



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Coalition Actions

The Coalition submitted [comments](#) to the Office of Personnel Management on the proposed employee performance management appraisal system, arguing it will insert political loyalty into civil service, reduce opportunities to challenge abusive practices, and create incentives for unfair evaluations.

We joined four other conservation organizations and the Southern Environmental Law Center in submitting [a letter](#) to the Camden County (GA) County Commission asking it to delay support for a proposed NPS land exchange, arguing it lacks both logistical and legal background. (See more in “Around the Parks” below).

The Coalition, Sierra Club, and National Parks Conservation Association submitted [comments](#) opposing the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed approval of Oklahoma’s 2022 Regional Haze State Implementation Plan, arguing it does not do enough to reduce pollution for scenic vistas, public health, and local economies.

We joined six conservation organizations and the Western Environmental Law Center in submitting [comments](#) for the proposed Bureau of Land Management Montana-Dakotas Office Second Quarter 2026 Oil and Gas Lease Sale, asking it to defer all 23 parcels until a more comprehensive environmental review is complete.

The Coalition joined the Wilderness Society and New Mexico Wild in submitting [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management New Mexico Office’s Third Quarter Oil and Gas Lease, arguing that the agency must comply fully with all federal regulations rather than relying on a “national energy emergency” to lease parcels.

We continue to provide statements and interviews to the media highlighting challenges to the

National Park System. Recent work includes:

- [BLM nominee puts Grand Canyon at risk. Here's why](#), *AZ Central* op-ed by Coalition member Steve Martin
- [Trump's pick to lead BLM is a threat to our great public lands](#), *Boulder Daily Camera* op-ed by Coalition Executive Council member Elaine Leslie
- [Managing Capitol Reef's Visitors](#), *National Parks Traveler*, including interview with Coalition Executive Council member/former Capitol Reef superintendent Sue Fritzke
- [Yosemite National Park's understaffed gates could be costing the park millions](#), *SFGate*, including quotes from Executive Council member/former Yosemite superintendent Don Neubacher

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.

- **PLA Awards** - The Public Lands Alliance recently announced the recipients of its 2026 Partnership Awards. Several NPS units or partners received awards:
 - Grand Teton National Park Foundation and Grand Teton National Park received the Public Lands Partner Award for their efforts protecting the Kelly Parcel.
 - Glen Canyon Conservancy received the Publication of the Year Award for *Geology Road Guide: Cottonwood Canyon*.
 - Western National Parks received the award for Outstanding Public Engagement in a program or service for "The National Park Experience" exhibit at the Tucson Festival of Books.
 - Eastern National received the Innovative Product of the Year Award for the Passport to Your National Parks Scrapbook Kit.
 - The Friends of Mount Vernon Trail received the Trail of the Year Award for their efforts enhancing safety and accessibility on the Mount Vernon Trail.
 - Source: [Public Lands Alliance](#)
- **EPA moving to allow pollution of national parks** - The Associated Press published [an article](#) about efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency to water down the regional haze rule, arguing that it is too much of a regulatory burden on industry. The move is likely to affect air quality in national parks. Source: *Associated Press*
- **Government employees have low job satisfaction** - A new survey of 11,000 federal employees, conducted by the Partnership for Public Service, found that only 32% of the federal workforce is "satisfied with and engaged in their jobs." Furthermore, among the 222 NPS staff surveyed, over 98% stated they don't trust U.S. government leaders. The survey used similar questions to what had been used previously in the now-canceled Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, and has now been taken twice. Every single federal agency showed a decreased in the level of engagement in their jobs since last year.

Source: [PoliticoPro](#), [The Travel](#)

- *National Park Week announced* - National Park Week will take place August 22-30 this year, with entrance fees waived on August 25 in honor of the NPS' 110th birthday. August 22 is also National Junior Ranger Day. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Ongoing censorship*
 - The George Washington University's National Security Archive created an online exhibit, "A Disappearing Data Chronology," a timeline documenting the Trump administration's deletion of images, data, websites, and exhibits, including many NPS resources. Source: [The George Washington University](#)
 - Lowell National Historical Park removed several films about mill workers from its visitor center. The films focused on women and immigrants. The NPS stated that the films are "under review." Source: [NBC Boston](#)
 - *PBS NewsHour* published [a segment](#) about the divide among Americans about how to best represent history. It includes an interview at Gettysburg National Military Park with Alan Spears from the National Parks Conservation Association., as well as shots from Stonewall National Monument, Independence National Historical Park. [Editor note: The ongoing lawsuit that the Coalition is a part of against the censorship of exhibits across the NPS is briefly referenced in the segment.] Source: *PBS NewsHour*
- *"Most endangered public lands"* - *RE:Public* published [a list](#) of its top ten "most endangered public lands," including Independence National Historical Park (and the NPS system, writ wide for censorship issues), Big Bend National Park, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Haleakalā National Park, and Everglades National Park. Source: *RE:Public*
- *SFGate blacklisted for park content* - The Department of the Interior has instructed all employees to not respond to inquiries from *SFGate*, a new bureau that has been reporting extensively on the state of the NPS in recent years. The move started after a February 10 article titled "'Unprecedented and a mess': Sweeping new rules restrict nearly all aspects of national park communications." Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Park ranger video game* - A new video game, *Ranger's Path: National Park Simulator*, simulates the "day-to-day work of a park ranger," including cleaning campsites, fixing signs, and clearing trails. Source: [SFGate](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants* (an NPS-administered program) - On March 19, the NPS announced \$7.5 million for nine Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants in five states. On March 31, the NPS announced a second round of grants, consisting of \$8.6 million for nine grants in four states. The program is funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Source: *National Park Service Office of Communications* ([3/19](#), [3/31](#))

- *Carlsbad Caverns National Park* - The *Permian Proud* published [an article](#) about a recent cave rescue training held at Lost Cave on Bureau of Land Management land, including personnel from the NPS, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and Carlsbad (NM) Fire Department. Source: *Permian Proud*
- *Catoctin Mountain Park* - On March 30, the park began a road rehabilitation project on Park Central Road. Intermittent closures will be in place on week days. The project is expected to be complete in four to six weeks. Source: [Catoctin Mountain Park](#)
- *Chilkoot National Historic Trail, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park* - On March 30, the NPS announced the completion of a project to rehabilitate the Sheep Camp Ranger Station and adjacent tool shed, including the siding, screens, porch deck, windows, and roofs. The project was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act, and executed by staff from a Maintenance Action Team and an intern from the Traditional Trades Advancement Program. Source: [Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - A land swap originally proposed by the NPS in September 2024 was recently thwarted by the Camden County Commission, who rejected a letter of support for the exchange, a new stipulation now required under Secretary's Order 3442. Several organizations, including the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, joined with the Southern Environmental Law Center to oppose to the land swap because the proposal lacks critical information about the proposed land exchanges and fears of commercial development (see our comment letter above in "Coalition Actions"). Source: [The Current](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - The week of March 23, the NPS began a road rehabilitation project on the parkway between Spout Run Parkway and Interstate 395, and between Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and First Street, in Alexandria, Virginia. Intermittent lane closures will be in place. The project is expected to be complete in mid-June. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - On March 19, the NPS began historic preservation work on key commemorative features of the Memorial Avenue Corridor, including the Boundary Channel Bridge, Seabees Memorial, the United Spanish War Veterans Memorial, and Memorial Circle. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - On February 25, the NPS denied approval to build a pump station at Waterfront Park in Alexandria, Virginia. The City of Alexandria proposed the pump to mitigate frequent flooding of public parks and local streets. The NPS deemed the pump station an "impermissible use" of the park. City officials expressed surprise at what they characterized as a reversal or prior NPS support for the project. Source: [ALXnow](#)

- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On March 25, the park began draining a beaver pond along Plum Run, just off Crawford Avenue, in order to restore the cultural landscape of the battlefield from 1863. Other beaver habitat in the park will be left untouched. There is some debate among scholars about the extend of wetlands in the historic landscape. Source: [Evening Sun](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area* - On March 18, the NPS announced efforts to adjust facilities for low water levels on Lake Powell, including the temporary relocation of Bullfrog Marina and fuel dock into deeper water near Halls Crossing Marina, and future plans for a long-term ramp at Stanton Creek at Bullfrog. Source: [Glen Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Muir Woods National Monument, Point Reyes National Seashore, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park* - On March 18, the NPS and Federal Aviation Administration announced completion of a commercial air tour management voluntary agreement for the four parks. The agreement replaces the Air Tour Management Plan finalized on January 11, which was negated by a court order. Source: [Golden Gate National Recreation Area](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - The park announced that the North Rim will reopen on May 15, for the first time since the Dragon Bravo Fire in Summer 2026. All paved roadways and the North Kaibab Trail will be open (except for stock). Temporary trail closures or delays may be in place while crews continue to repair the North Kaibab Trail. The North Rim Campground is expected to open at a later date and no overnight lodging is available this year. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Independence National Historical Park* - The *Philadelphia Inquirer* published [a photo essay](#) about efforts by citizens to place handmade signage where signs had previously depicted the stories of enslaved people under George Washington. The exhibits have since been restored, per a court order (see [2/18/26 Coalition Report](#)). Source: *MSN/Philadelphia Inquirer*
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - The week of March 27, the park began a project to stabilize the shore and protect infrastructure at Mount Baldy Beach. The area will be closed for the duration of the project, which is expected to be complete in mid-June. Source: [Detroit Free Press](#)
- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about the effects of drought on Lake Mead. As of early January, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation data showed the reservoir at one-third of capacity. Cyanobacteria blooms have been detected on the lake (see "Incidents" below). Source: *SFGate*
- *Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area* - On March 30, the park closed the Fort Spokane Museum and Visitor Center for historic preservation repairs, including the porch, roof, windows, brick, and interior plaster. The project is expected to be complete in July. The

project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area](#)

- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - On March 24, the Tehama County Board of Supervisors approved a renewal of a law enforcement partnership between the Tehama County Sheriff's Office and the National Park Service. The agreement has been in place for 20 years, and the new agreement will last 10 years. Source: [Action News Now](#)
- *Monocacy National Battlefield* - On April 3, the park will reopen its newly redesigned museum, including new exhibits. Source: [Monocacy National Battlefield](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - The NPS decided not to issue a special use permit for the Ride Around Mount Rainier in One Day (RAMROD) cycling event that has taken place in the park since the 1980s. The park cited "peak-season congestion and visitor impacts," and provided both alternative routes and dates, which the organizers rejected. Source: [Seattle Times](#)
- *National Capital Region* - *The Hill* provided [a summary](#) of the status of various federal buildings and lands being altered by the Trump administration, including the White House and East Potomac Park. Source: *The Hill*
- *National Capitol Region, U.S. Park Police* - *USA Today* published [an article](#) about the U.S. Park Police Mounted Patrol and its efforts to support visitors on the National Mall and at other Capitol Region parks. Source: *USA Today*
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On March 23, the NPS was slated to remove the 15th Street bike lane on the National Mall to allow for more cars for the National Cherry Blossom Festival and the 250th anniversary of the United States. The bike lane has been shown to reduce roadway crashes by 46% and bicycle injury crashes by 91%. However, a lawsuit by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association is asking for a temporary restraining order, arguing there was no public process for the action. The removal is on hold until court proceedings dictate next steps. Source: [Axios](#), [NBC Washington](#)
- *Theodore Roosevelt National Park* - On May 1, the park will transition to a fully cashless fee system, and will begin requiring reservations for all campsites at Cottonwood and Juniper Campgrounds and the Roundup Group Horse Camp. Reservations can be made through *Recreation.gov*. Source: [Theodore Roosevelt National Park](#)
- *Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve* - On March 16, the NPS announced the opening of an application process for Commercial Use Authorizations to provide event services at the Kennecott Recreation Hall. Applications are due by April 14. Source: [Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Zion National Park* - The park recently hosted personnel from 16 NPS units across the west for a technical rope rescue training. The training was hosted with funding from the

park's philanthropic partner, Zion Forever Project. Source: [KUER](#)

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.

- *Buffalo National River* - Public comment is [open through April 10](#) on a river management plan. Source: [Buffalo National River](#)
- *Capitol Reef National Park* - Public comment is [open through April 3](#) on a plan to improve visitor access and circulation in the park. Source: [Capitol Reef National Park](#)
- *Curecanti National Recreation Area* - Public comment is [open through April 1](#) on a proposal to replace the water and wastewater systems at Elk Creek Marina and Campground and Lake Fork Marina and Campground. Source: [Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - Public comment is [open through April 6](#) on a proposal to repair South Eureka Valley Road and make improvements to the Eureka Dunes backcountry campground. Source: [Pahrump Valley Times](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - Public comment is [open through April 16](#) on an Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Source: [Pahrump Valley Times](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - Public comment is [open through April 11](#) on a vista management plan for the 2.65-mile section of the parkway between Spout Run and the Glebe Road Bridge. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Public comment is [open through April 5](#) on a proposal to rehabilitate the water systems and utilities for the North Rim and inner canyon. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Los Angeles Coastal Area Special Resource Study* - Public comment is [open through April 6](#) on a Special Resource Study of the Los Angeles coast for possible inclusion in the National Park System. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Mammoth Cave National Park* - Public comment is [open through April 10](#) on a proposal to allow bicycle use on 37 miles of multi-use trails in the park and allow horse riding on the Houchin Ferry North/Ollie Road. Source: [Blue Ridge Outdoors](#)
- *Memphis Area Lynching Sites Special Resource Study* - Public comment is [open through April 3](#) on a Special Resource Study of eight sites in Tennessee for possible inclusion in the National Park System. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- National Capital Parks - East - Public comment is [open through March 27](#) on a proposal to extend Suitland Parkway Trail and make intersection improvements to support safety and connectivity. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *Petroglyph National Monument* - The NPS, City of Albuquerque, and Tribal partners have opened [public comment through April 30](#) on visitor services and facility enhancements for Boca Negra Canyon and the Lava Shadows area. Source: [Petroglyph National Monument](#)
- *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve* - Public comment is [open through April 1](#) on a proposal to relocate the Fort Caroline National Memorial to an upland location out of the floodplain. Source: [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#)

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

Nothing to report.

House of Representatives Actions

March 16 - The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

- Save Our Sequoias Act: H.R. 2709, amended, to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias;
- Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act: H.R. 4467, amended, to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park;
- Gateway Partnership Act: H.R. 5254, amended, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings. The Gateway Arch Park Foundation, a nonprofit organization, serves as the official philanthropic partner of the park.;
- North Rim Restoration Act: H.R. 5729, amended, to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving, and expediting contractor approval for the clearing, rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of the area of the Grand Canyon impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire; and
- Chiricahua National Park Act: H.R. 6380, amended, to designate Chiricahua National Monument as Chiricahua National Park.

March 18 - The House Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on several bills including:

- H.R. 3286, the “Mammoth Cave National Park Boundary Adjustment Act of 2025,” which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire approximately 551.14 acres of land \ for inclusion in the Mammoth Cave National Park;
- H.R. 4290, the “Downwinder Commemoration Act of 2025” which would direct, not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Air Force, and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the heads of such other departments and agencies as the Secretaries determine appropriate, to jointly obtain three honorific plaques of an appropriate design to commemorate the Downwinder communities of New Mexico. The plaques are to be placed at publicly accessible sites at the following locations in New Mexico: one at the White Sands Missile Range, one at the Holloman Air Force Base, and one at White Sands National Park, New Mexico;
- H.R. 5555, the “Monterey Bay National Heritage Area Study Act,” which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in California as the Monterey Bay National Heritage Area, and for other purposes;
- H.R. 6062, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain parcels of federal land in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Land transfers would occur between Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and Customs and Border Protection. Harpers Ferry NHP would receive approximately 72 acres from CBP and CBP would receive 25 acres from Harpers Ferry NHP; and
- H.R. 7031, the “Making National Parks Safer Act,” which would direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to Next Generation 9–1–1 Systems.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Vasquez, Owens, Panetta, and Moore of West Virginia; Chris Carn, Mayor, Saratoga Springs, Utah; Ronald Scott Lindsey, Judge/Executive, Edmonson County, Kentucky; and public witnesses.

March 24 - The House filed a report on H.R. 1897, to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to optimize conservation through resource prioritization, incentivize wildlife conservation on private lands, provide for greater incentives to recover listed species, create greater transparency and accountability in recovering listed species, streamline the permitting process, eliminate barriers to conservation, and restore congressional intent, with an amendment.

March 26 - The House Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing several bills including:

- H.R. 6778, the “Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act,” which would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use revenue collected from speed safety cameras on highways in the National Park System for maintenance and construction purposes; and
- H.R. 7618, the “American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026,” which would amend title 54, United States Code, to modify certain cost-sharing requirements for grant programs under the American Battlefield Protection Program.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Beyer, Kiggans of Virginia, Valadao, and Crank; Charles Cuvelier, Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Ellen Shultzabarger, Associate Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Shawn Thomas, Administrator/State Forester, Forestry and Trust Lands Division, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Montana; Jeffrey C. McKay, Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Virginia; and public witnesses.

Proposed Legislation of Note

We don't usually report on proposed legislation until it has gained enough traction to make it to the committee level (see above). Many proposed bills go nowhere. However, some proposals receive significant media attention or would have significant enough impact on the National Park Service that we note them here.

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) introduced S. 4205, a bill to abolish and defund César E. Chávez National Monument from the National Park Service, following recent news reports of César Chávez's abuse and rape of children and women. Source: [The Washington Times](#), [U.S. Congress](#)

Other Relevant Department of the Interior News

- *Endangered Species Act exempted for oil* - On March 31, the Department of the Interior held an Endangered Species Committee meeting/press conference, arguing that endangered species litigation is interfering with American energy security. They stated that an exception in the Endangered Species Act for federal security allows for the exemption of all oil and gas leasing activities in the Gulf of Mexico. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Grazing Action Plan* - On March 31, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture announced the release of a new Grazing Action Plan "to ensure more efficient, transparent, and responsive grazing management across federal lands," including streamlining permitting processes, strengthening partnerships, and improving data and management tools. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Wind lease settlement* - On March 23, the Department of the Interior announced a settlement with TotalEnergies in which they will be reimbursed for their lease purchases for offshore wind, and the company will commit \$1 billion in oil and natural gas production in the U.S. They agreed to not develop any new offshore wind projects in the U.S. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$889 million for water infrastructure* - On March 17, the Department of the Interior announced \$889 million in funding for Bureau of Reclamation projects in six states to support water conveyance, expanded storage, and modernized infrastructure. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *\$461 million in energy revenue* - On March 27, the Department of the Interior announced a

record \$460.9 million in energy revenue from the Outer Continental Shelf for disbursement to the four Gulf of Mexico states, and their coastal counties and parishes. Source:

[Department of the Interior](#)

- *\$164 million from National Petroleum Reserve* - On March 18, the Department of the Interior announced the sale of 187 leases in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, totaling \$163.7 million. It was the first sale in the reserve since 2019. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area NPS logo stolen

Over the weekend of March 31-22, the NPS logo arrowhead was stolen from the park's East Entrance sign. The park is looking for any information the public can provide regarding the incident. Source: [WATE](#)

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park Fall fatality

Late on March 23 or early on March 24, an individual "in [their] 40s" went over a cliff edge near the Gunnison Point Trail. A group of visitors observed the individual deceased just before 9am on March 24. The individual's body was recovered, with support from a helicopter. No further details have been given. Source: [Montrose Press](#)

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Hiker fatality

On March 21, two individuals were hiking on the Signal Point Trail when one of the individuals laid down on their stomach to get a view of the area below. The second hiker knelt down to do the same, when they slipped on a loose rock and fell 200 feet down the bluff. The Hamilton County (GA) Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security used technical rope rescue techniques to extract the individual. The individual died from injuries sustained in the fall. Source: [Gear Junkie](#)

Golden Gate National Recreation Area Cliff rescue

On March 26, an individual went over a cliff and became stuck on the face, wearing only a swimsuit and no shoes, above Ocean Beach by the Cliff House. A San Francisco Fire Department crew used technical rope rescue techniques to extract the individual. They were sent to the hospital after the incident. Source: [ABC7/Associated Press](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Waterline break (again)

On March 30, a break was found in the park's Transcanyon Waterline along the North Kaibab Trail adjacent to a footbridge abutment. Water conservation measures have been implemented at the South Rim. There is no estimated repair date yet. The park is currently midway through a \$208 million project to upgrade the waterline, and breaks have been frequent for many years. Source: [KOLD](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Rockslide injuries

On March 27, a rockslide took place on Little River Road, hitting a vehicle with two passengers. Both were taken to a local hospital with "serious injuries." The road was closed for several hours from Metcalf Bottoms to Townsend Wye for clean up. Source: [WBIR](#), [The Charlotte Observer](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Hiker rescue

On March 25, a hiker experienced a "medical emergency" on the False Gap Trail. A Tennessee Army National Guard helicopter crew rendered medical aid, then flew the patient to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville. Source: [Knox News](#)

Joshua Tree National Park

Tortoise rescue

The week of March 9, a visitor reported three tortoises trapped in a historic dig site. Park personnel located the tortoises and rehydrated them. They also built a ramp of natural materials to ensure other individuals will not become trapped in the future. All three tortoises were released back into the wild. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Harmful algal blooms

On March 13, the NPS announced the detection of cyanobacteria in Government Wash. Visitors and pets are warned to avoid contacting the water in areas with floating bright green algae. Source: [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Kennedy Center lawsuit

On March 23, eight architecture and preservation organizations filed a lawsuit against many parties, including the National Park Service, for the announcement of a \$200 million renovation of the Kennedy Center. The plaintiffs argue that the move will "fundamentally alter this property

without complying with bedrock federal historic preservation and environmental laws, and without securing the necessary Congressional authorization.” Source: [Wallpaper](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Sinkhole

A sinkhole recently appeared under the National Mall near the Washington Monument. Park crews are working on repairs, which are expected to continue through the end of April. Source: [WUSA9](#)

National Park Service

Lawsuit on gun ban in parks

On March 27, the Second Amendment Foundation and Firearms Policy Coalition filed a lawsuit challenging the ban on firearms possession in federal facilities operated by the NPS. Source: [Second Amendment Foundation](#), [USA Carry](#)

National Park Service

BASE jumping lawsuit dismissed

A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit by BASE Access to overturn the “Aerial Delivery Rule”, an attempt to allow BASE jumping in national parks. The lawsuit was dismissed due to lack of legal standing. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

Point Reyes National Seashore

Kayaking fatality

On March 21, two individuals and a dog were kayaking in Tomales Bay, when high winds and three-foot swells caused the kayak to capsize. Others were able to call in the incident. One individual was able to stay with the kayak and the dog, and experienced hypothermia while in the water. A Sonoma County (CA) Sheriff’s Department rescue helicopter located them and utilized a 100-foot longline to retrieve the individual from the water. The dog was rescued by an NPS watercraft, and was said to be in stable condition. The other individual, a 37-year-old, was observed by their companion to have “slipped out of [their] life jacket.” They were later found face down in the water about 200 yards from the kayak. That individual was brought to shore, where rescue personnel began CPR. They were transported to a hospital, where they were later pronounced deceased Source: [KRON4](#), [ABC7](#)

Rock Creek Park

Fallen trees

On March 23, a tree fell on three vehicles on Piney Branch Parkway NW, injuring one individual. They were taken to the hospital with “non-life-threatening injuries.” Source: [WUSA9](#)

Shenandoah National Park

Assault conviction

On August 24, 2025, a 31-year-old got into an argument with their partner at Mathews Arm Campground, resulting in their attack on the partner with a hatchet. Several witnesses in the campground called 911. The witnesses helped rangers identify the suspect's vehicle, which they pulled over. The suspect was shirtless, barefoot, and smelled of alcohol. The victim was sitting in the passenger seat, "crying and screaming," and holding a piece of clothing to her wrist to stop bleeding from a "gaping cut." The suspect claimed the victim had been accidentally cut by an ax. Rangers found evidence of a struggle, both on the car and at the campsite. On March 19, a federal jury found the individual guilty of the assault. A sentencing date has not yet been announced. Source: [CBS19](#)

U.S. Park Police

Officer injured

On March 23, a 22-year-old picked up personal property at the Anacostia Operations Facility, which had been confiscated in an arrest the day prior. A U.S. Park Police officer driving an unmarked vehicle was conducting surveillance on the individual as they departed the property, when the individual and their sibling, 21-years-old, fired shots at the officer. The officer was hit in the shoulder and was flown by helicopter to a hospital. The individual was said to be in "serious condition," though the injuries are not believed to be life-threatening. On March 24, the two suspects were arrested for the incident. Source: [The Washington Post](#), [United States Attorney's Office: District of Columbia](#)

Wildfires

- *Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area* - On March 21, the Kane Fire was reported, burning 1 mile northwest of Highway 14A and Road 20, east of Lovell. As of March 29, the Kane Fire was 1,915 acres and 85% contained, with 32 personnel assigned. Closures are in place in the Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area. Source: [The Ledger](#), [Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park*
 - On March 22, the park received a report of a fire near the Rabbit Creek Trail and northwest of Backcountry Campsite 16. As of March 30, the fire was 48 acres and 100% contained. Temporary closures are in place on local trails and campsites. Source: *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* ([3/23](#), [3/26](#), [3/28](#), [3/30](#))
 - On March 25, the park received report of a fire in the Twentymile Area. As of March 30, the Fox Gap Fire was 112 acres and 75% contained. Temporary closures are in place on local trails and roads. Source: *Great Smoky Mountains* ([3/26](#), [3/28](#), [3/30](#)).

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - On March 31, the NPS posted an update on ongoing recovery

efforts from damage sustained in 2024 from Hurricane Helene. Work is currently underway at 45 remaining sites, mostly between Mileposts 317 and 355. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)

- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - After storms over the weekend of March 14, many areas have reopened. However, some areas remain closed, including Mauna Loa Road beyond the first cattleguard, Mauna Loa Summit, and Crater Rim Drive west beyond Kilauea Military Camp to Uēkahuna. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)

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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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