



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Coalition Actions

The Coalition and the Association of National Park Rangers collaborated to organize [a letter](#) from over 450 former NPS leaders to Interior Secretary Burgum urging immediate closure of national parks until the government reopens.

The Coalition joined over 100 conservation and environmental organizations in [a letter](#) to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, expressing strong opposition to the “Fix Our Forests Act” (S. 1462). The letter argues that the bill eliminates science from decision making, undermines environmental and public engagement laws, and will not reach its intended effect of reducing wildfire risk.

We joined with Rocky Mountain Wild and the Natural Resources Defense Council to file [a formal protest](#) against the Bureau of Land Management’s Utah Office 2025 Fourth Quarter Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale, calling on the BLM to withdraw all parcels from sale and conduct a more rigorous environmental review.

The Coalition continues to give interviews and put out press releases:

- [“Nonprofit executive: ‘National parks should be closed during government shutdown’](#), *ABC News*
- [“Industry voices largely missing in the discussion over fate of public lands”](#), *National Parks Traveler*
- [“Allowing ORVs on National Park Service roads is incompatible with protection of park resources and visitor experiences”](#) - Press release by Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance (with quote from Coalition Executive Council member Sue Fritzke)

Take action: The National Parks Conservation Association is recruiting for an [Arctic and Interior](#)

[Alaska Campaign Director](#). We encourage Coalition Members to apply if interested or share the information with others that might be interested. This position is pivotal, given the current challenges facing NPS and other public lands in Alaska.

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.

- *RIFs blocked (somewhat) during shutdown* - On October 17, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order against the Trump Administration issuing or enforcing layoffs of federal workers in unionized offices during the government shutdown. The Interior Department has stated that they may move forward with cuts planned for personnel not currently party to the lawsuit (non-union members). Source: [E&E News](#), [Government Executive](#)
- *DOI plans to cut over 2,000 positions* - On October 20, in a court filing related to the lawsuit against a Reduction in Force during the government shutdown (see above), the Department of the Interior announced that it has planned to cut over 2,000 positions, including 272 employees in the National Park Service. Most of these positions are at the regional level. The filing stated that the staff cuts have been planned for months until blocked by a restraining order, and that they are not related to lapse in appropriations. The numbers reflect positions currently protected by the restraining order, not necessarily the full scope of planned layoffs. Source: [Federal News Network](#)
- *\$25 million in lost revenue in shutdown* - Since the government shutdown began on October 1, it is estimated that the National Park Service has missed out on \$25 million in uncollected recreation fees. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Economic impacts of shutdown on gateway communities* - *USA Today* published [an article](#) about the effects of the government shutdown on businesses adjacent to national parks. The National Parks Conservation Association estimates that gateway communities may lose up to \$80 million in visitor spending each day of the shutdown. (The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks is mentioned in the article.) Source: *USA Today*
- "Interior is failing to conserve national parks" - *High Country News* published [an article](#) with this title, written by former NPS director Jonathan B. Jarvis and former NPS assistant director T. Destry Jarvis. It highlights the failure of the Department of the Interior to protect parks through the government shutdown. Source: *High Country News*
- *Individual park shutdown impacts* - Media outlets continue to highlight the effects of the government shutdown on individual parks. The following is a small selection. (Also see the [10/15/25 Coalition Report](#), and "Incidents" below)
 - *Boston National Historical Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, Minute Man National*

- Historical Park* - [“Government shutdown hitting National Park Service sites in Massachusetts”](#), WGBH
- *Harriet Tubman National Historical Park* - [“Government shutdown puts damper on Harriet Tubman National Historical Park”](#), *National Parks Traveler*
- *Pinnacles National Park* - [“No maps, brown water: Shutdown woes at Pinnacles National Park”](#), KWBW
- *Shenandoah National Park* - [“Government shutdown strains Shenandoah National Park during peak season”](#), *Royal Examiner*
- *Timpanogos Cave National Monument* - [“Shutdown mars monumental birthday of one of Utah’s grand destinations”](#) (op-ed), *The Salt Lake Tribune*
- *Partners continue to support parks* - Many partners continue to prop up the parks during the shutdown. The following is a sampling (and more can be found in the [10/15/25 Coalition Report](#)):
 - *Acadia National Park* - [“Locals step up to serve visitors to Acadia National Park during shutdown”](#), NPR
 - *Gateway Arch National Park* - [“Keeping the Arch open is more than symbolic. It’s a civic investment in St. Louis”](#), *St. Louis Business Journal*
 - *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - [“How Sevier County led the way in reopening Great Smoky Mountains National Park”](#), *Knox News*
 - *Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - [“Morrisey says deal to keep national parks open through October near completion”](#), *The Parkersburg News and Sentinel*
 - *Muir Woods National Monument* - [“Muir Woods reopens amid government shutdown with help from vendors”](#), *San Francisco Chronicle*
 - *Rocky Mountain National Park* - [“Colorado funds Rocky Mountain National Park visitor centers amid government shutdown”](#), *The Denver Post*
 - *Zion National Park* - [“What it takes to keep Utah’s Zion National Park open during the government shutdown”](#), KUER
- *NPS outreach skewed across demographics* - A new study in the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* found that NPS efforts to diversify its outreach to different socioeconomic groups has been relatively ineffective, especially among Black respondents. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *“What’s the Trump Administration’s end game for the national parks?”* - RE:PUBLIC published [a long-form article](#) with this title, articulating the administration’s efforts to dismantle the NPS’ staffing and budget, and what it would mean to privatize NPS functions. Source: RE:PUBLIC
- *Save Our Signs database released* - On October 13, the Save Our Signs movement, an effort to document wayside exhibits across the National Park System to prevent them from being censored or removed, [announced](#) the public release of over 10,000 images. Source: [Kansas Reflector](#)

- *"The cost of cutting anthropology out of U.S. national parks"* - *Sapiens* published [an article](#) with this title, written by former NPS anthropologist Ellyn Demuynck. The article argues for the role of cultural anthropologists in better connecting traditional Indigenous ecological knowledge into park management, as well as to better connect Tribes with their cultural identities within the parks. Source: *Sapiens*
- *New feral pig management framework for NPS* - Scientists from Texas A&M AgriLife have helped develop an integrated framework for monitoring, management, and control methods for feral pigs across the National Park System. A pilot test will take place across multiple NPS units in Texas, Tennessee, and Hawai'i. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *New Deal programs supported NPS paleontology* - New research published in *Fossil Record* documents the ways in which staff from the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration uncovered fossil resources in their work, and often added significantly to research and education around paleontology in national parks. Source: [ResearchGate](#)
- *Wildfires support park bird populations* - New research by published in *Fire Ecology* shows that low- to moderate-severity wildfires have positive long-term ecological benefits on NPS bird populations, opening up resources, allowing for richer food webs, and providing nesting opportunities. The study was conducted by scientists from the NPS, The Institute for Bird Populations, and the University of California, Los Angeles. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Acadia National Park* - In the wake of signs about climate change and affiliated Tribes being removed from the park, several individuals posted their own signs around the park in protest. Source: ["Alt Acadia National Park" Facebook page](#), [Hilary Heron Instagram page](#)
- *Appalachian National Scenic Trail* - In early October, the Northeast Wilderness Trust acquired over 2,000 acres of land along the Appalachian Trail north of Lebanon, New Hampshire. The trust plans to eventually donate the conservation easement to another land trust to take over old-growth forest ownership and management. Source: [New Hampshire Union Leader](#)
- *Badlands National Park, Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - *The New York Times Magazine* published [an article](#) about one journalist's efforts to "toughen up" his son by a visit to the two parks, and what he learned about manhood along the way. It includes a history of President Teddy Roosevelt's upbringing and ascent to the presidency. Source: *The New York Times Magazine*
- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, others in Alaska Region* - On October 23,

the Department of the Interior announced that the NPS, Bureau of Land Management, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have reissued permits for the establishment of the Ambler Road, which would cross Gates of the Arctic and have effects on the greater region, including other NPS units. The DOI also conveyed over 23,000 acres near Ambler to the State of Alaska to enable the Ambler Mine. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - Over the weekend of October 26, the National Park Service returned the statue of Confederate General Albert Pike to Judiciary Square, per the order of the Trump Administration. It had been in storage for five years after being pulled down by protesters in 2020. U.S. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton released a statement calling the action “an affront to the mostly Black and Brown residents of the District of Columbia and offensive to members of the military who serve honorably,” and arguing that Confederate statues “should be placed in museums as historical artifacts, not remain in parks or other locations that imply honor.” Source: [Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton](#)
- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - The *Point Reyes Light* published [an article](#) about the impending closure of M Ranch, which is one of the ranch properties on an NPS lease that was purchased in a litigation buyout by the Nature Conservancy in January. Source: *Point Reyes Light*
- *Stonewall National Monument* - On October 17, over 70 House Representatives signed onto a letter to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum demanding the reversal of edits made at the park and on digital content that remove references to transgender and queer Americans. Source: [Edge Media Network](#)
- *The White House and President’s Park* - On October 20, demolition crews began tearing down the White House East Wing in order to construct a 90,000-square-foot ballroom. President Donald Trump has stated that it is being privately funded. The White House is exempt from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, though past White House renovations have typically gone through procedures outlined in the Act, as well as review by the National Capitol Planning Commission. The White House and the Trump-appointed chair of the Commission have stated that the design will be submitted to the Commission for the construction phase, and that the demolition phase is not in their purview. Construction is expected to take several years. Source: [USA Today](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A new study published in *Global Ecology and Conservation* calls into question previous research that showed an increase in willow health due to the reintroduction of wolves. They found that data used to support the prior study had “fundamental methodological flaws.” Source: [ScienceDirect](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A grizzly bear in the park has been observed with five cubs, which is the largest litter in the park’s recorded history. Source: [WyoFile](#)

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

- George Berklacy, 89, passed away on October 7. George was the director of the NPS Office of Public Affairs for over 10 years, and was a Coalition Member since 2012. Source: [E&E News](#)
- William “Bill” David Clark, 90, passed away on October 4. Bill worked for the NPS from the late 1950s until his retirement in 1993, including time at Wind Cave National Park, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Death Valley National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, and the Harpers Ferry Center. Source: [Bar Harbor Story](#)
- James “Jim” Everett Jones, 103, passed away on October 14. Jim worked for the NPS from the 1950s through the early 1980s, including time at Sequoia National Park and many others. Source: [Moab Sun News](#)
- Leo Francis Marnell, 84, passed away on October 10. In college, he spent summers working as a fishing guide in Yellowstone National Park. He later went on to work as an aquatic scientist for the NPS at Ozark National Scenic Riverways and Glacier National Park. Source: [Legacy/Schnackenberg Funeral Home](#)

In the News

- Tom Medema will present a lecture at Calvin University in January, titled “America at 250: How Our National Parks Inspire a More Perfect Union.” Tom worked for the NPS for 35 years, retiring as an Associate Director and “Chief Storytelling Officer.” Source: [Calvin University](#)

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.

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - Public comment is [open through November 6](#) on a National Mall telecommunications infrastructure plan to provide “full 5G coverage from all major wireless carriers while protecting the views, character, and historic resources of the park.” Source: [E&E News](#)

Other Department of the Interior News

- *Opened oil and gas leasing in Alaska* - On October 23, the Department of the Interior announced it is reversing a 2024 decision to restrict oil and gas development on the Coastal Plain of Alaska by issuing a new Record of Decision and restoring leases to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority. Furthermore, the Bureau of Land Management has opened a call for nominations for which tracts should be made available to lease within the National Petroleum Reserve this winter. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Wildlife refuge lands conveyed for King Cove road* - On October 23, the Department of the Interior announced that it has signed a land exchange agreement and issued an official patent to the King Corporation to convey lands from the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge to construct a road connecting King Cove to the Cold Bay airport. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

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

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

On October 8 and 9, the Senate passed three measures that provided for Congressional disapproval of rules submitted by the Bureau of Land Management under the Congressional Review Act (CRA) relating to the eastern Montana “Miles City Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment” (H.J. Res. 104), the “North Dakota Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan” (H.J. Res. 105), and the “Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan” (H.J. Res. 106).

This action by the Senate follows the same action taken by the House of Representatives in early September. These resolutions will now be submitted to the President for approval. President Donald Trump is expected to approve all three resolutions.

The Central Yukon plan blocked the development of the Ambler Access Project, a 211-mile road through the Brooks Range foothills in northern Alaska that includes about 26 miles through the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

There is major concern that the use of the CRA is in conflict with other Acts, specifically the Administrative Procedure Act, and the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA). FLPMA directs, legislatively, the BLM and other land management agencies to develop resource management plans. All three of the plans disapproved by Congress went through extensive public review and comment in their development and in compliance with FLPMA requirements. Initially, the Administration had directed the Department of the Interior to review the three

Resource Management Plans in an effort to overturn them. Congress invoking the CRA was a much speedier means to overturn them. All three will open up vast acreage in the three areas to mining and mineral development and extraction.

Background info:

What's a Resource Management Plan? The Conservation Lands Foundation explains: "Resource management plans are strategic processes of the Bureau of Land Management to guide the management of public lands and resources. They involve comprehensive planning that determines the best use of land and resources such as minerals, grazing, water, wildlife, recreation, and areas designated for conservation. The goal of an RMP is to balance various land uses while ensuring sustainable practices that protect the environment and meet public needs. This process includes stakeholder input, environmental assessments, and legal considerations, resulting in a plan that directs land management activities, typically over a period of 15-20 years."

What's the Congressional Review Act? The Wilderness Society says: "The CRA is a blunt legislative tool that allows Congress to roll back administrative rules—and prevent similar future rules—within a certain period of an agency submitting that rule to Congress. Once a joint resolution is filed disapproving of a rule, the rule can be overturned by a simple majority vote. If a rule is rescinded through a CRA resolution, it triggers a clause that bars agencies from issuing a subsequent rule that is 'substantially the same' as the one overturned."

There is real concern that the use of the CRA to overturn these three RMPs could result in invalidating previously approved RMPs in many other BLM Field Offices as well as land management and resource management plans developed and approved by other land management agencies, possibly including the National Park Service. These actions have the potential to totally undermine how public lands are managed and could result in legal challenges to existing permits, leases and rights-of-way.

House of Representatives Actions

The House was in recess; no actions specific to the National Park System to report.

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Buffalo National River

Teenager fatality

On October 18, a 13-year-old was near Brewer Bluff when they lost their footing and fell about 260 feet. They passed away from injuries in the fall. The recovery included personnel from the NPS, Searcy County (AR) Sheriff's Office, Marshall Fire Department, Harrison Fire Department, and Survival Flight. Source: [KY3](#)

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Hiker fatality

On October 13, a 53-year-old experienced a “cardiac event” while hiking on the Bill Goat Trail, and fell from “a rocky spot.” Bystanders immediately called 911, “but the terrain prevented [first responders] from reaching [them] in time.” The individual was pronounced dead on scene. Agencies involved in the rescue included the U.S. Park Police and Montgomery County (MD) County Fire and Rescue Service. Source: [People](#)

Death Valley National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park

Drone video taken down

In May, the company DJI, which produces drones, produced a video called, “The West Awaits - Epic Road-trip Journey Captured with 100MP Mavic 4 Pro.” It included footage from the parks listed above, as well as footage from Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. On October 12, *DroneXL* published [an article](#) questioning how DJI obtained the footage, noting that drones are banned in national parks and Navajo Tribal Parks. On October 21, DJI released a statement stating that the video was produced by an independent creator and not commissioned by DJI, and that they have removed the video. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#), *DroneXL*

Denali National Park and Preserve

Airplane crash

On October 19, an aircraft with two individuals aboard crashed near the Ruth Glacier. An Alaska Air National Guard helicopter rendered medical aid and transported the individuals to Anchorage. Source: [Defense Visual Information Distribution Service](#)

Gettysburg National Military Park

Vehicle collision with wall

On October 14, a stone wall adjacent to a parking lot in the Devil’s Den area of the park was discovered to have been damaged by a vehicle, with a section collapsed. There is no video and there are no eyewitnesses to the incident, and it is unclear whether the incident was vandalism or an accident. The wall has been damaged before by vehicles attempting to turn or park in the small parking lot. The stone wall is said to have “no historical significance.” Source: [CNN](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Hiker fatality

On September 20, a 66-year-old unexpectedly passed away while hiking the Pacific Crest Trail at Forester Pass. Source: [The Orange County Register](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Over 30 weather-related car incidents

On October 26, the park closed all roads within the park south of Mammoth Hot Springs due to over 30 motor vehicle incidents, including accidents, stranded vehicles, and slide offs, from snowy and icy conditions. Source: [Daily Montanan](#)

Yosemite National Park

BASE jumpers convicted

On October 24, the park announced three recent convictions for BASE jumping incidents in the park in June 2024 and July 2021. It also announced it is investigating three additional cases from 2025. BASE jumping has been illegal in the park “since the mid-1980s.” Source: [Yosemite National Park](#)

Zion National Park

Canyoneering fatality

On October 26, a 58-year-old had an unspecified accident at the last rappel of Pine Creek Canyon. Bystanders performed CPR while personnel from the NPS responded to the scene. Resuscitation efforts were not successful and the individual was pronounced deceased at the scene. The other member of the individual’s party was rescued by the first responders. The deceased individual’s body was taken to the medical examiner’s office by helicopter. The incident is under investigation by the NPS and Washington County (UT) Sheriff’s Office. Source: [KUTV](#), [KSL](#)

Wildfires

- *Joshua Tree National Park* - On October 12, a wildfire started near the Black Rock campground. The campground, Black Rock visitor center, and surrounding trails have been closed. As of October 15, it was 72 acres and 100% contained. The cause is yet to be determined. Source: [Desert Sun](#), [Z107.7](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - The Naches Peak Trail remains closed to protect public health and safety due to the Wildcat Fire, which is burning outside the park on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. (Shriner Peak Trail and trailheads on SR123 between Cayuse Pass and Stevens Canyon Road reopened on September 19.) Source: Mount Rainier National Park ([Facebook page](#), [Current conditions](#))
- *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. On July 30, the Staircase Campground and “areas across the causeway on the north side of Lake Cushman” were evacuated. Many trails and wilderness camps around the Staircase area and in the North Fork Skokomish Drainage remain closed. As of October 27, the Bear Gulch Fire was 20,233 acres and 50% contained, with 1 personnel assigned. Source: Olympic National Park ([7/7](#), [7/8](#), [Fire Conditions and Updates](#)), Watch Duty (app), [Inciweb](#), [Mason County \(WA\) Sheriff’s Office Facebook page](#), [Olympic National Park Facebook page](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Olympic National Park* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about the difficulty of securing funding to repair South Shore Road along Lake Quinault, which washed out in December 2024. 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: Teresa Ford, Tom Haraden, Steve Hastings, David Manski, Mike Murray, 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.