPS), has violated unspecified terms of its lease and the administration is considering termination. NLT denies violating the lease and has stated they would like to continue managing the courses to be affordable and accessible. They are five years into a 50-year lease, with the goal of redesigning and renovating the courses. President Trump and staff have stated in different interviews that professional golfer Tiger Woods has agreed to help with the renovation of Langston, and that East Potomac will be converted from 36 holes to 18 holes, and renamed. Source: [Front Office Sports](#)

- *Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Noatak National Preserve, Kobuk Valley National Park* - The 2025 Eileen Devinney Award was given to Cyrus Naungaq Harris for his many contributions to Cape Krusenstern, including serving on the Subsistence Resources Commission, partnering on the Maniilaq Hunter Support Program, and providing an oral history for a new film. The award is given each year for individuals contributing service and the perpetuation of traditional knowledge at the three parks. Source: [Kobuk Valley National Park](#)
- *Clara Barton National Historic Site* - The park recently collaborated with a group of Georgetown University students, who completed research projects about Clara Barton, then developed interpretive materials, such as storymaps, online exhibits, and lesson plans, based on those findings. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - On December 17, the NPS and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy finished a 15-year renovation project of Hawk Hill, stabilizing and improving the trails. Source: [KTVU](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - Starting on January 5, the park will begin a multi-year project to rehabilitate the Gatlinburg Spur road. Single-lane closures will be in effect during the project. The first phase is expected to wrap up on April 14. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Lake Clark National Park and Preserve* - PBS published an hour-long [documentary](#) following a seasonal cycle at the park, including interviews with Indigenous elders and park scientists. Source: *PBS*
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - On December 12, the NPS announced that the parkway rehabilitation project has been delayed by “unforeseen site conditions and weather delays.” The parkway is currently closed between Mississippi Highway 413 (milepost 181) and U.S. Highway 82 (milepost 204), and a new reopening date for that segment is not yet available. It has been closed since June 9. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On December 10, the NPS announced the early completion of the Tidal Basin seawall reconstruction, the first of two phases to strengthen the shoreline. The second phase will stabilize the Potomac River seawall, and is expected to be complete in May 2026. A major landscape restoration will also take place this spring

to replant 426 trees, including 269 cherry trees. Source: [National Mall and Memorial Parks](#)

- *Rock Creek Park* - On December 10, the NPS issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for a plan to rebuild 1.5 miles of Broad Branch Road NW between Linnean Avenue NW and Beach Drive NW. This includes transferring a small piece of land from the NPS to the District [of Columbia] Department of Transportation. It will also include a new sidewalk from the Soapstone Valley Trailhead to parking at Picnic Grove #2 North. Timing for the project has not yet been announced. Source: [Rock Creek Park](#)
- *Saguaro National Park* - On December 16, the Pima County (AZ) Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to sell just over 400 acres of land, made up of 13 parcels over four areas, to the NPS for \$2.96 million. The parcels are located across a “roughly three-mile area” north of Gates Pass Road and east of Kinney Road (adjacent to the West District of the park). The Trust for Public Land also just acquired 20 acres just south of the Sweetwater Preserve, which will also be added to the park. Source: [Tucson.com](#)
- *Saguaro National Park* - On January 5, the park will begin a project to resurface the accessible Mica View Trail. It will be closed during the project, which is expected to be complete by March 7. The Mica View Picnic Area and Broadway Trailhead will remain open during construction. Source: [Saguaro National Park](#)
- *San Antonio Missions National Historical Park* - On December 20, the park honored the Joint Base San Antonio 502nd Force Support Group with the 2026 Superintendent’s Partnership Award. The group has partnered for ten years in its Work Force Alliance, veteran outreach, and recreational outings for military families. Acting Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks was in attendance at the ceremony. Source: [San Antonio Missions National Historical Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Cowboy State Daily* published [an article](#) about how the park removes large animals, such as bison, when they have become deceased near popular visitor areas. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*
- *Yosemite National Park* - The *Fresno Bee* published [an article](#) about the Yosemite Search and Rescue team, including stats for the 2024 calendar year. Source: *The Fresno Bee*

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

- Lawrence “Larry” Allen Belli, 77, passed away on December 9. Larry worked for the NPS for many years, including time at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, Everglades National Park, and as superintendent at Cape

Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial. Source: [Legacy/Vay-Schleich and Meeson Funeral and Cremation Chapels - Greece Chapel](#)

- Judy Chetwin, 75, passed away on December 3. Judy worked for the NPS over 30 years, including time at the National Capital Region, Morristown National Historical Park, Fort Point National Historic Site, Pinnacles National Park, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the Southwest Region, and Intermountain Region, retiring in 2009. Source: Cliff Chetwin, [Rivera Family Funeral Home](#)
- Robert “Bob” M. Daum, 69, passed away on August 26. Bob worked for the NPS for over 36 years, including time at Indiana Dunes National Park, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, and Cumberland Island National Seashore. Source: [Ott/Haverstock Funeral Chapel and Cremation Services](#)
- Frank Joseph Deckert, III, 81, passed away on December 11. Frank worked for the NPS for 36 years, including time at Shenandoah National Park, Isle Royale National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the Alaska Regional Office, and as superintendent at Petersburg National Battlefield, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and Big Bend National Park, retiring in 2003. Source: [Affinity Funeral Service](#)
- Charles “Chuck” “Charlie” Farrell Harris, 84, passed away on November 27. Chuck worked for the NPS for 30 years, including time at Rocky Mountain National Park, Natchez Trace Parkway, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Badlands National Park (then Monument), Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Cape Lookout National Seashore, retiring in 1998. Source: [Legacy/Noe-Brooks Funeral Home and Crematory - Morehead City](#)
- Karen V. Hill, 72, passed away on November 24. At the date of her passing, Karen was the President and CEO of the Harriet Tubman Home, a non-profit organization that manages the home. Karen was pivotal in getting the site established as Harriet Tubman National Historical Park. Source: [Andre F. Baker Funeral Home](#)
- Janis Jane Johnson, 76, passed away on December 13. She worked for the NPS for many years. Source: [W TOK](#)
- Billy Emmanuel Lyon, 96, passed away on December 8. Bill spent “more than ten summers” as a seasonal ranger with the NPS at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Antietam National Battlefield, and Gettysburg National Military Park. Source: [Herald-Mail Media](#)
- Leslie Parrish, 81, passed away on December 11. Leslie volunteered at Great Basin National Park for five years. Source: [Parker-Price and Davidson](#)
- Betty Reid Soskin, 104, passed away on December 21. She supported the creation of Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park in 2000, then worked

for the NPS from 2011 until her retirement in 2022 at age 100, making her the oldest National Park Service ranger. Betty lit the National Christmas Tree at the White House in 2015 and received a presidential coin from President Barack Obama. Source: [KQED](#), [Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park](#)

- Ellsworth R. Swift, 94, passed away on December 17. Ellsworth worked for the NPS for many years, including time at Shenandoah National Park, Devils Tower National Monument, National Capital Parks, as acting superintendent at Canyon De Chelly National Monument, and retiring as deputy manager for the Harpers Ferry Center. He was the recipient of a Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award. Source: [Legacy/Olean Times Herald](#)

Open for Comment

Items will stay on this list until public comment has closed. Listed alphabetically, except for items affecting the entire NPS, which are listed on top.

- *Bandelier National Monument* - Public comment is [open through February 1](#) on a fire management plan for the park. Source: [KRQE](#)
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through December 31](#) on a site management plan for the Orrs Ferry unit. There is [a storymap](#) for the project. Source: [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - Public comment will be open from January 12 to February 12 on a proposed plan for improvements near the Old Town North neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia, including new trail connections to the Mount Vernon Trail, more access to the Potomac River, more public space, and transportation upgrades. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Point Reyes National Seashore, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park* - The NPS and the Federal Aviation Administration have [opened public comment through January 2](#) on a proposed commercial air tour voluntary agreement for the four parks. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East* - The NPS and Washington, DC's Department of Energy and Environment have opened [public comment through January 23](#) on an ecological restoration of Kingman Lake. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - Public comment is [open through January 21](#) on an initial design plan for the Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge, which burned down in May 2023. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - Public comment is [open through January 8](#) on a plan to

improve wetland habitats and stabilize moose populations in the park. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)

Other Relevant Department of the Interior News

- *Wind leases paused* - On December 22, the Department of the Interior announced that it is pausing leases for all large-scale offshore wind projects due to “national security risks identified by the Department of War.” They cited radar interference as the concern. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

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

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

December 9 - The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing to examine:

- S.290, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to Next Generation 9–1–1 systems
- S.446, to prohibit Big Cypress National Preserve from being designated as federal wilderness or as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System
- S.573, to designate a mountain in the state of Alaska as Denali
- S.730, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument
- S.791, to establish the Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site in the State of Maryland as an affiliated area of the National Park System
- H.R. 186 and S.858, bills to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work on the National Mall to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients
- S.1088, to provide that the memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and service of the women who worked on the home front to support the efforts of the United States military during World War II may be located on the National Mall
- S.1131, to establish the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the state of Georgia (currently Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park)
- S.1135, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail

- S.1353, to extend the authority for modifications to the Second Division Memorial in the District of Columbia (part of The White House and President's Park, located near the White House)
- S.1377, to ensure the maintenance of a herd of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park
- S.1518, to redesignate the Saratoga National Historical Park as the "Saratoga National Battlefield Park"
- S.1777, to amend the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 to expand the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park, and to re-designate the Cottonwood Visitor Center at Joshua Tree National Park as the "Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center"
- S.1870, to adjust the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor
- S.1926, to encourage reduction of disposable plastic products in units of the National Park System
- S.2270, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the portion of the Myakka River in Sarasota County, Florida, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
- S.2308, to amend the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to collect a surcharge from international visitors to units of the National Park System
- S.2369, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to remove or permanently conceal the name of Francis Newlands on the grounds of the memorial fountain located at Chevy Chase Circle in the District of Columbia (part of Rock Creek Park, located adjacent to the park). Francis Newlands was a white supremacist and segregationist who developed whites-only neighborhoods in the area around Rock Creek.
- S. 2385, to codify Executive Order 14253 relating to "restoring truth and sanity to American history"
- S.2546, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs
- S.2708, the "Appalachian Trail Centennial Act," to enhance the preservation, maintenance, and management of national historic trails and national scenic trails
- S.2970, to authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park,
- H.R. 249, to re-designate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Testimony was heard from Senators Kaine and Van Hollen; and Mike Caldwell, Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

December 16 - The Senate passed S. 3490, the National Historic Park and National Historic Landmark Establishment and Boundary Adjustment Act, to establish the Fort Ontario Holocaust Refugee Shelter National Historical Park in New York, and to designate the America's National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark in Fulton, Missouri.

The Senate also passed the Modernizing Access to our Public Water Act, also known as the MAPWaters Act, which would provide an investment in technology to provide federal waterway users the information needed to utilize lands safely and legally.

December 17 - The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered favorably reported the following business items:

- S.858, to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work on the National Mall to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S.1377, to ensure the maintenance of a herd of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park
- S.1470, to require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to prioritize the completion of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail
- S.2033, to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on existing programs, rules, and authorities that enable or inhibit wildfire mitigation across land ownership boundaries on federal and non-federal land, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute
- S. 2546, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs

House of Representatives Actions

December 9 - The House passed:

- H.R. 4285, the Semiquincentennial Tourism and Access to Recreation Sites Act (also may be cited as the “STARS Act”), which directs the Secretary of the Interior to designate an entrance-fee free date in 2026 at National Park Service sites in order to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States of America; establishes September 17, 2026, as an entrance-fee free date on which admission is free to all visitors with respect to each public lands site that charges an entrance fee.
- H.R. 2290, the World War II Women's Memorial Location Act, to provide that the memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and service of the women who worked on the home front to support the efforts of the United States military during World War II may be located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.
- H.R. 2306, the Adams Memorial-Great American Heroes Act, to reauthorize the Adams Memorial Commission through 2032.

December 11 - The House Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on a number of bills, including:

- H.R. 5095, the “HOMEFRONT Act of 2025,” to amend title 54, United States Code, and title 10, United States Code to exempt certain units of military housing from the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act

- H.R. 5729, the “North Rim Restoration Act of 2025,” to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving, and expediting contractor approval for the clearing, rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of the Grand Canyon grounds that have been impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire
- H.R. 6380, the “Chiricahua National Park Act,” that would establish the Chiricahua National Park in the State of Arizona as a unit of the National Park System (currently Chiricahua National Monument).

Testimony was heard from Representatives Neguse, Ciscomani, Crane, Kean, McGuire and Patronis; Greg Hancock, Mayor, Willcox, Arizona; Curtis Sheets, Chief, Wintergreen Fire and Rescue, Nellysford, Virginia; Brad White, Chief, Grand Fire Protection District No. 1, Granby, Colorado; and public witnesses.

December 15 - The House Committee on Natural Resources filed a supplemental report on H.R. 4776, to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to clarify ambiguous provisions and facilitate a more efficient, effective, and timely environmental review process.

December 16 - The House filed a report on H. Res. 951, providing for consideration of the bill H.R. 4776 to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) to clarify ambiguous provisions and facilitate a more efficient, effective, and timely environmental review process. The bill, Standardizing Permitting and Expediting Economic Development Act, or the “SPEED Act,” limits the scope of NEPA and modifies the environmental review of major federal actions under NEPA to generally limit the number of federal actions that trigger NEPA review and to expedite the review process.

Proposed Legislation of Note

We don’t usually report on proposed legislation until it has gained enough traction to make it to the committee level (see above). Many proposed bills go nowhere. However, some proposals receive significant media attention or would have significant enough impact on the National Park Service that we note them here.

In a Department of the Interior appropriations bill, Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) proposed an amendment that would remove language stating that national park units are federal lands staffed and maintained by federal employees, as well as language maintaining that federal lands remain federal lands. Critics have feared that this amendment would open parks to sell-offs or staffing by private contract. However, the NPS has stated that it would prefer the removal of this provision to avoid unnecessary conflicts with interagency management, as well as land exchanges and minor boundary adjustments. Senator Lee later struck the amendment from the bill. [Editor note: See the Coalition’s statement on this amendment above in “Coalition Actions.”] Source: [SFGate](#), [Deseret News](#)

H.R. 6714, introduced in the House on December 15, would ban foreign-made products being sold in the National Park System. Source: [Fox 11 Los Angeles](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

200 turtles rescued

Since Thanksgiving, NPS staff and volunteers from the Network for Endangered Sea Turtles have rescued “almost 200” cold-stunned turtles. Source: [Outer Banks Voice](#)

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Bridge deterioration

On December 18, the park closed the Lander Lock Bridge (lock 19 at mile marker 50.8) in Point of Rocks, Maryland, to all vehicle traffic. A recent inspection revealed that that bridge’s steel is in “a state of advanced corrosion.” It remains open to bicyclists and pedestrians. There is no reopening date yet. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Record rainfall

The park experienced its wettest fall (September to November) and its wettest November on record, with 2.41 inches and 1.76 inches of rain, respectively. This broke the previous record set in 1923. Storms have caused numerous road closures throughout the park. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park

Flooding and landslides

The week of December 7, the park experienced “severe flooding” and landslides, creating “unsafe conditions and limited basic services” in the Stehekin Valley. The Stehekin Valley Road is “severely damaged” and can only been used by 4-wheel drive vehicles, and the wastewater treatment plant “was destroyed.” On December 13, Stehekin Valley was evacuated due to further predicted rains. Crews are working to stabilize the area. Impacts throughout the park are unknown and will be assessed further in the spring. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#) ([12/14](#), [12/19](#))

Olympic National Park

Fishing paused to support steelhead

On December 16, the Queets River was closed to sport fishing due to the low forecasted return of wild steelhead. It is the eighth straight year that they have failed to meet the escapement goal of 4,200 fish. A recent study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration showed that Olympic Peninsula steelhead are at “moderate risk of extinction.” The Queets River is

expected to reopen to recreational fishing on June 1. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

Ozark National Scenic Riverways **NPS employee charged with theft**

On December 15, a 45-year-old, former employee of the NPS, was sentenced for one count of theft of government property. The individual pleaded guilty to stealing \$249,000 in “campsite and tour fees” from the park, while serving as a supervisory visitor use assistant. They stated that they altered records and made false deposit reports to hide the crime. They were sentenced to five years of probation and will repay the entirety of the funds. Source: [KRCG](#)

Point Reyes National Seashore **Assault on elephant seal**

On December 6, a livestream camera at Chimney Rock caught two individuals throwing rocks at an elephant seal lying on the beach. Several rocks appeared to hit the seal. An individual in Japan watching the livestream reported the incident to the Marine Mammal Center, who operates the camera. The NPS has released the footage and is asking for any information the public can provide. The animals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act and “other NPS wildlife regulations.” Source: [SFGate](#)

Follow-Ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On December 17, the park allowed hotels on the South Rim to reopen following repairs to the Transcanyon Waterline. They had been closed since December 6. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Horseshoe Bend National Military Park* - On December 15, the park reopened the tour road and portions of the eastern trail system for the first time since a tornado hit the park in March. A few trails and overlooks are still impacted, and park staff are working to clear them. Source: [Horseshoe Bend National Military Park](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On December 17, the park announced that the search for a missing 26-year-old whose car was found at the Sol Duc Trailhead (see [12/10/25 Coalition Report](#)) has moved into a “clue-responsive, limited continuous phase.” The NPS welcomes any information the public might have. A multi-agency effort attempted to find the individual, utilizing drones, dog teams, snorkel surveys, technical rope operations, and ground teams, but they were unsuccessful. Agencies included the NPS, Port Angeles (WA) Police Department, Aramark, Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office, Jefferson County Search and Rescue, Port Townsend Police, Kitsap County Search and Rescue and Search Dogs, Olympic Mountain Rescue, Mason County Search and Rescue, Pierce County Search and Rescue, Clallam County Sheriff’s Office, Washington State Emergency Management Division, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Washington State Search and Rescue Planning Unit. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

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

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The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks 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.



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