



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Take Action!

Help us help the parks! We're working with the National Parks Conservation Association to document and share park experiences that demonstrate the impacts of staffing cuts, the hiring freeze, and other recent actions devastating the National Park Service.

Share your experience

Each year, the Coalition honors individuals or groups who demonstrate outstanding support for the mission of the National Park Service through the George Hartzog Award. Nominations are due October 15.

Nominate someone

Coalition Actions

We submitted [comments](#) to the U.S. Department of Transportation encouraging it to consider increasing funding for the Federal Lands Transportation Program, Federal Lands Access Program, National Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program, and Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads, as well as expanding eligibility for other competitive funding sources to federal lands.

The Coalition continues to give interviews and make press releases related to the current challenges facing the National Park Service, including this *New York Times* [article](#) that reported

that at least 90 NPS units are under serious strain due to understaffing, and our [subsequent press release](#), as well as participating in the “[National Parks Call-In Show](#)” on KRCL’s “RadioACTIVE” program.

The Provincetown Independent published [an op-ed](#) arguing against budget cuts to the NPS by Coalition Member Maria Burks.

In Memoriam

On October 31, a celebration of life will be held for Rick Smith at the Shrine of the Ages at Grand Canyon National Park. Rick worked for the NPS for many years, and was a former chair of the Coalition. Those interested in attending should RSVP to [Kathy Smith](#) by October 1.

Additionally, Butch Farabee is organizing a digital memory book, and has asked individuals who knew Rick to send anecdotes, shared experiences, goodbyes, thank yous, or any other type of salute (150 words or less) by October 10 to [Butch's email](#).

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.

- “Shuttered visitor centers, closed campgrounds, slower emergency response” - The National Parks Conservation Association published [a press release](#) with this title, outlining the effects of the loss of 24% of permanent staff across the National Park Service. Source: National Parks Conservation Association
- *Masks and wildland firefighting* - *The New York Times* published [an article](#) about why the federal and state firefighting agencies have been hesitant to implement mask-wearing policies for wildland firefighters, and the downplaying of the health risks associated with the profession. Source: *The New York Times*
- *New edition of Park Science* - On August 29, the NPS published the [Summer 2025 edition](#) of *Park Science*, the NPS’ quarterly magazine. Source: National Park Service *Park Science*
- *Chuck Sams op-ed against offloading parks* - *National Parks Traveler* published [an op-ed](#) by former National Park Service director Chuck Sams arguing against turning national parks over to state governments. He argues that doing so would not improve the maintenance backlog at parks, would worsen wildfire response, and would be detrimental to the protection of places and stories Americans value. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Most Google-searched parks* - *Outside* published [an article](#) about which national parks are included in Google searches the most between 2004 and August 13, 2025. Yellowstone was the most searched, and the article did not rank the remainder, but listed 13 other

parks among the most searched. Source: *Outside*

- *Op-ed on proposed location for national garden of heroes* - *The Hill* published [an op-ed](#) opposing South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden's offer to place President Donald Trump's proposed "National Garden of American Heroes" on state land in the Black Hills near Mount Rushmore. The op-ed, written by journalist Matthew Davis, argues that it is disrespectful to the Lakota Nation to place it in a place considered a spiritual center and already negatively affected by the Mount Rushmore memorial. Source: *The Hill*
- *App for dog-friendly hikes in parks* - A new free app called ORIEN Trails is designed to help pet owners identify pet-accessible trails in national parks, scenic overlook locations, and designated rest areas for pets. The app is partnering with the National Park Foundation on the initiative. Source: [Pet Food Industry](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Andrew Johnson National Historic Site* - On August 23, the park began a project to renovate the visitor center, including "internal structural changes" and a new HVAC system. The project is expected to go through "early 2026." The visitor center will be closed during that time, with a temporary visitor contact station available at the adjacent Memorial Building. Source: [Andrew Johnson National Historic Site](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - On August 20, the park announced that it has revised the start date for construction projects at Chisos Basin to May 1, 2026, allowing the area to remain open through the winter months this year. When construction starts, the area will be closed for about two years. Source: [Big Bend National Park](#)
- *Capitol Reef National Park* - On August 25, the park announced the completion of a road rehabilitation of Scenic Drive and the expansion of several parking lots. The project started in Spring 2024. Road access is now reopened to Capitol Gorge. Source: [Capitol Reef National Park](#)
- *Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - Research published in January in the journal *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*, shows that stream fish populations in both parks have remained remarkably stable since 2013, likely due to their status as protected areas. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Everglades National Park* - The South Florida Water Management District and University of Florida are utilizing robots disguised as rabbits to lure and detect Burmese pythons, which are an invasive predator responsible for killing 95% of native small mammals and many birds in the region. The rabbits are set up to emit heat and a smell, and to make "natural movements" similar to a rabbit. They are set up in small pens monitored by a video

camera that sends out a signal when a python is nearby. When a python is discovered, a contractor goes to kill it. Source: [WUSF](#)

- *Gateway Arch National Park* - On August 19 the park announced its re-accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums, considered the highest national recognition for museums in the United States. Accreditation takes place every 10 years. Source: [Gateway Arch National Park](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - In mid-September, the park will complete a project to rehabilitate Mather Drive and Grinnell Drive, the final phase of a year-long headquarters paving project. The bike path will be rerouted onto Going-to-the-Sun Road from West Glacier to the bike path intersection after the West Entrance Station for this final phase. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - *AZ Central* published a series of [letters to the editor](#) expressing concern over the management of the Dragon Bravo Fire, including one by Coalition Member and former NPS ranger Richard Thorum. Source: *AZ Central*
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The U.S. Geological Survey published [an article](#) about whether the humpback chub in the Grand Canyon has distinct sub populations based on habitats, behavior, growth, and migration. The research was supported by scientists from the USGS, NPS, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Source: U.S. Geological Survey
- *Hot Springs National Park* - On August 19, the park broke ground on a project to rehabilitate the Maurice Bathhouse and provide repairs to the Buckstaff, Libbey, and Fordyce Bathhouses. Maurice Bathhouse has been closed since 1974 and represents the last of the historic Bathhouse Row buildings to be rehabilitated. The project is expected to allow commercial leases in the building. The \$31.6 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Hot Springs National Park](#)
- *Isle Royale National Park* - On August 26, new research was published in the journal *Scientific Reports* showing that gray wolves in Isle Royale select habitat based on the location of beaver lodges during snow-free periods, when moose are more difficult and riskier to kill. Source: [Nature](#)
- *Mojave National Preserve* - On August 27, the NPS announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for a rehabilitation project for the South Kelbaker and Kelso-Cima Roads. The project is expected to take three years to complete. Start dates have not been announced. Source: [Mojave National Preserve](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - On September 2, a project will begin to replace two large box culverts on State Route 123, from south of Cayuse Pass to an area just north of the intersection with Stevens Canyon Road. The project is expected to be complete by the end of the month. Source: [Mount Rainier National Park](#)

- *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act* (an NPS-administered program) - The State Museum of Pennsylvania is currently dismantling an exhibit on Native Americans to repatriate objects excavated in the 19th and 20th centuries, in alignment with NAGPRA. The museum is consulting with many Tribes on the return, as well as a future exhibit. Source: [WTAJ](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - *The Seattle Times* published [an article](#) about the complex logistics and challenges of fighting the Bear Gulch Fire, which is burning in the park and on adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands. (See more on the Bear Gulch Fire in “Incidents” below.) Source: *The Seattle Times*
- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - *The San Francisco Standard* published [an article](#) chronicling the long conflict between private ranching and the park and the current status of that conflict. Source: *The San Francisco Standard*
- *Point Reyes National Seashore* - The NPS published [an article](#) about the ongoing efforts to restore the Bolinas Lagoon watershed, with support from the Watershed Stewards Program, NPS’ San Francisco Bay Area Inventory and Monitoring Network, Audubon Canyon Ranch, and volunteers. Source: National Park Service Office of Communications
- *Redwood National and State Parks* - Patrick Pollard, facility manager at the park, was selected for the National Facility Manager of the Year Award for his efforts. Patrick has managed several key projects with many stakeholders, including the Prairie Creek Fish Hatchery, Davison Road culverts, Redwoods Rising restoration, and a partnership with the U.S. Air Force Innovation Readiness Team. Source: [Redwood National and State Parks](#)
- *Rock Creek Park* - The Request for Proposals to lease Little House has been extended through November 25. Source: [Rock Creek Park](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park* - On August 14, the park held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the reopening of Tiber Creek Campground Amphitheater. The amphitheater underwent a \$25,000 renovation project, with funding from the Rocky Mountain Conservancy. It will allow for evening programs at the campground for the first time since 2020. Source: [Estes Park News](#)
- *Saguaro National Park* - The park and Friends of Saguaro National Park received the 2025 Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Award for a team for their efforts maintaining and improving trails in the park and conducting important wilderness surveys. Source: [Saguaro National Park](#)
- *Scotts Bluff National Monument* - On August 17, the park announced the start of a project to rehabilitate Summit Road. The \$6.4 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Scotts Bluff National Monument](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Yosemite National Park* - On August 25, the

Federal Labor Relations Authority certified that 97% of ballots cast by employees at Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite, were in favor of joining the National Federation of Federal Employees. Source: [OnLabor](#)

- *Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument* - On August 22, the park announced the start of a project to construct the Tufa Trail, which will be a 3.3-mile accessible trail, including bilingual wayside exhibits, tactile models, and wayfinding signage. The project is expected to be complete in 2027. Design and construction are being provided in-kind by home builder D.R. Horton as part of a 2018 land exchange agreement between the NPS and the City of North Las Vegas. D.R. Horton is currently constructing a community on the southeastern boundary of the park. \$70,000 in funding was also obtained by the Protectors of Tule Spring from the Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trails Program. Source: [Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument](#)
- *U.S. Park Police* - As part of Executive Order 14333, issued on August 25, U.S. Park Police have lifted a ban on pursuing vehicles that leave the scene during a traffic stop. Previously, they were instructed to not pursue vehicles. Source: [WTOP](#)
- *Vicksburg National Military Park* - On September 2, the park began a project to restore the Illinois Memorial. It is expected to take a year to complete. During the restoration, the memorial will be closed and some of the parking area. The \$5.3 million project was funded in part by a donation from John Nau II, a founding board member of Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign. Source: [Vicksburg National Military Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Cowboy State Daily* published [an article](#) about the efforts to save the town of West Yellowstone from fires in 1988, including the loaning of irrigation pipes by local farmers and using dynamite on the Madison River inside the park to create a deep enough place to draw water from. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*
- *Yellowstone National Park* - *National Public Radio* published [a segment](#) on its “Short Wave” program about the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone and whether it has had the intended effects. Source: *National Public Radio*
- *Yosemite National Park* - *E&E News* published [an article](#) about the effects of understaffing and management decisions on a variety of facets of the park, including search and rescue incidents, fires, maintenance, and the visitor experience. Source: *E&E News*
- *Yosemite National Park* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about George Meléndez Wright, one of the NPS’ first wildlife biologists. He deeply influenced NPS policy around predator control. Source: *SFGate*

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

- Raynold “Worth” Allen, III, 45, passed away on August 11. Worth worked for the NPS as a law enforcement ranger, starting in 2012, with time at Yosemite National Park and Big Bend National Park. Source: [Legacy/Stephen C. Gregory and Son Cremation Service](#)
- Michael “Mike” Dorce Colyer, 77, passed away on August 13. He worked for the NPS at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park as a historic preservation specialist, and as a maintenance supervisor at Glacier National Park. Source: [Legacy/Daily Inter Lake](#)
- William “Bill” John Hauze III, 78, passed away on December 8. Bill worked for the NPS as a district ranger at Capitol Reef National Park for ten years around the 1970s. Source: [Taylor Funeral Service and Crematory](#), Bud McMahon
- Barbara Joan Jackson, 77, passed away on May 13. Barbara worked for the NPS for many years, including time at Lassen Volcanic National Park, Yosemite National Park, Redwood National and State Parks, and Great Basin National Park. Source: [The Plumas Sun](#)
- Shawn L. Lobaugh, 59, passed away on August 10. Shawn worked seasonally at Yosemite National Park for a time. Source: [The Herald](#)
- Thomas “Tom” Elmer Lubbert, 86, passed away on June 17. Tom worked for the NPS for 36 years, including time at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, Glacier National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, as superintendent at Big Thicket National Preserve, and at the Denver Service Center. Source: [Horan and McConaty Funeral Service and Cremation](#), Kathy Ziegenfus
- Barbara C. Schwartz, 84, passed away on July 8. Barbara worked for the NPS for many years, serving as the secretary to the chief ranger at Upper Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River. Source: [Stroyan Funeral Home](#), Chris Nelson
- David “Dave” H. Spearing, 74, passed away on August 28. Dave worked at Cuyahoga Valley National Park for over 30 years. Source: [Tribute Archive/Silva-Hostetler Funeral Home](#)
- Judy Eanes Swann, 89, passed away on August 4. Judy volunteered in her retirement with her spouse Jack at Grand Teton National Park for a time around 2000. Source: [Jacksonville.com](#)

In the News

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change selected Patrick Gonzalez as a lead author on its next global scientific assessment of climate change. Patrick served previously as the principal climate change scientist of the NPS. Source: [UC Berkeley News](#)

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.

- *American Beach National Historic Landmark Study* - Public comment is [open through September 7](#) on a nomination for National Historic Landmark status for American Beach, a historic African American resort community on the Atlantic coast in northern Florida. Source: [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#)
- *Clara Barton National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through September 9](#) on a plan to rehabilitate the Clara Barton home. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - Public comment is [open through September 29](#) on a proposal to repair the southernmost jetty in Buxton, North Carolina. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Freedom Riders National Monument* - Public comment is [open through September 24](#) on a master plan for the Bus Burning Site in Calhoun County, Alabama. Source: [Freedom Riders National Monument](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - Public comment is [open through September 23](#) on proposed improvements at Taggart Lake, including a larger parking lot, new toilets, a potable water station, a redesigned trailhead and trail linkages, an accessible trail bridge, shoreline improvements, and facility improvements to the Cottonwood Creek picnic area. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument* - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has opened public comment through September 29 on a draft recovery plan for the Sonoyta mud turtle, which is found only in the U.S. at Quitobaquito Springs in the park. The plan can be reviewed [here](#) and comments can be submitted by mail or email. Source: [Daily Independent](#)

Other Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service (DOA) News

- *Proposal to discard roadless rule* - The U.S. Forest Service has proposed the rescinding of the “roadless rule,” which was adopted in 2001 to prevent road construction and timber harvesting on about 58 million acres of forest lands to protect ecological and recreational values. The agency has stated that it will allow them to better manage the forests to prevent wildfires and promote economic growth. The proposal is up for [public comment](#) until September 19. Source: [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Expanded hunting and fishing* - On August 27, the Department of the Interior announced

42 new hunting and sport fishing opportunities across 16 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System and one unit of the National Fish Hatchery System. It also has attempted to “better align Fish and Wildlife Service regulations with state regulations and promote consistency across national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries.” Source:

[Department of the Interior](#)

- *Court stops land transfer to mining company* - On August 18, a federal appeals court issued an emergency injunction blocking the transfer of Oak Flat to Resolution Copper just hours before the transfer would have taken place. It has the potential to become the largest copper mine in the world. Oak Flat is considered a sacred site to the San Carlos Apache Tribe and other Tribal nations in the region, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a Western Apache Cultural Property and National Historic District. Lawsuits related to the fight have been ongoing since 2021. The injunction allows court proceedings to move forward with no mining while motions are pending. The Department of the Interior published [a press release](#) urging the appeals court to lift the stay immediately. Source: [AZ Mirror](#), Department of the Interior
- *Critical minerals list* - On August 25, the U.S. Geological Survey released its draft 2025 List of Critical Minerals, which is intended to provide a “road map” for strategy, investment, and permitting decisions. Its focus is on forecasting mineral supply chain disruptions. 54 mineral commodities made the list. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Op-ed against removal of BLM authority to defer leases* - *The Salt Lake Tribune* published an op-ed by Walt Dabney arguing against a provision in H.R. 1 (“the Big Beautiful Bill”) that removed the Bureau of Land Management’s authority to defer oil and gas lease nominations. If a private company nominates land for an oil or gas lease, it must now be put on the auction block, regardless of recreational, cultural, or ecological values. Walt worked for the NPS for many years, including as superintendent of Canyonlands National Park, and is a Coalition member. Source: [The Salt Lake Tribune](#)
- *Commingle rule finalized* - On August 20, the Department of the Interior finalized its rule on offshore commingling, which allows for combining production from multiple sources into a single stream for processing and accounting. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Offshore oil and gas lease sale schedule* - On August 19, the Department of the Interior announced a long-term schedule for offshore oil and gas leases. It includes at least 30 lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and six in Cook Inlet (AK) through 2032. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Congressional Actions

Nothing to report this period due to Congress’ annual August recess.

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Many Parks

Hurricane Erin

Hurricane Erin made landfall on southeastern parks the week of August 18, but had minimal effect on park sites:

- [Assateague Island National Seashore](#): Closures to Chincoteague Beach, all beach parking, and the Tom's Cove Visitor Center due to tidal surge and overwash. They have since reopened.
- [Buck Island Reef National Monument, Christiansted National Historic Site, Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve](#): Temporary closures, no damage. All closures have been lifted.
- [Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Wright Brothers National Memorial](#): Delayed opening, since lifted.
- [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#): Temporary closures and standing water. All closures have since been lifted.

Many Parks

Protests

On August 25, the 109th anniversary of the National Park Service, several protests took place at several national park units, demonstrating against cuts to the National Park Service and efforts to erase important American stories. Source: [Danville San Ramon](#), [Mammoth Times](#) (via *Pressreader*)

Cape Cod National Seashore

Missing person found deceased

On August 22, an individual was reported missing in Provincetown, Massachusetts. An extensive search was conducted. On August 24, the individual was found deceased in a remote area of Hatches Harbor near the dike and the back end of the runway for Provincetown Municipal Airport. A preliminary investigation suggests the death was not suspicious. Agencies involved in the recovery and investigation include Provincetown Police, the NPS, and the Massachusetts State Police. Source: [CapeCod.com](#)

Capitol Region

Border patrol dispatched to DC parks

On August 20, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum announced that the DOI has dispatched Customs and Border Protection officers to NPS sites in Washington, DC, to support law enforcement in its efforts to "intensify crime deterrence efforts" in the city. Source: [The Travel](#)

Denali National Park and Preserve

Heavy storms

On August 29, the park announced that heavy rain and snow caused flooding, erosion, and snow accumulation along Denali Park Road, requiring its closure at Mile 15 until conditions improve. Campgrounds past that point were evacuated. On August 30, the closures were lifted and campgrounds were reopened. Later that day, erosion observed at the Teklanika Bridge caused the park to close the road at Teklanika rest area. On September 1, the closure was lifted. Source: Denali National Park and Preserve ([8/29](#), 8/30 ([first](#), [second](#)), [8/31](#))

Fire Island National Seashore

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus was detected in a mosquito sample taken on July 29 at the William Floyd Estate. A sample taken on August 5 returned no results of West Nile Virus. The virus may still be present among the mosquito population, so visitors should take precautions. The NPS and Suffolk County (NY) will continue their weekly mosquito monitoring, including increased surveillance at the William Floyd Estate. Source: [Fire Island National Seashore](#)

Glacier National Park

Water shortages

On August 22, the park announced that there are water shortages at Logan Pass due to a combination of abnormally high water consumption and low water levels. This may cause plumbed bathroom closures. Source: [Glacier National Park](#)

Glacier National Park

Hiking fatality

On August 29, while hiking with a large group on the Highline Trail between Big Bend and Triple Arches, a 73-year-old tripped and fell about 450 feet. A Two Bear Air helicopter located the individual, finding them deceased from injuries sustained in the fall. Their body was recovered and brought to the Apgar horse corrals, then transferred to the Flathead County (MT) coroner. Source: [Daily Montanan](#)

Glacier National Park

Bear incident

On August 27, a 34-year-old was hiking with one other individual near Lake Janet when a medium-sized brown-colored bear (unidentified as an American black bear or grizzly bear) and two cubs charged out of some undergrowth toward them. The 34-year-old dove off the trail and covered their head. The adult bear swiped at them, wounding their shoulder and arm. The other individual deployed bear spray, causing the bears to run away. The two individuals hiked to a wilderness campground located at the lake and used another camper's satellite device to send a request for help. An air ambulance service transported the individual to a hospital in Kalispell, Montana. The hiker was said to be in "stable condition." Source: [SFGate](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Flooding

On August 26, the park experienced heavy thunderstorms and flooding, causing the Oasis of Mara to close. It has since reopened. Source: [Newsweek](#), [Joshua Tree National Park current conditions](#)

Olympic National Park

Firefighters arrested by border patrol

On August 27, two firefighters working on the Bear Gulch Fire, burning in Olympic National Park and adjacent federal lands (see “Wildfires” below) were arrested by U.S. Customs and Border Protection with the accusation that they are in the United States illegally. The individuals were part of a wildland firefighting crew contracted by the Bureau of Land Management. Source: [KUOW](#)

Redwood National and State Parks

Illegal dumping

On August 16, an illegal garbage dump was found at Walker Road, near the Smith River, in the Jedediah Smith area of the park. It included materials removed from a roofing project, including chemicals that are dangerous for flora and fauna in the park. The park has released some details about the refuse and is asking the public for any information they might be able to provide. Source: [Redwood National and State Parks](#)

Rocky Mountain National Park

Climber accident

On August 17, a 26-year-old took a roped fall while climbing the South Face of Petit Grepon, sustaining lower leg injuries. Their climbing partner helped them rappel to the base of the route, where a team of NPS personnel provided medical care. While another NPS team carried equipment for a guiding line rope rescue to the scene, a Colorado Army National Guard helicopter was able to arrive on scene and hoist the individual and transport them to Upper Beaver Meadows. From there, the individual was taken to “further medical care.” Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)

Sequoia National Park

Illegal marijuana grow

On August 21, the park announced that an illegal marijuana cultivation site was removed from the park (location undisclosed) by hand and helicopter sling-load operations. It consisted of 13 acres of disturbance, including 2,377 full-grown marijuana plants, 2,000 pounds of trash and infrastructure, a semi-automatic pistol, a variety of hazardous and banned chemicals, significant disturbances to waterways, terrain, and native vegetation, and evidence of poaching. The site

was detected and raided in 2024, but was unable to be rehabilitated until this year due to the presence of the chemicals. The operation was conducted by personnel from the NPS and Bureau of Land Management. No arrests have been made in conjunction with the site; the investigation is ongoing. Source: [Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Mutual aid for search

On August 16, a hiker went missing while hiking in the area near Cottonwood Lakes, located in the Inyo National Forest. A multi-day search ensued, including personnel from the China Lake (CA) Mountain Rescue Group, Mono County Search and Rescue team, the NPS, California Army National Guard, and a California Highway Patrol helicopter. The individual was located near Cottonwood Lakes and evacuated on August 19. Source: [GVWire](#)

Yosemite National Park

Staff fired for hanging flag

On August 18, an NPS staff member posted on their social media that they were fired the previous week for hanging a transgender pride flag on El Capitan in May. They stated that they did so in their free time, and the flag hung for two hours. The day afterward, the park's acting superintendent updated the Yosemite's compendium, including a regulation banning large banners, flags, or signs in wilderness without a permit. The reason for firing was stated as "failing to demonstrate acceptable conduct." The NPS has stated publicly that they are "pursuing administrative action against several Yosemite National Park employees and possible criminal charges against several park visitors who are alleged to have violated federal laws and regulations related to demonstrations." Source: [CBS News](#)

Wildfires

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area* - On July 10, lightning strikes ignited wildfires on both the North Rim and South Rim of Black Canyon of the Gunnison. All visitors and staff were evacuated from the park. On July 18, Curecanti closed all boating activities on the Blue Mesa Reservoir, west of Middle Bridge, due to firefighting scooper aircraft. On July 20, the reservoir was reopened. On July 24, the park announced that a team of hydrologists and soil scientists began conducting rapid assessments, and have thus far noted that drinking water supplies have not been affected. On July 30, the North Rim of Black Canyon of the Gunnison reopened to the public. On August 18, the South Rim of Black Canyon reopened a small area around the visitor center. On August 29, the South Rim reopened in its entirety. East Portal Road and Campground remain closed, as well as the South Rim Campground and several trails and wilderness routes. As of August 29, the South Rim Fire was 4,232 acres and 80% contained. Source: Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park ([7/10](#), [7/24](#), [7/25](#), [8/14](#), [8/28](#)), [Inciweb](#), Curecanti National Recreation Area ([7/18](#), [7/20](#)), *Watch Duty* (app)

- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On July 4, lightning struck south of an area known as the Basin near the W1 Road, causing the Dragon Bravo Fire. It was originally allowed to burn, with fire crews monitoring its progress. It grew slowly to 120 acres after seven days. On July 11, winds shifted and increased dramatically, headed toward the North Rim facilities. All facilities were evacuated. On July 12, the fire jumped several fire containment lines, and personnel detected a potential chlorine gas leak from the water treatment facility, requiring the evacuation of firefighters, grounding of aircraft, and evacuation of the North Kaibab Trail, South Kaibab Trail, and Phantom Ranch area. Early on July 13, the fire burned over the developed area of the North Rim, destroying or damaging 235 structures, including the historic Grand Canyon Lodge and an NPS visitor center. On August 15, the park posted a photo of the popular “Brightly the Burro” bronze statue, which was safely removed from the remains of the lodge, with a small amount of damage. It is unclear whether the statue will be restored or replaced when the lodge is rebuilt. On August 20, the park reopened the South Kaibab Trail from the trailhead to the Tipoff, the Tonto Trail from the Tipoff to Havasupai Gardens, and the Bright Angel Trail from the trailhead to Pipe Creek Resthouse. All three have been closed since July 13 due to safety concerns related to the Dragon Bravo Fire. On August 24, an interagency Burned Area Emergency Response team [published](#) a Soil Burn Severity map for the fire. As of September 1, the fire was 145,504 acres and 80% contained, with 698 personnel assigned. Source: *Watch Duty* (app), [AZ Central](#), [Inciweb](#), [Grand Canyon National Park Facebook page](#), [KJZZ](#), Grand Canyon National Park ([8/20](#), [8/24](#))
- *North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area* - On August 28, lightning struck the area, starting several wildfires:
 - Thunder Fire - As of September 1, it was 1.5 acres, and expected to be 100% contained by the end of the day.
 - Perry Fire - As of September 1, it was 600 acres.
 - Big Beaver Fire - As of August 28, it was 100% contained at 0.25 acres.
 - Trails and camps in the Little Beaver area of Ross Lake are currently closed. Source: North Cascades National Park ([8/28](#), [9/1](#))
- *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 September 2, the Bear Gulch Fire was 9,406 acres and 10% contained, with 200 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](#)
- *Rocky Mountain National Park*
 - On August 17, lightning caused a fire in the Lump Ridge area. The fire was contained at 0.3 acres the same day. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)
 - On August 24, a visitor reported smoke in the area above Mills and Jewel Lakes. NPS personnel and Northern Colorado Helitack responded and suppressed the fire

at 0.1 acres. The Mills Lake Trail closed temporarily during the operation and has since reopened. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Source: [Rocky Mountain National Park](#)

- *Zion National Park* - On August 23, lightning started a fire in Kolob Canyons. Kolob Canyons Road and all connecting trails were closed, and have since reopened. As of August 26, the Kanarrville Fire was 100% contained at 16 acres. Source: [SFGate](#), *Watch Duty* (app), [Zion National Park](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - On August 22, the NPS announced the reopening of milepost 393 to milepost 420 after a major landslide repair project at milepost 401.5. On August 29, the NPS announced the completion of a landslide repair project at milepost 422, near Devil's Courthouse. The section of road from milepost 382 to 422 is now open. Both sections of road have been closed since Hurricane Helene hit the region in September 2024. Source: Blue Ridge Parkway ([7/22](#), [7/29](#))
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On August 22, the park announced the reopening of camper services and water spigots at Mather Campground and Desert View Campground. Stage 2 water restrictions remain in place until reservoir tanks are refilled. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On August 25, the NPS announced that the Federal Highway Administration awarded a contract to Eclipse Companies, LLC, for the repair of the road washout on US 441/Newfound Gap Road (see [8/6/25](#) and [8/18/25 Coalition Reports](#)). Construction is now expected to be complete by September 30. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On August 29, the park announced the partial reopening of fishing on the Madison River, Firehole River, and Gibbon River and its tributaries. They had been closed in July due to high temperatures, which create stressful conditions for fish ([see 7/23/25 Coalition Report](#)). Fishing is now open from sunrise until 2 PM each day, then closed for the subsequent hours. Source: Yellowstone National Park

Corrections

In the 8/18/25 *Coalition Report*, we mistakenly used the word “flaunt” instead of “flout.” Thanks to Cassie Thomas for bringing this to our attention.

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- Editor: Katie Wallace

- Tech and Production Support: Steve Pittleman, Debbie Reed, Emily Thompson
- Regular Correspondent: Chris Soller
- Issue Contributors: Bud McMahon, Mike Murray, Chris Nelson, Cassie Thomas, Richard Thorum, Bill Walters, Kathy Ziegenfus

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to:
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The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service.

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