



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Please consider making a gift to the Coalition today. Your donation helps us defend the National Park Service mission and workforce.

Coalition Actions

The Coalition submitted [a letter](#) to the Bureau of Land Management Montana-Dakotas Office Second Quarter Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale, recommending the deferral of 12 parcels close to the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The Coalition and The Wilderness Society also submitted [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management's draft Finding of No Significant Impact for the Wyoming First Quarter Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale, applauding its deferment and removal of 15 parcels and urging it to conduct a stronger environmental analysis.

We submitted [a letter](#) to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division urging it to deny a permit to the Foster Family Trust for beach driving access on Cumberland Island, arguing it runs counter to NPS policy, Georgia's Shoreline Protection Act, is not in the public interest, and is likely not within the state's jurisdiction to determine.

The Coalition submitted [a letter](#) to U.S. Senator Michael Bennet (CO-D) asking him to vote "yes" on Senate Joint Resolution 69, which would stop the implementation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Barred Owl Management Strategy and Record of Decision. The plan is slated to kill several hundred thousand barred owls, including in 14 NPS units.

We joined with four other conservation organizations in submitting [a letter](#) to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management arguing that their Regional Haze State Implementation Plan for the Second Planning Period will do very little to curb emissions from coal-fired power plants and industrial facilities, particularly in Birmingham and Mobile.

The Coalition continues to put out press releases and give interviews to media outlets about the threats to the National Park Service:

- [Interior Secretary faces scrutiny for travel amid shutdown](#), *New York Times*
- [“Bear jams,” graffiti and fires: National parks suffer during shutdown](#), *Axios*

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.

- *End to shutdown likely* - On October 10, several Senate Democrats voted with Republicans to approve a funding measure to end the longest shutdown in U.S. history, which has reached 41 days, as of November 11. At the time the *Coalition Report* went to press, the bill was awaiting a convening of the House of Representatives, followed by signature into law by President Donald Trump. It looked likely to pass. Part of the compromise included a provision that would restore funding for federal agencies and stall efforts to downsize the federal workforce until the end of January. Source: [Reuters](#)
- *RIFs blocked through shutdown* - On October 25, a federal judge put in a preliminary injunction blocking the Trump Administration from carrying out Reductions in Force for federal agencies during the government shutdown. This includes new RIFs and ongoing implementation of ordered layoffs. On November 4, the Department of the Interior affirmed in federal court that it has frozen its plans to enact RIFs. (*Editor note: Previously, an October 17 decision suspended RIFs only for unionized workers represented in an ongoing lawsuit. They are now extended to all federal employees.*) Source: [Government Executive](#), [E&E News](#)
- *Ongoing shutdown news* - The lapse in Congressional appropriations has caused the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. Media outlets continue to report on the state of national parks; the following is a selection:
 - *National* - [Leaders of friends groups express Concerns for National Park Service employees, parks](#), *National Parks Traveler*
 - *National* - [How budget cuts are affecting National Park Service rangers](#), *The Daily Record/RE:PUBLIC*
 - *National* - [What has the government shutdown cost America’s public lands?](#), *Center for Western Priorities*
 - *National* - [National Park Service loses only employee tracking leaky wells](#), *Center for Western Priorities*

- *Acadia National Park, Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument* - [‘Muffled echoes’: National parks struggle during lengthy shutdown](#), *News Center Maine*
- *Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park* - [Dayton’s heritage at risk without park rangers, maintenance workers to protect it](#) (op-ed co-written by former Dayton Aviation Heritage superintendent Dean Alexander), *Dayton Daily News*
- *Glacier National Park* - [‘A low point’: Government shutdown latest challenge for Glacier National Park, surrounding communities](#), *KURL8*
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - [Businesses near Joshua Tree National Park feel the strain of the government shutdown](#), *NPR*
- *Shenandoah National Park* - [Tourism is booming in Virginia, but Shenandoah National Park is missing out](#), *WBUR*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - [Visiting Yellowstone National Park this winter? Here’s what to expect: and how the government shutdown could change that](#), *Mountain Journal*
- *Groups continue to support parks through shutdown* - Many Friends Groups, local governments, and private entities continue to step up to support the parks. The following is a selection of media articles outlining those efforts:
 - *National* - [National park friends groups filling gaps during shutdown, but at a price](#), *National Parks Traveler*
 - *National* - [States and Nonprofits are helping national parks run during the shutdown. Could their efforts backfire?](#), *Inside Climate News*
 - *Blue Ridge Parkway, Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - [National Park units in the NC mountains are relying on outside funding during shutdown](#), *The News & Observer*
 - *Gateway Arch National Park* - [Gateway Arch to be open on select days in November](#), *First Alert 4*
 - *Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument* - [Katahdin Woods and Waters group doesn’t want to keep ‘plugging holes in federal staffing,’ director says](#), *The County*
 - *Muir Woods National Monument* - [Donors are doing all they can to keep iconic Bay Area park open amid shutdown](#), *SFGate*
 - *Rocky Mountain National Park* - [Colorado to continue funding Rocky Mountain National Park visitor centers as shutdown continues](#), *KOAA*
 - *Saguaro National Park* - [Nonprofit does what US government can’t: Keeps Saguaro National Park open](#), *Tucson.com*
 - *Zion National Park* - [New wellness fund established for ‘incredibly dedicated people supporting Zion National Park](#), *St. George News*
- *How shutdown foreshadows other public lands actions* - The Center for American Progress published [an analysis](#) of the state of public lands during the shutdown and how they may reflect efforts by President Donald Trump to radically change public lands, focusing on extraction and dismantling conservation. Source: *Center for American Progress*

- *PEER fights underqualified acting employees* - On October 31, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility published a letter to the Department of the Interior arguing that the Trump Administration is violating the Federal Vacancies Reform Act by placing individuals in “acting” positions who do not fit the law’s criteria. The letter argues that any decisions these individuals make in their role could be invalidated. Courts struck down agency decisions for similar violations during the first Trump Administration. Source: [Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#)
- *Alaska fights for claim over federally-managed rivers* - The Alaska Beacon published [an article](#) about the multi-year effort of the State of Alaska against the federal government to gain jurisdiction over navigable waterways inside federal parks and preserves. Source: *Alaska Beacon*
- *GWS looking for testimonials from recently-departed NPS staff* - The George Wright Society has started a new project, called [RISE Declarations](#) (Recently Involuntarily Separated Employees) that seeks statements from former federal employees about “the most important aspects of their career in place-based conservation, along with lessons learned.” They hope to create a public record “to ensure that their achievements and record of public service/benefit are not lost.” Source: *George Wright Society*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Chaco Culture National Historical Park* - On October 30, the Bureau of Land Management sent a letter to Tribal leaders stating that it will be initiating formal meetings to consider revoking the 20-year ban on oil and gas leasing on a large swath of land surrounding the park. The ban was instituted in 2023, and Tribal groups have been split on the issue. Pueblo groups traveled to Washington, DC, in September to advocate for keeping the ban in place, while the Navajo Nation opened a lawsuit in January to rescind the ban. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program* (an NPS-administered program) - A group of Congresspeople from around the Chesapeake Bay region signed onto a letter to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum and Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought, urging the Trump Administration to not follow through with a plan to cut six out of 10 positions at the program office. The letter stated, “Terminating these employees is a direct attack on the decades-long work to preserve the Chesapeake Bay.” Source: [WHRO](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On October 27, the Gettysburg Borough (PA) Council held a public hearing on a proposal to change maximum building heights from 48 to 72 feet. A representative from the NPS shared a visual analysis that showed that taller buildings near the borough’s square would intrude on the view of the David Wills House. They recommended limiting building heights to 48 feet near the center of town and gradually increasing them farther north. Source: [Gettysburg Connection](#)

- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On November 4, BRIC, a subsidiary of the Diné Development Corporation, announced that it has been awarded an NPS contract to produce a “state-of-the-art arsenic treatment system” at Wahweap Well in Page, Arizona. Source: [Barchart](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - *The Western Carolinian* published an article about the high levels of ozone, air pollution, and acid rain in the park, posing risks to flora, fauna, and visitors. It also outlined efforts by community groups to lessen pollution in the region. Source: [The Western Carolinian](#)
- *Mount Rushmore National Memorial* - *The Guardian* published [an article](#) about efforts to tell a broader story of Indigenous connections to the Black Hills at Mount Rushmore, particularly by Gerard Baker, the first Native American superintendent at the site (now retired). Source: *The Guardian*
- *National Capital Region* - President Donald Trump has had staff make an official inquiry into naming the new home stadium for the Washington Commanders (a National Football League team) after him. The new stadium is being built on the former RFK Stadium site, which is land owned by the National Park Service. Naming rights belong to the team, though will also “likely rest” with the District of Columbia Council and the NPS. Source: [ESPN](#)
- *National Capital Region* - The Association of National Park Rangers commissioned a series of illustrated ads in bus shelters around Washington, D.C., to draw attention to the impact of funding cuts on national parks. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - In the wake of the reinstalled statue of Confederate General Albert Pike in Judiciary Square, *Straight Arrow News* published [an article](#) about the status of Confederate symbols in public areas across the country and the ongoing tension of how to best honor nuanced history. Source: *Straight Arrow News*
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks, The White House and President’s Park* - In late October, dirt excavated from the East Wing renovation of The White House was trucked to the East Potomac Golf Course (an NPS-administered property) and deposited between the ninth and sixth holes. Renovation plans for the course include rebuilt greens and bunkers, though public plans have not mentioned the dirt staging. President Donald Trump has previously shared autograph prints with pictures of the golf course and the words “Washington National Golf Course,” lending speculation to future plans. No federal officials would comment on the dirt move. Source: [The Washington Post](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - On October 30, the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to make a final determination on whether the Olympic marmot is deserving of protections under the Endangered Species Act within the law’s year deadline. Source: [KUOW](#)

- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - The Rocky Mountain Conservancy published a new book by Dr. James H. Pickering, *When the Park Was Young: Chapters in the Early History of Rocky Mountain National Park*. James is the historian laureate of Estes Park, Colorado. Source: [Estes Park News](#)
- *The White House and President's Park* - On October 30, three ranking Democrats on Senate committees related to the White House and its construction projects, submitted a letter to The White House asking for answers about President Donald Trump's "solicitation and acceptance of private funding" for the East Wing ballroom project to determine whether or not they had engaged in "pay-to-play corruption." Source: [U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works](#)
- *U.S. Park Police* - In late October, the federal government launched a new website to recruit more law enforcement officers to police Washington, D.C., including for the U.S. Park Police (an NPS branch), Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Hires will be stationed in DC "for up to one year." Source: [Reuters](#)

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

- Jim Carrico passed away on November 1. He worked for the NPS for many years, retiring as the superintendent at Big Bend National Park. Source: Virginia (Ginny) Carrico, Elvira Arnberger
- Frank "Butch" Richard Marhefka, 83, passed away on November 6. Frank worked as a law enforcement ranger for 27 years, at Fort Necessity National Battlefield and Friendship Hill National Historic Site. Source: [Herald-Standard](#)
- Douglas "Doug" E. Stover, 67, passed away on October 31. Doug worked for the NPS for 32 years, including time at The White House, George Washington Memorial Parkway, National Capital Parks - East, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, and the Outer Banks Group (Cape Hatteras, Cape Lookout, Fort Raleigh, and Wright Brothers). Source: [The Outer Banks Voice](#)
- Michael Bennett Thompson, 56, passed away on October 10. Michael worked for one year at Yellowstone National Park and one year at Everglades National Park. Source: [Legacy](#)

In the News

- On November 20, Bill Hafker will be presenting a lecture at the University of Richmond called “The Challenges Confronting America’s National Park System.” Bill is an 8-year volunteer bike patroller at Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and a member of the National Parks Conservation Association’s Mid-Atlantic and National Councils. Source: [University of Richmond School of Professional and Continuing Studies: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#)

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.

- *Mississippi National River and Recreation Area* - The City of Saint Paul, Minnesota, has opened public comment through November 13 on the construction of the Mississippi River Learning Center. The NPS is a partner on the project and would serve as one of its inter-agency tenants. Comments may be submitted via email. Source: [My Villager](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Gray wolf recovery plan dropped* - In early November, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it will not launch its nationwide recovery plan for gray wolves, which was slated to begin in December. The announcement stated that gray wolves “are no longer in need of conservation under the [Endangered Species] Act due to recovery.” The Center for Biological Diversity has stated that they will challenge the decision in court. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *List of critical minerals* - On November 7, the Department of the Interior published the final 2025 List of Critical Minerals, outlining “60 minerals vital to the U.S. economy and national security that face potential risks from disrupted supply chains.” 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.

Editor note: *The following update was written prior to advances on continuing appropriations that took place late starting on November 10. See note above about the likely end to the government shutdown. News is a dynamic landscape, so please bear with our team of editors and our deadlines for this biweekly report.*

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

October 29 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources concluded a hearing to examine the Section 106 consultation process under the National Historic Preservation Act, after receiving testimony from Christopher W. Merritt, Utah State Historic Preservation Officer, Millcreek; Andy McDonald, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., Bismarck, North Dakota; and Steven Concho, National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, Acoma, New Mexico.

House of Representatives Actions

House was not in session. However, Speaker Mike Johnson designated the period from October 27 - November 9 a “district work period.”

October 31 - A report was filed in the House regarding H.R. 2306, to reauthorize the Adams Memorial Commission, and for other purposes, with an amendment.

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Arches National Park

Graffiti

In late October/early November, a number of locations in Devils Garden were tagged with graffiti.

Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Crater Lake National Park

Former concession lawsuit

In November 2023, an individual fell on an icy sidewalk at Rim Village, resulting in a fractured wrist, torn rotator cuff, and a right shoulder tear. The individual sat on the ice for a half hour before they were able to receive help. The individual filed a lawsuit in September for \$2.2 million in damages, including disfigurement, emotional distress, and loss of enjoyment of life. On October 22, the case was assigned to a federal judge. The incident was one of several documented in the 2023 performance review of Crater Lake Hospitality (a subsidiary of Aramark) that led to its concession termination in 2024. Source: [Oregon Live](#)

Mount Rainier National Park

Bridge washed out

On November 3, the NPS announced that storms washed away the log footbridge over the Nisqually River on the Carter Falls Trail. The closure will remain in place until at least the spring when trail crews can assess. Source: [Mount Rainier Facebook page](#)

Olympic National Park

Mutual aid for boating accident

On October 30, a boat with four passengers overturned on the Bogachiel River, southwest of Forks, Washington. One passenger, 33-years-old, was able to hold onto a tree to call 911, and reported three individuals in the water, ages 39, 35, and 7. Personnel from Clallam County (WA) Sheriff's Office, Fire Districts 1& 6, Forks Ambulance, La Push Police Department, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the NPS responded to the scene. The 35-year-old and 7-year-old were located, but resuscitation efforts were not successful. As of November 6, the 39-year-old remains missing.

Source: [KOMO News](#), [Northwest Sportsman](#)

U.S. Park Police

Hit-and-run with two bicyclists

On October 8, two bicyclists were traveling on Soil Conservation Road at Beaver Dam Road within the Agricultural Research Center when they were struck by a vehicle, which left the scene. One individual was declared deceased at the scene, while the other was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. After a thorough investigation, U.S. Park Police officers were able to locate the suspect vehicle, and on October 31, a suspect was arrested. Source: [U.S. Park Police](#)

Yosemite National Park

Climber rescue

On October 20, an individual was rock climbing about halfway up the Salathé Wall of El Capitan when they took a fall and injured their arm. They requested emergency assistance. California Highway Patrol inserted a ranger "high on the wall." High winds slowed other helicopter operations, but they were eventually able to provide medical assistance and an evacuation. The individual received "urgent surgical care" and was said to be "recovering well." Source: [SFGate](#)

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: Elvira Arnberger, Bill Hafker, Steve Hastings, Mike Murray

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.