



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

This report goes out every two weeks. For more frequent updates, follow the Coalition on social media:



In Memoriam

Today, we honor the life and legacy of Rick Smith, who passed away on July 16. Rick worked for the NPS for several decades, including time at Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park, the Albright Training Center, the NPS Division of Legislation, the Mid-Atlantic Region, and Everglades National Park. He retired as the associate regional director for natural resources at the Southwest Regional Office. After Rick retired from his long and distinguished career of service as an NPS ranger, trainer, and manager, he continued working for our national parks. He was the second chair of the Coalition (then known as the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees), as well as the second president of the International Ranger Federation. In 2019, Rick received the Coalition's 1872 Award, given to an individual for outstanding service and support for the mission of the Coalition. Up until his passing, Rick was also the lead moderator of the Parklands Watch news group, which has been instrumental in compiling the *Coalition Report*. Rick was a mentor, friend, and passionate supporter of our national parks. He will be greatly missed, but his legacy lives on in our continued work to protect our national parks.

Coalition Actions

The Coalition, in collaboration with the National Parks Conservation Association, Association of National Park Rangers, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, released [a new analysis](#) detailing the impacts of staffing cuts on the National Park Service in response to the Supreme Court ruling allowing federal agencies to conduct Reductions in Force while lawsuits

make their way through the judicial system.

We collaborated with the Sustainable Energy and Environmental Coalition Institute on [a new report](#) about the effects of climate change on national parks.

The Coalition joined over 260 organizations in [a letter](#) to the House Committee on Appropriations opposing the proposed elimination of the NPS Community Assistance Programs, which include the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Heritage Areas, the National Register of Historic Places, Hydropower Assistance Program, and several grant programs.

We joined several dozen organizations in [a letter](#) to the House Committee on Appropriations opposing onshore oil and gas riders in the FY26 House Interior appropriations bill, arguing they reinstate wasteful leasing practices, cut the public out of decision making, and strip away commonsense fiscal reforms that ensure the industry pays its fair share.

The Coalition continues to provide interviews and resources for the media, including [a press release](#) arguing that the House appropriations bill mark-up would be disastrous for the National Park Service, and recent articles in [The Post and Courier](#), [High Country News](#), and [Roll Call](#).

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.

- *Probationary employees can bring class-action suit* - On July 18, the Merit Systems Protection Board ruled that 1,700 probationary-status Department of the Interior employees qualify as a class and can collectively challenge their illegal firings in February. Source: [E&E News](#)
- *Mather and Albright Centers to close* - The Department of the Interior is closing the Horace P. Albright Training Center, located at Grand Canyon National Park, and the Stephen T. Mather Training Center, located at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. A representative from the DOI stated, "This consolidation reflects an internal shift in how the NPS manages training and workforce development. It is not a reflection of the value of the training programs themselves, which remain a critical component of our agency's mission to support and develop the NPS workforce." The buildings that housed these programs are under management by their respective parks. Grand Canyon "has decided that the training center lodging will be transitioned to housing for park contractors, and Kowski Hall, the training center rooms and offices, will be used for office space, meeting space, and park-specific training." Source: [National Parks Traveler](#), [Costa Dillon Facebook post](#)
- *NPS retail under scrutiny for "disparaging" narratives* - On July 9, the acting director of the NPS issued [a memo](#) mandating all NPS units conduct a review of all retail items and report any content by July 18 that includes "images, descriptions, depictions, messages,

narratives or other information (content) that, without right reason, inappropriately disparages Americans past or living (including persons living in colonial times), or with respect to content describing natural features, that emphasizes matters unrelated to the beauty, abundance, or grandeur of said feature.” Source: *NewsWire* - July 2025 (Public Lands Alliance newsletter), [The Washington Post](#)

- *Air pollution at parks* - *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) about the state of air quality at national parks, including a tool that people can use to look up air quality at a particular park (data permitting). Generally, east coast park units have worse air quality due to coal burning. Meanwhile, western parks are affected by seasonal wildfires. Executive Council Chair Phil Francis and Coalition Member Bill Wade are quoted in the article. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *“Save our Signs” project* - The Data Rescue Project, an effort to protect and catalog data that is being erased by the federal government, has created the “Save Our Signs” project, a crowd-sourced effort to take pictures of any interpretive signage in NPS units, then upload them to their shared server. This is in response to the order for parks to post a QR code for national park visitors to report signs that “inappropriately disparage Americans.” Source: [Data Rescue Project](#)
- *VA County proposes to have state manage NPS parks during shutdowns* - On July 15, the Arlington County (VA) Parks and Recreation Commission included a recommendation in its 2026 state legislative priorities to have state government fund and manage operations of its NPS sites during federal government shutdowns. If a state bill passes, an agreement will be needed between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Department of the Interior. Source: [ARL Now](#)
- *How sale of public lands was overridden* - *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) chronicling the path by which a budget provision to sell off public lands was ultimately removed from the reconciliation bill, mostly due to conservative backlash. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *NPF receives \$1.5 million from Subaru* - On July 15, the National Park Foundation announced that Subaru of America, Inc., has donated over \$1.5 million through its 2024 Share the Love Event. Subaru has donated \$65 million to NPF since 2013. Source: [Morningstar](#)
- *National parks on The Daily Show* - On July 16, the news satire program *The Daily Show* ran [a segment](#) called “America’s National Parks Are Under Attack.” Source: *YouTube*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Arches National Park* - On July 15, the Grand County (UT) Commission voted 5-2 to

approve a letter to the Department of the Interior that asks them to “consider other options” to handle park visitation apart from timed entry, such as a shuttle system, adding a northern park entrance, building a new bike path in the park, or expanding park trails to disperse visitation more widely. Source: [KSL](#)

- *Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area* - The park recently plugged six orphaned wells and restored ecological function in those areas. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Catoctin Mountain Park* - On July 21, the park began a project to rehabilitate Foxville Deerfield Road, expecting to last four weeks. It will be closed during the project. In August, they will begin a project to rehabilitate Park Central Road. Temporary closures may be in place, with the project extending through October. Source: [Catoctin Mountain Park](#)
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - On July 11, the NPS celebrated the completion of a project to stabilize the “Log Wall,” a historic 1,015-foot-long drylaid stone wall at Mile 11, built between 1828 and 1831. Funding for the project came from the Great American Outdoors Act, and it was supported by the C&O Canal Trust. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - On July 10, the park and Summit Metro Parks announced the opening of a new Cuyahoga River access location, Northampton Point, located in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The site has parking, a seating area, a launch/takeout area, a small changing room, and will have a portable restroom during paddling season. The \$396,000 project was funded by Summit Metro Parks. Source: [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - On July 17, Interior Department Secretary Doug Burgum and Attorney General Pam Bondi visited Alcatraz Island, announcing plans to reopen the site as a prison, and directing U.S. Park Police and park staff to collaborate on the planning effort. Congress is expected to introduce legislation to convert it from a park site to a federal prison. Source: [KQED](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - *The New York Times* published [an article](#) about the aftermath of the burning of facilities at the North Rim (see “Incidents” below), including the effects on local businesses and employees who were stationed there. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Great Basin National Park* - On July 14, the park announced the opening of a new part of the park via an “Introduction to Wild Caving Tour.” These three-hour ranger-guided tours will visit areas of Lehman Caves that have been closed to the public since 1981, and will open the Behman Annex to visitors for the first time. Source: [Great Basin National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On July 14, the park will begin a project to rehabilitate 7 miles of Newfound Gap Road from Milepost 20.9 to 27.9. The project is expected to be complete by September 30. Single-lane closures may be in place. Source:

[Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)

- *Jimmy Carter National Historical Park* - On July 14, the park announced the opening of the Carter Gardens to public access for the first time. The location is the final resting place of President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter. Source: [Jimmy Carter National Historical Park](#)
- *National Capital Region, U.S. Park Police* - On July 2, Chenega Naswik International was awarded a five-year \$14.2 million contract to provide uniformed security services at several NPS units in the National Capital Region. Source: [ExecutiveBiz](#)
- *Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park* - On July 16, an announcement was made at at Georgia State Transportation Board Meeting that in April, the Georgia Department of Transportation donated 136 acres of land along Interstate 16 southeast of Macon to the park. The transaction has been in process since 2012. Source: [Athens Banner-Herald](#)
- *Ozark National Scenic Riverways* - The park has opened up applications through July 31 for two managed deer hunts, providing opportunities for youth and for veterans using mobility devices. Source: [Ozark National Scenic Riverways](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - The Rocky Mountain Conservancy is making a host of accessibility improvements at the park, including the replacement of 135 aging picnic tables with concrete tables that accommodate wheelchairs, the acquisition of an accessible shuttle bus, four all-terrain wheelchairs that can be rented for free at a local mountain gear shop, and a new Rocky Mountain National Park Accessibility Guide that will be published next spring. Source: [Estes Park Trail Gazette](#)
- *Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area* - On July 15, the park announced that they have released about 600 California red-legged frog tadpoles into streams in the park. The tadpole eggs were rescued in March 2025 during late winter storms and transferred to the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, where they were hatched and nurtured into tadpoles for release back into the park. The release sites will be monitored to track the development of the tadpoles and their success rate. The species is a federally threatened species under the Endangered Species Act and a California state species of special concern. Source: [Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
- *Valley Forge National Historical Park* - On July 14, the NPS put out a Request for Proposals for a 10-year commercial lease of the Kennedy Supplee mansion, carriage house, and associated grounds. Possible uses include a restaurant, office, or “other light commercial use.” The historic building was constructed in 1852. Applications are due by September 12. Source: [Valley Forge National Historical Park](#)
- *Vicksburg National Military Park* - The Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park recently received a \$2.8 million private donation. The gift will be matched by Centennial Challenge program funds, which will allow for a restoration of the Illinois Memorial and the removal of

a building incompatible with the historic battlefield landscape. Source: [Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park](#)

- *Yellowstone National Park* - On July 14, the U.S. Geological Survey made [an announcement](#) that scientists have identified a new thermal feature in the Norris Geyser Basin, a four-meter-diameter blue water pool in Porcelain Basin. It was likely formed by an unobserved hydrothermal explosion. Source: U.S. Geological Survey
- *Yosemite National Park* - A new book by Laurel Munson Boyers, *Across Yosemite's Wilderness - A Trailblazing Woman's Career Protecting the Park's Backcountry*, was just released by Falcon. It covers Laurel's career, as well as a history of wilderness policy. Source: [The Mercury News](#)

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

- Thomas "Tom" Hanson Gilmore, 93, passed away on July 4. Tom worked "for 42 days as a fire lookout on Mt. Washburn in Yellowstone National Park" during his retirement. Source: [Legacy/Huber Funeral Homes and Cremation Services: Eden Prairie](#)
- Robert Guon, 89, passed away on July 9. Robert was a long-time volunteer at Glacier National Park. Source: [Great Falls Tribune](#)
- John "Jonny" Johnson, passed away on July 4. John worked at Denali National Park and Preserve for one season in 1968. Source: [Legacy/Janssen's Alaska Cremation Center - Anchorage](#)
- Gerald "Jerry" W. Sanders, 77, passed away on July 10. Jerry worked for the NPS for 25 years, retiring as the supervisory park ranger/historian at Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial. Source: [Dubois County Free Press](#)

In the News

- *MPR News* published [an article](#) about Sharon Stiteler's adoption of one of the retired sled dogs, named Party Pants, from Denali National Park and Preserve after getting laid off from the U.S. Forest Service. Sharon previously worked at Denali. Source: *MPR News*
- *The Tribune* published [an article](#) about Bill Wade's efforts to support recently-fired rangers during layoffs this spring and to advocate for the National Park Service in his role as the executive director of the Association of National Park Rangers. Bill is a Coalition Member and the former superintendent of Shenandoah National Park. Source: *The Tribune*

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.

- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - Public comment is [open through July 23](#) on proposals to improve horseback riding in the park, in response to increased use. Source: [Bryce Canyon National Park](#)
- *Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area* - The NPS, Georgia Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and the City of Roswell (GA) have opened [public comment through July 31](#) on transportation improvement projects on State Route 9. Source: [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area](#)
- *Clara Barton National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through September 9](#) on a plan to rehabilitate the Clara Barton home. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Fort Raleigh National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through August 20](#) on a plan to stabilize one mile of shoreline for erosion control and protection of the Lost Colony Waterside Theater and historic Dough Cemetery. Source: [Fort Raleigh National Historic Site](#)
- *Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through August 11](#) on a frontcountry and visitor use plan for the park and the State Route 20 corridor. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#)
- *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve* - Public comment is [open through August 8](#) on the proposed relocation of the Fort Caroline Memorial out of the floodplain and away from the St. Johns River. Source: [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Land conveyance of Ambler Road site to Native corporation* - On July 16, the Department of the Interior announced the conveyance of 28,000 acres of land to NANA Regional Corporation, Inc., a provision of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The land is at the western end of the proposed Ambler Road corridor, which would allow for “local control over land use and resource development in the region.” Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Pebble Mine project possibly revitalized* - On July 3, the Department of Justice made a court filing with their openness to reconsideration of the Biden Administration decision to block the development of the Pebble Mine in Alaska. The mine has been tied up in the legal system for many years due to its potential impacts on one of the world’s largest

salmon runs. Source: [Alaska Beacon](#)

- *End of subsidies and more scrutiny for wind and solar* - On July 17, the Department of the Interior announced that it is ending subsidies for wind and solar projects, and will now implement “elevated review by the Office of the Secretary, including leases, rights-of-way, construction and operation plans, grants, consultations and biological opinions.” In the press release, it called wind and solar “economically unviable energy development” that would not be able to exist without “artificial advantages.” Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Updated guidelines for cleaning orphaned wells* - On July 17, the Department of the Interior updated guidelines for the two federal grant programs for cleaning up orphaned oil and gas wells, including removing pre-and post-plugging methane measurement, giving states more discretion to identify which wells to plug, and eliminating a post-award environmental review and approval process. 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

- **July 15:** The Salem Maritime National Historical Park Redesignation and Boundary Study Act (P.L. 119-25) was signed. It redesignated Salem Maritime from a National Historic Site to National Historical Park, and the park will now undergo a boundary study for potential expansion.

Senate Actions

- **July 16:** Although it does not currently directly affect the National Park Service, the Senate passed H.R. 4 with amendments by a vote of 51 yeas to 48 nays, a bill to rescind \$9 million from previously approved appropriations from foreign aid and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. It was later passed in the House (see below). This signals the potential for future rescissions of approved appropriations.

House of Representative Actions

- **July 15:**
 - The Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a markup on the FY26 Appropriations Bill. It was forwarded to the full Committee without amendment.
 - The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on:
 - H.R. 281, the “Grizzly Bear State Management Act of 2025,” which would

delist the grizzly bear from the Endangered Species Act. It was ordered reported, as amended.

- H.R. 435, the “Direct Hire to Fight Fires,” which aims to streamline the hiring process for federal wildland firefighters and support staff by creating permanent direct-hire authority. It was ordered reported without amendment.
- H.R. 556, the “Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2025,” which bars federal agencies from banning or restricting the use of lead ammunition and tackle unless site-based data demonstrates a decline in wildlife populations primarily caused by lead use and the relevant state wildlife agency approves the restriction. It was ordered reported, as amended.

• **July 16:**

- The House filed a report, with amendments, on H.R. 183, to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and to provide for a lifetime National Recreational Pass for law enforcement officers.

• **July 17:**

- The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on the following:
 - H.R. 1945, America’s National Churchill Museum National Historic Landmark Act, which would designate the museum as a National Historic Landmark (an NPS-administered program).
 - H.R. 2290, World War II Women’s Memorial Location Act, which would authorize the location of the memorial on or near the National Mall.
 - H.R. 2306, Adams Memorial-Great American Heroes Act, extending the authorization of a commission supporting a Washington, D.C., memorial for the Adams family, as established under the Dingell Act.
 - H.R. 4285, Semiquincentennial Tourism and Access to Recreation Sites or STARS Act, which would designate September 17, 2026, as Constitution Day, a fee-free day throughout the NPS in celebration of the 250th anniversary of United States independence.
 - Testimony was heard from Representatives Onder, Dingell, and Maloy; Natalie Randall, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism and Film Commission; and public witnesses.
- The House passed H. Res. 590, the Senate-amended version of H.R. 4, rescinding previously-approved appropriations (see “Senate Actions” above), by a recorded vote of 215 ayes to 203 noes.

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Acadia National Park

Assault charges

In October 2023, an individual became angry that they could not pay their entrance fees in cash,

and allegedly threw cash and their wallet at an NPS staff member, and pounded on the door of their entrance booth. At the time of the incident, they were issued citations for engaging in fighting, violent, or threatening behavior, and for a failure to pay the entrance fee, a total of \$200 in fines. However, the individual refused to pay “because it would have been an admission of guilt.” They claimed they never received copies of the violations they requested from the administrative office of the federal court, nor were they notified of a second court date. On March 18, 2025, armed officers came to the individual’s house and the suspect was charged with simple assault and disorderly conduct. They were not home at the time, and a week later, county sheriff personnel arrested them. They were released on a personal recognizance bond. The suspect has argued that accommodations for their autism have not been made throughout the legal proceedings. Source: [WGME](#)

Blue Ridge Parkway

Fatality

On July 13, a 58-year-old went into “medical distress” about a mile from the Graveyard Fields Overlook Trail near Milepost 418. Personnel from the NPS and Haywood County (NC) EMS responded to the scene and began CPR on site. The individual was pronounced deceased in the ambulance enroute to Haywood Regional Hospital. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)

Blue Ridge Parkway

Motorcycle fatality

On July 14, a 68-year-old motorcyclist was traveling southbound near Wintergreen, Virginia, when they left the road shoulder, veered back onto the road, flipped, then came to a stop. The individual was transported to a local hospital, and later died from injuries incurred in the crash. This is the third fatal motorcycle crash since June 1 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Source: [The Charlotte Observer](#)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Vessel goes aground

On July 21 around 4 AM, a 32-foot sailboat grounded on the beach one mile south of off-road vehicle ramp 38. There was one individual on board, and they were reported uninjured. The park and U.S. Coast Guard are working with the owner to have it removed from the beach. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Kayaking fatality

On July 9, a 54-year-old capsized while kayaking. Bystanders brought the victim to shore two miles below Bushkill Access. Personnel from the NPS, Bushkill Fire, Warren County (NJ) EMS, and New Jersey State Police Marine Service Bureau responded to the call. The individual did not survive the incident. Source: [Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area](#)

Gateway National Recreation Area

Traffic jams

The mayor of Highlands, New Jersey, has urged citizens to write to the park to let them know "how their mismanagement of the toll area is impacting our town and creating an Emergency Service nightmare." Traffic at Sandy Hook backs up through town, requiring local law enforcement to work overtime to address traffic issues and, on occasion, close streets. Local officials have worked with the NPS since 2020 on solutions, though various efforts have been unsuccessful. Source: [NJ.com](#)

Gettysburg National Military Park

Unexploded firework

On July 10, the park announced that an unexploded commercial grade firework was present in the "fields or wooded areas" west of the Gettysburg Area Recreation Park and east of West Confederate Avenue. They have asked that anyone who finds it mark the location, take photos, and call 911 so that officials can properly inert the firework. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park Facebook page](#)

Glacier National Park

Climbing fatality

On July 9, a 42-year-old fell while descending a steep off-trail climbing route from the west face of Mount Gould above the Highline Trail. The NPS worked with ALERT and Two Bear Air to locate the individual's body. On July 10, Two Bear Air recovered the individual's body and transported them to the Apgar Horse Corral, where they were transferred to the Flathead County (MT) Coroner. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Water draws by aircraft

On July 18, the NPS announced that fixed-wing fire suppression aircraft would be drawing water from Lake Powell between buoys 43 and 49 to support "nearby wildfires." Boaters are advised to avoid or limit transit only on Lake Powell between Dangling Rope and Rainbow Bridge. A temporary flight restriction is also in place. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Hiker fatality

On July 8, a 67-year-old became unresponsive while hiking on the South Kaibab Trail below Cedar Ridge. The individual had planned to do an overnight stay at Phantom Ranch, but had instead turned around at Skeleton Point and was hiking back out when the incident occurred. Bystanders began CPR, and NPS staff and volunteers responded on foot. All attempts at resuscitation were unsuccessful. An investigation is being conducted by the NPS and Coconino County (AZ) Medical Examiner. The NPS reminds visitors to use extreme caution during the heat

of summer. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Wildfire investigation

On July 13, many of the facilities at the North Rim, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge and an NPS visitor center, were destroyed in the Dragon Bravo Fire (see more in “Wildfires” below). Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs and members of the Congressional delegation have called for an investigation of the fire’s management. Many reports have stated that the park did not respond aggressively enough when the fire started. The NPS released a statement saying the fire “was under a full suppression strategy from the outset,” and that it was “effectively managed... through its initial phase.” Source: [KOLO](#)

Grand Teton National Park

Paddleboard fatality

On July 3, a 30-year-old was paddleboarding on Jackson Lake near Swim Beach in the Colter Bay area when a storm moved through the area, bringing strong winds and waves. The individual got knocked away from their board, and was not wearing a life jacket. A bystander called 911, reporting the individual in distress in the water. Other bystanders were able to help and began CPR on the individual. NPS personnel responded and continued CPR about an hour, but their resuscitation efforts were unsuccessful. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

Grand Teton National Park

Kleptomaniac fox

On July 10, the park posted on its social media that a fox in the park has stolen at least 32 shoes. They have warned campers to store shoes in tents or vehicles and be careful with food storage so the fox does not become habituated and need to be euthanized. Source: [USA Today](#)

Mount Rainier National Park

Earthquakes

The week leading up to July 10, 334 earthquakes registered at Mount Rainier, the largest cluster of earthquakes (known as a “swarm”) since 2009. The largest was a magnitude 2.3, and scientists “do not have any concerns about the earthquakes,” according to the Cascades Volcano Observatory. Source: [USA Today](#)

Olympic National Park

Plane crash

On July 15, a small plane with three occupants crashed north of the Irely Lake Trailhead in the Quinault area of the park. Personnel from the NPS and Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Search and Rescue responded to the incident, and the three occupants were transported to a nearby hospital. One individual did not survive the incident. The other two “are being treated for their

injuries,” though the severity was not noted. The cause of the crash is unknown and under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

Olympic National Park

Mountain lion attack

On July 20, a four-year-old was hiking with their family near the Victoria Overlook area on Hurricane Ridge when they were bitten by a mountain lion. Personnel from the NPS and Clallam County (WA) Fire District 2 responded to the incident and transferred the patient via LifeFlight to a hospital in Seattle. The individual was said to be “undergoing treatment for their injuries,” but no further details were given. Park staff and a canine team located the cougar that evening and euthanized it the following morning. The incident is under investigation, and the park is looking for any witnesses to the incident. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

Petersburg National Battlefield

Flooding

On July 14, the park received heavy rains, resulting in major flooding and damage to some roads and trails. The Tour Road south of Route 36 is closed to vehicles at the Eastern Front, and the Friend Trail and part of the Harrison Creek Trail are also closed. The bridge over Harrison Creek will require significant repairs and will be combined with already-scheduled work in August. The closure of the bridge will last at least through September 9. Source: [Petersburg National Battlefield](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Hiker fatality

On July 12, a 36-year-old was reported missing after going out to hike Sawtooth Peak. The following day, the individual’s family and friends, as well as NPS personnel, began to search the area around Sawtooth Peak. The individual was found deceased below the peak by family and friends. Source: [SFGate](#)

Shenandoah National Park

Hiker rescue

On July 16, an individual was hiking on Old Rag when they injured their shoulder and could not hike back down to the trailhead. Med-Flight 1, staffed with personnel from Virginia State Police, Chesterfield Flight and Chesterfield Fire, hoisted the individual from their location, and flew them to the base of the mountain. An EMS crew received them there. No further details were given about the individual’s injury or care. Source: [News Leader](#)

Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River

Multiple canoe rescue

On July 11, a summer camp group of eight “young” campers and two adult counselors in 10

canoes, were boating on the Delaware River near the Mid-Delaware Bridge, when “choppy, faster-than-usual” conditions flipped one of the canoes. The group called for a rescue. All individuals were wearing life vests. Personnel from Matamoras (PA) Fire, Westfall Fire, Port Jervis Fire, and Huguenot Fire responded to support the incident. The individuals were rescued, and had no injuries. Source: [Mid Hudson News](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Habituated bear euthanized

On June 7, a bear crushed an unoccupied tent at a backcountry campsite in the Blacktail Deer Creek drainage in the northern part of the park. On July 11, the bear climbed the site’s food storage pole and accessed and consumed several bags of food. Due to concerns for human safety and equipment, as well as the bear’s ability to thwart food storage mechanisms, the bear was euthanized on July 11. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Fishing closures

On July 12, the park closed fishing on the Madison River, Firehole River, Gibbon River, and many of their tributaries due to warm water temperatures and low river flows. Fishing will remain closed until water temperatures cool and flows return to “more typical summer conditions.” Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Fake viral videos

A video viewed over 6 million times claiming that “all the grizzly bears” are leaving Yellowstone, was found to be a fake, with video footage from a wildlife park in South Dakota. The same person had posted video a few days prior claiming that mountain lions were migrating from Yellowstone to Utah. It also received millions of views. Source: [Snopes](#)

Wildfires

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - On July 10, lightning strikes ignited wildfires on both the North Rim and South Rim of Black Canyon of the Gunnison. All visitors and staff were evacuated from the park. As of July 22, the South Rim Fire was 4,220 acres and 31% contained, with 450 personnel assigned. On July 18, Curecanti closed all boating activities on the Blue Mesa Reservoir, west of Middle Bridge, due to firefighting scooper aircraft. On July 20, the reservoir was reopened. Source: [Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#), [Inciweb](#), Curecanti National Recreation Area ([7/18](#), [7/20](#))
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On July 4, lightning struck south of an area known as the Basin near the W1 Road, causing the Dragon Bravo Fire. It was originally allowed to burn, with fire crews monitoring its progress. It grew slowly to 120 acres after seven days. On

July 11, winds shifted and increased dramatically, headed toward the North Rim facilities. All facilities were evacuated. On July 12, the fire jumped several fire containment lines, and personnel detected a potential chlorine gas leak from the water treatment facility, requiring the evacuation of firefighters, grounding of aircraft, and evacuation of the North Kaibab Trail, South Kaibab Trail, and Phantom Ranch area. Early on July 13, the fire burned over the developed area of the North Rim, destroying or damaging 235 structures, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge and an NPS visitor center. As of July 20, the fire was 123,662 acres and 18% contained, with 883 personnel assigned. Source: *Watch Duty* (app), [AZ Central](#), [Inciweb](#)

- *Kobuk Valley National Park* - On July 6, “nearly 1,600 lightning strikes” took place in the Galena Zone. Several fires were started:
 - Jade Fire, located 17 miles northwest of Ambler and 1.5 miles north of the Kobuk River at river mile 61: As of July 12, the fire was 100% contained.
 - Karet Fire, south of the Kobuk River adjacent to the Jade Fire: As of July 12, the fire was 100% contained at 8 acres.
 - Hunt, Kaliguricheark, and Kobuk Fires, burning close to one another in Kobuk Valley National Park 7 miles north of the Kobuk River at river mile 37 and 1.5 miles east of the Kaliguricheark River at river mile 11. As of July 17, the three fires were estimated to be 11,859 acres.
 - Source: [Kobuk Valley National Park](#), [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On July 6, a human-caused fire began on the Olympic National Forest near the Mt. Rose Trailhead, southeast of the Staircase area of the park. As of July 22, the Bear Gulch Fire was 762 acres and 19% contained, with 160 personnel assigned. Several U.S. Forest Service and Olympic National Park sites are closed, including the Staircase Area and Campground. Source: Olympic National Park ([7/7](#), [7/8](#)), *Watch Duty* (app), [Inciweb](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - On July 21, the parkway opened the road from milepost 305.2, near Beacon Heights and U.S. 221, to milepost 317.5, at U.S. 221 at the access point to Linville Falls. This section has been closed since Hurricane Helene hit the region in September 2024. Due to remaining damage, Linville Falls spur road, campground, picnic area, and visitor center remain closed. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - More details have surfaced related to the reckless driving incident by multiple cars on June 24 (see [7/9/25 Coalition Report](#)). The Department of Justice will prosecute at least five of the six people involved in the incident. Two cars were drag racing and were apprehended on Teton Park Road, while the other two cars were stopped on the “outer park road” near Oxbow Bend. The top speed recorded was 111 mph. One of the individuals is a social media tour known for racing, and sometimes crashing, expensive vehicles. The five individuals are scheduled to appear in federal court on July 29. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

- *Yellowstone National Park* - *Cowboy State Daily* published [an article](#) about upcoming efforts by a private search and rescue group that will search for the 20-year-old that went missing after summiting Eagle Peak in September 2024 (see [10/2/24](#), [10/30/24](#), and [4/16/24 Coalition Reports](#)). Though the effort is being coordinated by a private entity, the NPS is support the efforts, allowing search dogs and drones, and giving them access to resources from the previous year's search. The group is hoping to fundraise enough money to utilize helicopters, as well. The NPS is planning to run a second search, if necessary, following the private search. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*

Acknowledgements

This newsletter is supported through Coalition staff and invaluable volunteers:

- Editor: Katie Wallace
- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Debbie Reed, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Teresa Ford, Phil Francis, Mike Murray, Bill Wade, Bill Walters

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

report@protectnps.org.

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.

Copyright (C) 2025 Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. All rights reserved.

