



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

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



Coalition Actions

The Coalition, Association of National Park Rangers, and National Parks Conservation Association sent [a letter](#) to the Office of Personnel Management in strong opposition to the proposed rule, “Improving Performance, Accountability, and Responsiveness in the Civil Service,” which threatens to politicize the civil service and allow for the dismissal of employees at-will.

The Coalition submitted [comments](#) on the Gunlock State Park (UT) West Access Road Right of Way, arguing that the environmental assessment does not adequately address potential effects on the Old Spanish National Historic Trail.

We submitted [comments](#) on the Bureau of Land Management Montana/Dakotas State Office’s 2025 Fourth Quarter Oil and Gas Lease Sale, arguing for the deferral of three parcels in close proximity to Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

The Coalition continues to give statements and interviews to the press, such as [this statement](#) against the current budget proposal for the Department of the Interior, and [this article](#) in *The Hill* about Republicans who are not in support of deep cuts to the National Park Service budget.

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.

- *Appeals court upholds block on RIF* - On May 30, a federal appeals court rejected the Trump Administration's appeal to pause a lower court ruling that halted Reductions in Force by the Executive Branch (see [5/28/25 Coalition Report](#)). The preliminary injunction will remain in place as the lawsuit moves through the judicial system. Source: [Democracy Forward](#) [Editor note: *The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.*]
- *Proposed NPS budget* - On May 30, the Trump Administration released a document outlining details in the \$1.2 billion in cuts to the NPS budget, including 95% cuts to natural resources programs, 60% cuts to cultural programs, 100% cuts to the National Heritage Areas program, and the loss of 5,518 full-time positions. Source: [SF Gate](#)
- *5 new national trails* - On June 6, the Department of the Interior announced the designation of five new National Recreation Trails, representing 387 miles over six states. The trails are the Miner's Ravine Trail in California; the Ohio River Way in Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio; the Cuyahoga River Water Trail in Ohio; the Elizabeth River Trail in Virginia; and the Great Pinery Heritage Waterway in Wisconsin. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *DOJ legal counsel claims President can rescind national monuments* - On June 10, the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel released a legal opinion titled "Revocation of Prior Monument Designations," arguing that Presidents can revoke or change national monuments. This runs counter to a 1938 ruling that monuments created under the Antiquities Act cannot be revoked. In the legal opinion, Chuckwalla National Monument and S  t  tla Highlands National Monument (managed by the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service, respectively) were singled out for barring oil and natural gas drilling and mining. Source: [U.S. News and World Report](#)
- *Seasonal park staffing lags far behind* - The National Parks Conservation Association obtained stats from the Department of the Interior's workforce database indicating that the NPS has 18,066 employees, a 16.5% drop since Fiscal Year 2023. Furthermore, only 3,300 seasonal and temporary staff have been hired, 39% fewer than FY23, and less than half of the Trump Administration's stated goal of 7,700. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *"Trump plans to offload national park sites, but states don't want them"* - Bloomberg News published [an article](#) with this title, outlining the costs associated with dismantling the National Park System. Source: *Bloomberg News/Murray Ledger & Times*
- *DOGE increasing, not decreasing, efficiency* - The Washington Post published [an article](#) outlining examples of new procedures and requirements, as well as staffing shortages and reassignments, created by the Department of Government Efficiency, that have slowed government processes, such as contracting, purchasing, HR, and IT support. [Editor note: *The NPS is not mentioned specifically among examples, though the examples listed have parallels across federal agencies.*] Source: *The Washington Post*

- *“How Trump is crippling US national parks”* - *The Guardian* published [an article](#) outlining the many challenges currently facing the NPS due to recent actions by the Trump Administration, including interviews with many current and former NPS staff. Source: *The Guardian*
- *GWS Award nominations open* - The George Wright Society has opened nominations through July 15 for awards for research, management, and education related to parks and other place-based conservation in cultural resources, natural resources, and social science. Source: [George Wright Society](#)
- *Book on national park mysteries* - *UC Davis Magazine* published [an article](#) about a new book, *Mysteries of the National Parks: 35 Stories of Baffling Disappearances, Unexplained Phenomena, and More*, by University of California, Davis, alumnus Mike Bezemek. Source: *UC Davis Magazine*
- *EDGI interviewing retired NPS staff* - The Environmental Data and Governance Initiatives recently began an interview project with recently retired NPS staff. The interviews will inform white papers and other reports on the current impacts on the NPS. For more information, see this month’s [Coalition Brief](#).

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Blue Ridge Parkway*- On June 6, the NPS announced the opening of a prospectus for contracts providing craft sales at the Folk Art Center in Asheville, North Carolina (milepost 382), and boat rental services at Price Lake near Blowing Rock, North Carolina (milepost 297). Contracts will begin on January 1, 2026, and last for a 10-year term. Proposals are due by September 3. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - The park, with support from the Historic Preservation Training Center, will replace the roof of Mabry Mill this summer, utilizing “6,000 authentic white oak shakes” (wooden shingles crafted from split logs). The project is being supported with \$100,000 from the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - On June 3, the park announced the opening of a prospectus for a 10-year concession contract operating “a casual food and beverage snack bar and its associated operations” at Herring Cove Beach. Proposals are due by September 17. Source: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#)
- *Chattahoochee National Recreation Area* - On June 2, the park and the Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy began a project to restore 2.2 miles of the Island Ford Trail. This is the first phase of the park’s trail management plan. The \$700,000 project is being funded by the National Park Foundation and private donors to the conservancy. Source: [SaportaReport](#)

- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - On June 10, the NPS, Georgetown University, and the District of Columbia announced an agreement in which Georgetown University will donate a parcel of land to the park, including an easement that will be dissolved upon transfer, that will allow for uninterrupted public trail use. In turn, the NPS will transfer administrative jurisdiction of two parcels at the base of Key Bridge to the District for boathouse development. One of those parcels will then be transferred to Georgetown University for construction of a boathouse, while the other is intended to improve public access to the Potomac River and connect to the Georgetown Waterfront Park. The boathouse will provide year-round public access to its docks and will serve the university's rowing teams. The plan has "been underway for decades." Source: [Georgetown University](#)
- *Colonial National Historical Park, National Trails System* (an NPS-administered program), *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (WARO)* - On June 3, the NPS published [a press release](#) highlighting the efforts of visitor Frank Kos to visit 30 of the 32 national scenic and historic trails. In April, Frank revisited WARO at its terminus at Colonial NHP in order to get a photo with the new trail signage. Source: Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail [Editor note: Three trails were just added to the National Trails System, bringing the total to 35. See "National/Regional NPS Updates" above.]
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - On June 2, the park will begin a rehabilitation project on its mainland parking lot. The lot will be closed throughout the project, which is expected to take six months to complete. Alternative parking is being coordinated with the City of St. Marys, Georgia. The project is being funded by fee dollars. Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - On May 28, the park completed a project to stabilize the shoreline around Plum Orchard, utilizing "bioengineering, livable landscape, and appropriate plantings in concert with rip rap." The Plum Orchard Dock was closed during the project and has now reopened. Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - On May 30, the park announced the return of the live [Puppy Cam](#), showcasing five sled dogs born in the park on May 3. Their names are Storm, Squall, Graupel, Fog, and Dew. Funding for the Puppy Cam comes from Alaska Geographic, using proceeds from their Denali Park Store. Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park* - The Defense Visual Information Distribution Service published [an article](#) about a collaborative project between the NPS and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Charleston District to construct a new stone breakwater around Fort Sumter to reduce the impacts of waves on the fort's walls. Source: Defense Visual Information Distribution System

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On June 5, the NPS and the Bureau of Reclamation announced that they completed a project to reshape a slough below the Glen Canyon Dam to increase water flow and reduce temperatures to create unfavorable conditions for invasive smallmouth bass. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - *Knox News* published [an article](#) about why the park is such a hotbed for scientific research, including its plentiful unique species, large roadless tract of Eastern wilderness, and its large number of microclimates. Source: *Knox News*
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - On June 9, the NPS began a rehabilitation project on the parkway from Mississippi Highway 413 (milepost 181) to U.S. Highway 82 (milepost 204) in Choctaw and Webster Counties, Mississippi. There will be a full closure and detours in place for the duration of the project, which is “anticipated to last through summer.” Additionally, Jeff Busby Campground and its day use area will also be closed. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)
- *National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act* (an NPS-administered program) - *The Providence Journal* published [an article](#) about the Warwick Neck Lighthouse, located in Rhode Island, which was recently put on an auction block by the General Services Administration. The NPS has stated publicly that they have not been given the opportunity to finish its review of eligible stewards, a tenet of the law. Source: *The Providence Journal*
- *National Parks of Boston* - On May 27, the NPS opened a Request for Proposals for a leasing opportunity at the historic Easton Building in downtown Boston. The RFP allows for “use as office space, hotel, or residential housing units. Additional uses will be considered.” Proposals are due by August 29. Source: [Boston National Historical Park](#)
- *North Cascades National Park* - *Longreads* published [an article](#) about the decades-long debate and politics around whether or not to stock fish in alpine lakes in the park. Source: *Longreads*
- *Olympic National Park* - On May 29, the park announced the selection of Explor Olympic, LLC, as the new concessioner for lodging, food and beverage, and other visitor services at Lake Crescent Lodge, Log Cabin Resort, Fairholme Store, and Hurricane Ridge. The new contract begins on February 1, 2026, and will last 12 years. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Reconstruction Era National Historic Network* (an NPS-administered program) - On June 4, the NPS announced the addition of seven new sites in seven states to the network. Source: [Reconstruction Era National Historical Park](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - On June 6, the park opened a new visitor center in Crane Lake, Minnesota. A number of local officials were present for the opening. Source: [Northern News Now](#)

- *Women's Rights National Historical Park* - On June 10, the park opened a new temporary exhibit called "Enterprising Waters: New York's Erie Canal," in honor of the canal's bicentennial anniversary. The exhibit was created by the New York State Museum, funded by the Friends of Women's Rights National Historical Park, and supported by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. It will remain on display through the end of October. Source: [Women's Rights National Historical Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - New research from the University of New Mexico has mapped the composition of magma and how many volatiles are in the magma underneath Yellowstone, showing a "really gas-rich, volatile-rich cap on top of the magma chamber." Source: [KRQE](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey installed a new [webcam at Biscuit Basin](#), which has been closed to the public since a geothermal explosion on July 23, 2024. Bandwidth is not sufficient to support live streaming, but images are updated every 15 minutes. Source: [Daily Montanan](#), U.S. Geological Survey
- *Yosemite National Park* - *SFGate* recently obtained the 2024 annual NPS performance review for concessioner Yosemite Hospitality (a subsidiary of Aramark Corporation) through a Freedom of Information Act request. Within the report, the NPS highlights rodent activity in facilities, improper food storage, lapses in facility maintenance, public health concerns, and a failure to conduct inspections. The report gave the company an overall "unsatisfactory" rating, which is the lowest possible rating and a downgrade from its "marginal" rating in 2023 and 2022. In a statement, Aramark said, "We take this rating seriously, and in working closely with the NPS, we have and continue to make improvements at Yosemite to ensure high standards are met for park guests." Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Zion National Park* - On June 5, the NPS announced the opening of a new temporary exhibit at the Zion Human History Museum about the late Triassic and early Jurassic period based on new science in the park by researchers from the University of Arkansas. The exhibit was a collaborative effort with the NPS, Zion Forever Project, St. George Dinosaur Discovery Museum, the Utah Geological Survey, and the National Science Foundation. Source: [Zion National Park](#)
- *Zion National Park* - On June 10, the park announced the relocation and reopening of a trail bridge connecting Zion Lodge and the Emerald Pools Trail system. The bridge's foundation was destabilized by a landslide in May 2023, and the park decided to move the bridge out of "the geologically active zone," approximately 100 feet upstream. The move took two years of planning, design, and construction, and was funded by entrance and recreation fees. Source: [Zion National Park](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Cuyahoga Valley National Park* - On June 9, the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park announced that they selected Greg Peckham as their new president and CEO. Greg has “more than two decades of experience in nonprofit leadership, public engagement, and cultural placemaking.” Source: [Akron Beacon Journal](#)

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

- Juanita Marie Hammond, 63, passed away on May 3. Juanita worked at Mount Rainier National Park for many years. Source: [Legacy/Fayetteville Cremation Services](#)
- Robert “Bob” J. Mihan, 94, passed away on October 1, 2024. Bob worked for the NPS for several decades, including time at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Yellowstone National Park. Source: [Echovita](#), Tom Griffiths
- Christopher “Chris” Chalmers Revels, 66, passed away on May 28. Chris worked for the NPS at Kings Mountain National Military Park for 40 years, retiring as chief park ranger. Source: [Bratton Funeral Home](#)
- Henry Michael “Mike” Robinson, 73, passed away on May 27. Mike worked for the NPS for over 30 years, including time at Jimmy Carter National Historical Park and Anderson National Historic Site. Source: [Way-Watson Funeral Homes](#)
- Nancy Jane Vencevich, 81, passed away on April 6. Nancy worked at Yellowstone National Park “several summers.” Source: [Chicago Tribune](#)

Retired

- At the end of 2024, Julie Byerly retired from a 30-year career at the National Park Service, most recently as chief ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore. Source: *Your Park, Your Place*, 6/5/25 (newsletter for Point Reyes National Seashore Association)
- On May 30, Bob DeGross retired from a 36-year career at the National Park Service, most recently as superintendent of Voyageurs National Park. He also spent time working at Mammoth Cave National Park, Shenandoah National Park, Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, and Big Cypress National Preserve. *The Timberjay* published [an article](#) about his career. Source: *The Timberjay*
- Jeff Duncan, long time ecologist for NPS at the Southeast Region, has retired from the NPS. Source: [Chattanooga Times Free Press](#)

- On May 30, Teri Gage retired from the NPS after “nearly four decades of service,” most recently as superintendent at Pullman National Historical Park for five years. She started her NPS career at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and worked at “several parks throughout the Service.” Source: [Pullman National Historical Park](#)
- On May 30, Kevin Heatley left the National Park Service. Kevin worked for the Bureau of Land Management for many years, and came on as the superintendent of Crater Lake National Park in January. Source: [The Oregonian](#)
- In the spring, Gina Icenoggle retired from the NPS. She worked for the Department of Agriculture for 30 years, then at the NPS for six years as the public affairs specialist at Glacier National Park. Source: [Hungry Horse News](#), [Montana State University Alumni Foundation Facebook page](#)

Open for Comment

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

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through June 27](#) on a grazing management plan for the two jointly-managed parks. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
- *Castillo de San Marcos National Monument* - Public comment is [open through July 9](#) on a proposal to raise, repair, and rehabilitate seawalls on the Castillo. Source: [The St. Augustine Record](#)
- *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through July 28](#) on a development concept plan for the Great Falls area of the park in Montgomery County, Maryland. Source: [Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park](#)
- *Petersburg National Battlefield* - Public comment is [open through June 18](#) on a draft programmatic agreement for the second phase of a bluff stabilization project at Grant’s Headquarters in the City Point unit, including the protection of archaeological resources and the cultural landscape. Source: [Petersburg National Battlefield](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Upper Colorado River Basin infrastructure* - On May 29, the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Upper Colorado River Commission announced they have begun implementing \$50 million in projects to improve water infrastructure in the Upper Colorado River Basin. Many of the improvements are aimed at improving data tracking for water measurement and delivery accuracy, snow studies, and how ecosystems are responding to drought and land management practices. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *Rescission of BLM energy regulations* - On June 3, the Department of the Interior announced it will rescind 18 “obsolete or redundant Bureau of Land Management regulations.” The efforts are intended to repeal regulations “that impose unjustified economic burdens” to foster economic growth and energy production. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Rescission of National Petroleum Reserve rules* - On June 2, the Department of the Interior announced the proposal of a rescission of the 2024 rule that added restrictions on oil and gas development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. The proposal will be published in the Federal Register and open for public comment. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Energy projects expedited* - On May 29, the Department of the Interior announced the implementation of emergency permitting procedures for three geothermal projects on Bureau of Land Management lands in Nevada. On June 6, the Department of the Interior announced the approval of a mining plan modification for the Bull Mountains coal mine in Musselshell and Yellowstone Counties, Montana, using “alternative arrangements for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.” Source: Department of the Interior ([5/30](#), [6/6](#))
- *\$249 million awarded for abandoned mines* - On June 4, the Department of the Interior announced the award of \$119 million in Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act grants for four States and two Tribes for abandoned mine land reclamation. On June 5, the DOI announced the award of \$130 million in Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program funds to six states and three Tribes for projects related to repurposing mining lands into economic opportunities. Source: Department of the Interior ([6/4](#), [6/5](#))
- *Lawsuit over wind project* - The week of June 1, a coalition of conservation groups and commercial fishing companies filed a lawsuit against the Department of the Interior’s decision to lift a stop-work order on the Empire Wind project offshore of New Jersey. The Trump Administration had originally paused the project in April, then reversed course in May. The plaintiffs argue that the DOI violated the Administrative Procedure Act, calling its reversal “arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable.” Source: [The Center Square](#)

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming 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. Support for this Report came from Coalition intern Katie Moorer.

New Public Laws

Public Law 119-13: A joint resolution disapproving the rule by the NPS that would have limited the use of off-road vehicles for certain areas in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The NPS

rule is now nullified, allowing off-road vehicles in those areas.

Senate Actions

May 14: The Senate confirmed the nomination of Katharine MacGregor to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior by a vote of 54 yeas to 40 nays.

May 21: The Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for Fiscal Year 2026 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior.

May 22: The Senate discharged the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources from further consideration, and passed S. 1051, a bill to establish the Historic Greenwood District - Black Wall Street National Monument in the state of Oklahoma. It preserves, protects, and interprets resources associated with the Historic Greenwood District, Black Wall Street, and the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921.

June 3: The Senate received a message from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of 22 rescissions for the FY26 Budget. The rescission request was referred jointly to the Committees on Appropriations; the Budget; Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and Foreign Relations.

June 2-6: The Senate began consideration of H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill” (see below for sections related to the NPS).

House of Representative Actions

May 13:

The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

- H.R. 1682: Amending the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, to provide for lifetime National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes for family members of members of the Armed Forces who lost their lives while serving their country;
- H.R. 1550: Strengthening America's Turning Point Act, to re-designate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park;
- H.R. 249: Re-designating certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.

The House debated the Salem Maritime National Historical Park Re-designation and Boundary Study Act: H.R. 2215, to re-designate the Salem Maritime National Historic Site as the “Salem Maritime National Historical Park” measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

May 14: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the Salem Maritime National Historical Park Re-designation and Boundary Study Act: H.R. 2215, to re-designate the Salem Maritime National Historic Site as the “Salem Maritime National Historical Park,” by a 2/3 ye-

and-nay vote of 382 yeas to 31 nays.

May 18: The full House Committee on the Budget concluded a markup on legislation to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025, H. Con. Res. 14 and ordered that the legislation be reported without amendment.

May 20:

A report, H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14, was filed today (H.R. 1 is also known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill;” see below for sections related to NPS).

The House Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies held a budget hearing on the Department of the Interior. Testimony was heard from Doug Burgum, Secretary, Department of the Interior.

May 21:

A Report was filed on H. Res. 436, providing for consideration H.R. 1 to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14.

The House Committee on Rules held a hearing on H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.” The Committee granted, by a record vote of 8–4, a rule providing for its consideration under a closed rule. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill.

May 22:

The House passed H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” by a vote of 216 Yeas to 215 Nays. H.R. 1, is an expansive bill covering almost all aspects of the Executive Branch of the federal government. The following are provisions of interest to the National Park Service:

- Three sections (80302, 80303, 80304) rescind the balance of funds to the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management that have not been obligated that were authorized in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. These relate to conservation, ecosystem, and habitat restoration projects and funding to hire new NPS employees.
- Language in the bill’s Table of Contents refers to Ambler Road in Alaska, but with no language in this section at this stage in the bill’s progression through Congress.
- Appropriations for celebrating America’s 250th anniversary:
 - \$150 million for events, celebrations, and activities related to the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States; and
 - \$40 million to carry out Executive Orders to establish and maintain a statutory park to be known as the National Garden of American Heroes
- Changes regarding federal employment, benefits, and protections for federal employees:
 - Requiring new hires to choose between being an “at-will” employee or paying an additional 5% in Federal Employees Retirement System contributions
 - Instituting a filing fee for merit systems protection board claims and appeals
 - Changes to the Federal Employees Health Benefits program to verify that recipients are eligible for benefits to prevent fraud, including audits by the Office of Personnel

Management and processes for disenrollment

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park.

Blue Ridge Parkway

Explosive found

On May 31, a “suspicious item” was found in a dirt pull-off near an intersection adjacent to the Folk Art Center. Personnel from the NPS, Asheville (NC) Police Department bomb squad, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation responded. During the investigation, the Folk Art Center and a section of the Blue Ridge Parkway were temporarily closed. The item, identified as an improvised incendiary device, was safely removed. The NPS Investigative Services Branch is leading the investigation. The NPS is asking the public to report any information they might have about the incident. Source: [WYFF](#), [WSPA](#)

Cumberland Island National Seashore

Plumbing issues

On May 28, the park announced the closure of Sea Camp Campground due to plumbing issues. The park said they “hope to have this resolved by Friday, June 13.” Source: [Cumberland Island National Seashore Facebook page](#)

Cuyahoga Valley National Park

Guilty plea for murder

On March 6, 2021, an individual traveled to Ohio to meet up with a 31-year-old. While hiking in the Terra Vista Natural Study Area together, the individual shot the 31-year-old in the back of the head. Other hikers discovered the victim’s body three days later. Witnesses were able to describe the person and car who had last been seen with the victim, hikers on the trail the day of the murder, and the timing of the gunshots. Furthermore, investigators were able to use GPS data, DNA, social media and phone records, and ballistics analysis to find the suspect.

While the investigation was ongoing, in November 2021, the parents of the victim drove to the suspect’s city. One of them dressed up as a UPS driver, knocked on an apartment door, then shot a person who they believed to be the suspect (they were not). The individual that was shot in the incident survived their injuries. The two parents of the original victim fled the scene, changing their license plate to avoid capture, but they were tracked down and stopped by law enforcement. Upon being pulled over, the parent who had fired the shots then shot and killed themselves. The other parent pleaded guilty to accessory after the fact to assault with intent to kill and was sentenced to three years in prison.

Nine months after the original murder, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested the suspect. The suspect and the victim had gone to high school together, and in 2017, the suspect had filed

a report with Virginia Beach (VA) Police, alleging the victim had committed rape against them. There was not enough evidence to file charges. On May 27, the suspect pleaded guilty to murder in the second degree and using or carrying and discharging a firearm during and in relation to, a crime of violence on federal property. Sentencing is scheduled for September 9. The investigation was supported by the FBI Cleveland Division, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, National Park Service Investigative Services Branch, Valley View (OH) Police Department, and law enforcement from Cuyahoga Valley. Source: [United States Attorney's Office: Northern District of Ohio, New York Post](#)

Death Valley National Park

Vehicle fires

On May 20, a motorcycle caught fire while the owner attempted to start the engine. The owner, an off-duty park employee, used a fire extinguisher, then found two other park staff to bring fire extinguishers to reduce the flames. The group then used a garden hose and a fire hose to fully extinguish the fire. The owner had attempted to fix a fuel leak the previous day, and believed the fire was likely due to that issue.

On May 24, a vehicle arrived at Dantes View with smoke coming off the engine. Other visitors helped pour ice and water on the engine, extinguishing the fire and limiting its spread to one part of the engine compartment. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)

Death Valley National Park

Missing person

In early February, the Inyo County (CA) Sheriff's Office and NPS personnel located a vehicle in an area just outside the park off Highway 190 on private property, sometimes called "Slab City." It is "commonly used by campers during the winter months." Over several months, staff from both agencies searched the area for the owner, a 33-year-old, "or any other responsible party." The search included SAR teams, drones, tracking/cadaver dogs, and certified trackers, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Deputies monitored for a missing person report for several months, but were also unsuccessful. Eventually, they were able to speak with the car owner's parent, who said no one had had contact with the individual since November 2024, when they "had a law enforcement contact in Utah." On May 29, the Inyo County Sheriff's Office posted a request for public assistance in any information related to the individual. Source: [Sierra Sun Times](#)

Denali National Park and Preserve

Mountaineering fall

On June 2, a three-person team was ski mountaineering at Squirrel Point on Denali's West Buttress when one took a fall. They were un-ropeed at the time. The individual, 41 years old, fell toward Peters Glacier, "an exposed and rocky serac-covered 3,000-foot face." The other members of the party lowered over the edge as far as possible, but they were unable to see or hear their companion. They then descended the West Buttress route to request help. Ground and air searches were put on hold on June 3 due to high winds and snow, then resumed on June 4.

The individual's body was located and recovered by helicopter later that day. Source: Denali National Park and Preserve ([6/3](#), [6/4](#))

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

Break-in and threats

On May 13, an armed individual broke into Fort Union when it was not open to the public. The building was evacuated and the road closed to "barricade" the individual in at the site during the incident. The suspect threatened an NPS employee and Williams County (ND) law enforcement, and was arrested. During the investigation, it was found that the individual threatened to kill and inflict bodily harm on former President Barak Obama between April 20 and May 13, and they are also accused of threatening to injure three individuals in Williston, North Dakota, during the month of May. The grand jury filed an indictment on June 4, levying charges of burglary, damage to federal property, terrorizing, malicious mischief, threatening to kill a former President, and three counts of threatening interstate communications. Source: [Associated Press](#)

Glacier National Park

Possible suicide

On June 4, emergency services got a report of an individual with "severe injuries" near Avalanche Campground. Personnel from the NPS, Three Rivers Ambulance, and ALERT responded to the scene and administered medical care. The individual was declared deceased at the scene. The park did not release the cause of death, but did include information for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline within the press release. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

13 rescues in a week

The week of May 25, the park rescued 13 people via helicopter for ailments including heat illness, dehydration, hyponatremia, and lower leg injuries. Source: [News3LV](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Power outage

On June 2, an equipment failure involving a transformer near the Grand Canyon Lodge on the North Rim caused power to go out at all North Rim facilities. Lodging was cancelled starting on June 2. As of June 10, power had been restored to the general store, fuel station, campground showers and laundry, North Rim Campground, employee housing, and administrative areas, but there has been no announcement about the reopening of the Grand Canyon Lodge. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Isle Royale National Park

Backcountry campers found deceased

On June 8, the park received reports from bystanders who found two people deceased at "a

remote backcountry campground within the park.” Two rangers hiked 11 miles to the campground the following morning to assess and confirmed two “unidentified” people deceased. The causes of death are unknown at this point. As of June 10, the park was still working on mobilizing ground and aviation resources to investigate and recover the individual’s bodies. The incident is under investigation and no further details have been released. Source: [Isle Royale National Park](#)

Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, North Cascades National Park

Closures for manhunt

On June 5, the two parks announced the closure of many trails in the park due to an ongoing search for a 32-year-old who is suspected to have killed their three children, ages 5, 8, and 9, at Rock Island Campground in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. Many local, state, and federal agencies are involved in the search, and U.S. Marshals are offering a reward of up to \$20,000 for information leading to their arrest. As of June 10, the suspect had not been found. Source: [North Cascades National Park](#), *USA Today* (6/4, 6/6), *NPR*

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Lost dog, then lost hiker and other dog

On May 28, a dog went missing after a motor vehicle accident. A 48-year-old with a different dog went to search for the original dog and then went missing. A major search ensued, and on June 4, the individual and their dog were located. *[Editor note: It is unclear whether the original missing dog was ever located.]* Involved agencies included the NPS, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Nevada Department of Wildlife, and Red Rock Search and Rescue. Source: [News3LV](#)

Olympic National Park

Waterfall fatality

On June 8, an 18-year-old was walking across rocks at the top of Sol Duc Falls, when they slipped and were swept over the first falls, a 50-foot drop. The individual resurfaced at the bottom, then submerged into the water again. Personnel from the park’s swiftwater and rope rescue teams, Forks (WA) Ambulance, Forks Swiftwater, Olympic Ambulance, Clallam County Fire District 2, Port Townsend Police, Sequim Police, and Clallam County Sheriff’s Office responded to the incident. The following day, June 9, a park staff member located the individual’s body submerged and pinned between the first and second falls at Sol Duc. As of June 10, due to high river flows and the nature of the terrain and local hazards, the team has not yet been able to access the individual’s body. They will perform a rescue when conditions allow for a safe and successful recovery. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Visitor swept away by river

On May 25, a 26-year-old was “recreating” with friends and family on the Middle Fork of the

Kaweah River near Paradise Creek Bridge in Sequoia National Park when their sibling got swept away in the current. The 26-year-old jumped in to attempt to save them, and they were also swept away. The sibling was able to make it to shore, but the would-be-rescuer was pulled under and not seen again. Park staff conducted a search for the individual, including ground teams, canines, underwater cameras, drones, and helicopters. Divers have been unable to complete an underwater search due to dangerous conditions. On June 5, the search transitioned to “limited continuous mode,” with fewer resources actively searching. As of June 10, the individual had not been located. Source: Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks ([5/30](#), [6/5](#)), [The Travel](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Employee sues over lead poisoning

In 2018, an employee in the park and their family were provided housing in Historic Fort Yellowstone. They later learned that houses in the area are known to have toxic levels of lead. When their children were tested for lead poisoning, both tested positive. The home also tested positive for high levels of lead dust. They were moved to another house in Fort Yellowstone with high levels of lead dust, where they resided for about three years. One of the children has had “medical issues that doctors attribute to lead exposure.” The employee had filed a claim through an employee grievance system, but it went unanswered. Source: [Powell Tribune](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Bison goring

On June 10, a 30-year-old was gored by a bison in the Upper Geyser Basin at Old Faithful. They were part of a large group that approached the bison too closely. The individual “sustained minor injuries” and was treated and transported by medical personnel. It is the second reported incident of an individual injured by a bison in the park this year. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Zion National Park

Heat exhaustion

On May 29, an individual “estimated to be in [their] 40s” suffered heat exhaustion about a half-mile northeast of the Left Fork Trailhead. Personnel from the NPS and Hurricane Valley Fire responded, and were able to stabilize them, hydrate them, and bring them back to the trailhead. They were transported to a hospital for treatment. Source: [St. George News](#) [Editor note: The article linked here cites another rescue of 12 individuals in the park the same day, but it occurred on Bureau of Land Management lands outside of Zion.]

Zion National Park

Lost hikers rescued

On May 28, an adult and two minors called for help, stating they were lost and out of supplies near the Simon Gulch area of the North Fork Virgin River. A helicopter from the Utah Department of Public Safety located the group, hoisted them out, and transported them to a parking area.

Park staff then transported them back to their vehicle. Source: [St. George News](#)

Wildfires

- *Joshua Tree National Park* - The Eureka Fire was discovered on May 30 in the Covington Flats area of the park. As of June 10, the fire was 100% contained at 214 acres. The cause is unknown and under investigation. During the fire, closures were in place on nearby trails and roads. They have since reopened. Source: Joshua Tree National Park ([5/30](#), [5/31](#)), [Cal Fire](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On May 26, the Memorial Day Fire was observed by hikers, burning southeast of the Bighorn Pass Trailhead of Highway 191. Park firefighters were able to get it under control by May 28. It burned 0.1 acres. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)
- *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve* - On May 25, the Kathul Fire was discovered burning across the Yukon River from Kathul Mountain, east of Washington Creek. Smokejumpers were deployed to protect the Washington Creek Cabin, and have since demobilized. As of June 7, the fire is estimated at 1,009 acres and will remain in “monitor status.” Source: [Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve](#), [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - The cat that was found alive after a nearly 400-foot fall with its owners, who both died in the fall (see [5/14/25 Coalition Report](#)), has made a full recovery and was adopted by the Utah Department of Public Safety helicopter pilot involved in the rescue. The cat was named Mirage. Source: [Newsweek](#)
- *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* - The park published a landing page dedicated to 10 categories of projects related to Hurricane Helene recovery so that interested parties can receive updates. The park was heavily damaged in the September 2024 event. Source: [Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - On May 28, the Flathead (MT) Conservation District filed a brief in a federal appeals court against the couple that built its house adjacent to McDonald Creek on an inholding within the park (see [3/22/23](#), [11/1/23](#), [11/29/23](#), [2/21/24](#), [2/19/25](#), and [3/19/25 Coalition Reports](#)). The couple and their legal team have 30 days to respond. Source: [SF Gate](#)
- *Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park* - On June 1, the park will reopen the Chilkoot National Historic Trail in its entirety for the first time since 2021. The trail had sustained severe flood damage in 2021 and 2022, and crews have rebuilt the trail over several summers (see [4/26/23](#), [2/21/24](#), and [6/12/24 Coalition Reports](#)). Though the trail continues into Canada, trail users currently cannot cross the border. The Canadian Border Services Agency is currently reviewing a proposal by the NPS and Parks Canada to determine

whether or not visitors can enter Canada. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has already stated that Canadians will not be allowed to enter the U.S. on the Chilkoot Trail because it is not a designated port of entry. Source: [Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park](#).
[KHNS](#)

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

report@protectnps.org.

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The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that "studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service."

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