



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, August 5, 2026

Coalition Actions

The Coalition submitted [comments](#) on Director's Order #41, strongly supporting existing wilderness stewardship policies and urging the Department of the Interior to uphold them in accordance with the Wilderness Act.

We joined over 330 organizations in [a letter](#) to President Donald Trump and Interior Secretary Doug Burgum announcing strong opposition to rollbacks, reductions, and reduced protections of any kind to national monuments.

The Coalition joined a group of conservation and public health groups in [filing a court challenge](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency's rejection of the State of Hawai'i's Regional Haze State Implementation Plan.

Our staff and Executive Council continue to provide statements and interviews to the media highlighting challenges to the National Park System. Recent work includes:

- [“Keep Parks Public” tour](#), *The Landscape*
- [Monuments never blocked public access, but stripping their protections will cost us](#), op-ed by Coalition Executive Council member Linda Mazzu

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.

- *Importance of Section 106* - The National Parks Conservation Association published [an](#)

[article](#) about the power of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, highlighting areas of national parks preserved through its passage. The article is in response to recent efforts to undermine Section 106 (see [7/22/26 Coalition Report](#)).

Source: *National Parks Conservation Association*

- *Pushback to Section 106 changes* - The governor-appointed board of directors for History Colorado, a state agency and non-profit, put out a statement against changes to Section 106, arguing they “undermine the right of Tribes, states, local governments, descendant communities, and the public to have a say in how federal projects impact the places where Americans live.” Source: [History Colorado](#)
- *Pacific West unionizes* - On August 3, Pacific West Region workers voted 194-6 to join the National Treasury Employees Union, joining three other NPS chapters (NPS Headquarters, National Capital Region, and Intermountain Region). Source: [National Treasury Employees Union](#)
- *Tech grants to support parks* - *GearJunkie* published [an article](#) about the National Park Foundation’s recent granting of \$10 million for 18 technology-focused projects across 21 NPS sites. The projects broadly land in three categories: connectivity, data analytics, and real-time traffic management, as well as one waste management project and one fee structure project. Source: *GearJunkie*
- *NPF gives \$5 million to Friends Groups* - On July 29, the National Park Foundation announced the award of \$5 million in grants for 77 projects by official park partners to national park units toward strengthening their organizational and philanthropic capacity. Source: [PR Newswire](#)
- *Conflict over climbing bolts in wilderness* - *High Country News* published [an article](#) about draft guidance released in June by the U.S. Forest Service and Department of the Interior agencies, allowing for permanent climbing anchors in wilderness areas, and the resulting conflict between climbers and wilderness advocates. Source: *High Country News*
- *Protesting censorship* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about former NPS ranger Melissa Dalley, who has been traveling to parks and having conversations with visitors about censored interpretive materials and providing flyers with the missing information. She left her job at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site in April. Her efforts are part of a coalition of people called America433+ that is working to draw attention to censorship across the parks. Source: *SFGate*
- *Wide support for wildlife in national parks* - A new poll conducted by YouGov shows that American hunters and the general public are closely aligned in wanting clear communication and opportunities for input around changes to hunting and trapping rule changes in national parks, supporting the Endangered Species Act, opposing lifetime exemptions from regulations that protect species, and supporting tax dollar investment in wildlife crossings. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)

- *Op-ed about “police” rebranding* - The *San Francisco Chronicle* published [an op-ed](#) by Coalition Member Bob Binnewies, arguing that the NPS’ efforts to rebrand rangers as “police” is misguided, particularly because rangers do much more than law enforcement. Bob worked for the NPS for many years, including as superintendent at Yosemite. Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Amistad National Recreation Area, Big Bend National Park, Coronado National Memorial, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument* - The National Parks Conservation Association published an article about the U.S. Customs and Border Protection plan to add security infrastructure in the parks along the border with Mexico, as well as the efforts to fight it. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - On July 27, the NPS began a rehabilitation of the Deep Gap Bridge over Highway 421 in Boone, NC, at milepost 276.4. A closure and detour will be in place from milepost 269.8 to 276.5 until late September. The project is expected to be complete in late Spring 2027. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - On July 27, the NPS announced a Request for Proposals for a 10-year concession contract for retail services at Northwest Trading Post, located at milepost 258.7 in Glendale Springs, NC. The contract would begin in early 2027. Proposals are due by September 17. Source: [Blue Ridge Parkway](#)
- *Blue Ridge Parkway* - *Mountain Xpress* published [an article](#) about differing opinions about the effects of a hazardous fuel debris removal project along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Thousands of trees fell during Hurricane Helene in 2024, leaving land managers to decide between ecological benefits and wildfire management. The NPS is expected to begin the project in September. Source: *Mountain Xpress*
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - *The New York Times* published [an article](#) about the Old Ladies Against Underwater Garbage, a group of women over the age of 64, that remove trash from the ponds around Cape Cod, utilizing snorkeling equipment and kayaks. The group estimates they have removed 6,000 pounds of trash since 2018. Source: *The New York Times*
- *Cape Cod National Seashore* - On August 3, the NPS announced a Request for Proposals for leases of three historic private homes. All three properties “require substantial repair and rehabilitation work.” Proposals are due November 1. Source: [Cape Cod National Seashore](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On August 3, the park closed a section of beach and

swimming area in Buxton to allow for repair work on the southernmost groin near the former Cape Hatteras Lighthouse site. The project is being overseen by Dare County (NC) and executed by SJ Hamill Construction Company. It is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#), [Dare County](#)

- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On August 17, three weeks ahead of schedule, the park will begin a runway pavement rehabilitation project at the Billy Mitchell Airport. The airport will remain closed for the duration of the project, which is expected to last until mid-November. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Aviation is contracting and overseeing the project. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Channel Islands National Park* - A group of scientists from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute discovered a new species of a clear jellyfish-related animal, called the Erenna siphonophore. The species was spotted via a remote camera submersible, 6,500 feet below the surface of the ocean, near the Channel Islands. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - Workers at the park have voted to join the National Federation of Federal Employees Local 465, joining employees from Yellowstone, Yosemite, Saguario, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks. Source: [National Federation of Federal Employees](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - This fall, the park will begin a three-year rehabilitation of the water and wastewater systems at Cow Creek and Furnace Creek. In recent years, the park has needed repairs “about once a week,” sometimes necessitating outages or boil water advisories. The \$69.5 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Death Valley National Park](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - At the Badwater 135 ultramarathon, new records were set in the men’s and women’s races, by Max Jolliffe and Carmen Maria Perez, respectively. Source: [Canadian Running](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - The Associated Press published [an article](#) about dwindling water levels on Lake Powell and Lake Mead. Lake Powell is 23% full. Combined with the capacity of Lake Mead, the two bodies of water are the lowest they have ever been. Eight other reservoirs across the American West are also at or near-record lows. Source: *Associated Press*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On July 31, the Bureau of Reclamation released a Final Environmental Impact Statement for the future management of Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The framework is valid through 2036, with new operating guidelines within the framework being issued “at anticipated 2-year periods, unless consensus-based agreements provide for a longer duration.” Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Grand Teton National Park* - On March 27, the NPS purchased 35 acres near the Granite

Canyon entrance. The land was purchased for \$11 million with funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It had been held in trust by The Conservation Fund. On July 15, NPS staff, local politicians, and family members who previously owned the property gathered to celebrate the acquisition. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)

- *Grand Teton National Park* - In early August, the park and Federal Highway Administration began a roadway rehabilitation project on North Park Road. The project is expected to be completed in two months. Delays may be in place while construction is underway. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* - From July 26 through August 2, the NPS and Colorado Parks and Wildlife treated the lower Sand Creek drainage to remove existing fish as part of an effort to restore Rio Grande cutthroat trout. If treatment is successful, they will restock the creek with cutthroats in Fall 2027. The area around the creek between Music Pass Trail and Sand Ramp Trail was closed during the project. Source: [Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Manassas National Battlefield Park* - The *Roosevelt Network Undergraduate Emerging Fellowship Journal* published [an article](#) about the environmental consequences of super data centers, including reference to the proposed Prince William Digital Gateway Project, which would be located adjacent to Manassas and in the historic footprint of the battlefield. The project was halted by the Virginia Court of Appeals due to procedural issues. The article highlights the “systemic weakness of current data center regulation,” particularly around their “true ecological footprint.” [Editor note: *The Coalition has taken numerous actions against the Prince William Digital Gateway Project.*] Source: *Roosevelt Institute*
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - On August 3, the park will complete and reopen the 15-mile section of the parkway that has been under rehabilitation for several months. They will then begin the next phase of the project, a 24-mile section between Highway 16 (milepost 135) and Highway 19 (milepost 159.5). The second phase is expected to continue through late 2026, with a final phase expected to continue through mid-2027. The \$150 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and the Federal Highway Administration. Source: [Natchez Trace Parkway](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On July 24, President Donald Trump issued an executive order that the NPS post warning signs on NPS-managed walkways adjacent to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History to inform visitors of “the inaccurate information presented in the Museum.” This comes after a July 4 White House report claiming that the museum “cannot be trusted to tell America’s story with honesty and gratitude.” The Smithsonian has stated that the report is not a fair characterization of the work of the museum. Source: [NBC News](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On July 30, a group of 47 local and national politicians signed onto a letter pushing back against President Donald Trump’s efforts to redevelop

the East Potomac Golf Links, a unit of the National Mall and Memorial Parks. The redevelopment would destroy historical features, impede affordability, and could affect local bike and walking paths. They are calling for more transparency, compliance with environmental and historic preservation laws, and public consultation. Source: [WUSA9](#)

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On July 21, the Office of Management and Budget transmitted a list of provisions for Congress to consider for a short-term continuing resolution, including \$10 million to reimburse NPS costs incurred during the Freedom 250 events on the National Mall. The One Big Bill Act of July 2025 had allocated \$150 million in funds for the events, and the Trump administration has also raised an undisclosed amount of money for the events from private donors. Source: [KOSU](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - NPS staff have completed an assessment of the proposed “Triumphal Arch,” stating that it would intrude on views at 37 historic sites across Washington, DC. The Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer stated, “These adverse effects are intentional and inherent in the design of the arch; it is intended to dominate the surrounding landscape.” Source: [The New York Times](#)
- *New River Gorge National Park and Preserve* - On August 3, the park began a rehabilitation project at the Rend and Minden Trails. It includes a new parking lot, restroom, and picnic area, as well as structural repairs to five historic railroad trestles and an accessible ramp, which will make the Rend Trail the park’s only fully-accessible trail. The project is expected to be complete in Fall or Winter 2027. The \$11.8 million project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [WVNews](#)
- *Ninety Six National Historic Site* - On July 31, the park announced the installation of a new wayside exhibit about Star Fort, including a glass panel allowing visitors to envision what the historic fort might have looked like, superimposed on the modern landscape. The exhibit was developed with the Friends of Ninety Six National Historic Site, with grant funding from Americana Corner. The park will hold a celebration on August 22 in conjunction with the park’s 50th anniversary. Source: [Ninety Six National Historic Site](#)
- *Office of International Affairs* - The Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia was recently declared an UNESCO World Heritage site. [Editor note: *The Okefenokee is managed primarily by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but the NPS Office of International Affairs is responsible for all UNESCO nominations from the U.S.*] Source: [National Public Radio](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - SFGate published [an article](#) about “the quietest place in the continental United States,” located on the Hoh River Trail. The site has become known due to the One Square Inch of Silence project and book, which has documented sounds in the forest for two decades. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - The NPS published an article about the park’s efforts to utilize eDNA testing techniques to survey backcountry lakes for fish and amphibians. Their survey shows that many lakes previously thought to not have fish had them, with the result

of lower populations of long-toed salamanders and rough-skinned newts. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Redwood National and State Parks* - On August 1, the Yurok Tribe is opening 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway, a new recreation and information stop in Orick, California, near the park. The property, located at the confluence of Prairie Creek and Redwood Creek, has undergone a long-term restoration by both Save the Redwoods League and the Tribe. The site currently has interpretive exhibits, trails, and picnic areas, and the Tribe plans to eventually build a cultural center and a traditional village. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Virgin Islands National Park* - *The St. Thomas Source* published an article about recent changes made to NPS plans for Caneel Bay, as well as reactions from the Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park and local politicians and leaders. New plans allow for more development and have removed NPS interpretation and a protected area from the site. Source: [The St. Thomas Source](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - A social media influencer, Jonas Black, has offered up a \$10,000 reward for anyone giving the identity of any hunters that shoot wolves that are part of Mollie's Pack, one of the longest-studied and most famous wolf packs of Yellowstone. The pack has wandered into an area where hunting is legal on the Shoshone National Forest, with the season starting on September 15. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has denounced the effort, citing statutes in place to protect the anonymity of wolf hunters. The influencer is a dog trainer and wolf advocate, and has stated that they are doing this because of social media comments by hunters threatening to kill the pack. Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - A group of scientists from the Ancient Forest Society recently scaled the Grizzly Giant, the largest and oldest giant sequoia in the Mariposa Grove, to make observations about the tree's health. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - The park recently reopened up a section of the John Muir Trail between Clark Point and the Panorama Trail Junction for the first time since 2023, when the area known as the "Ice Cut" was damaged by record-setting snow and ice. The restoration involved blasting rock, pouring concrete from helicopters and operating heavy equipment while dangling from ropes. Ultimately, the trail was widened and a new guardwall was installed. Source: [YourCentralValley.com](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Jimmy Carter National Historical Park* - Karen Barry was selected as the new superintendent. Karen has 23 years of NPS experience, most recently as the administrative officer and acting superintendent at Jimmy Carter National Historical Park. Source: [Jimmy Carter National Historical Park](#)

- *Presidio Trust* - Lynne Benioff was selected as the board chair of the Presidio Trust, which oversees infrastructure improvements in the Presidio section of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Lynne previously served on the Presidio Trust board from 2015-2025 and co-chaired the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy's Presidio Tunnel Tops Campaign. Trevor Traina was named vice chair. Trevor is the chief business officer at Tools for Humanity and previously served as U.S. ambassador to Austria. Source: *CityBiz*
- *National Park Foundation* - Mike Reynolds was selected as the new chief program officer. Mike has over 40 years of NPS experience, most recently as deputy director of external and Congressional affairs. Source: [PR Newswire](#)

Park People

Deceased

- Kathleen Anne Pettingill Dawson, 71, passed away on July 7. Kathleen served just under 5,000 hours as a trail work volunteer at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Source: [Legacy/Kindrich-McHugh Steinbauer Funeral Home](#)
- Jeanne Gibson, 100, recently passed away. Jeanne volunteered for many years as a "Rosie Ambassador" at Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park, telling stories of her time as a welder at Todd Pacific Shipyards in Seattle, Washington, during World War II. Just two weeks before her passing, she was honored at the park with a Wall of Honor banner recognizing her service. Source: [Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park \(Facebook\)](#)
- Joyce Ann Phillips, 86, passed away on July 17. Joyce worked for a time at the laundromat in Yellowstone National Park and in food service at Grand Canyon National Park. Source: [Lincoln County Record](#)

Retired

- Shelton Johnson, long-time interpretive ranger at Yosemite National Park, most known for his efforts to tell the story of the Buffalo Soldiers and other Black Americans in National Parks, is retiring. Shelton also worked at Yellowstone National Park for a time, and is the recipient of the Freeman Tilden Award for interpretation. Folks can leave a note celebrating Shelton on [this virtual Kudoboard](#). Source: Many

In the News

- Costa Dillon has produced a new film, "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes: Organic Intelligence," which will be released on August 7. Costa worked for the NPS for many years, including as superintendent at Indiana Dunes and as the former chief of training and employee development. Source: [Firstshowing.net](#), Costa Dillon

- Bill Kaage was interviewed in [an article](#) in *Outside* about how to survive a wildfire. Bill worked in fire management in Everglades National Park, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, and at the NPS Division of Fire and Aviation before retiring in 2022. Source: *Outside*
- Carla Chung Mattix has written a new book, *National Parks and the Supreme Court: Groundbreaking Legal Battles*, which will be released by the University of Nevada Press on August 11. The book examines five pivotal cases about the Supreme Court's influence on national parks. Carla is a former attorney for the Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor. Source: Carla Chung Mattix

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 Park Service* - Public comment is [open through August 14](#) about the agency's current Wilderness Stewardship Policy to inform future policy (see more in "Around the Parks" above). Source: [PostIndependent](#)
- *National Park Service* - Public comment is [open through August 14](#) on draft guidance for the implementation of the EXPLORE Act, Section 122, to allow for bolt installations in federal wilderness. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *First State National Historical Park* - Public comment is [open through September 28](#) on a proposal to open bicycle use on 25 miles of designated trails within the Brandywine Valley unit of the park. Source: [First State National Historical Park](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - Public comment is [open through August 15](#) on a draft programmatic agreement outlining the consideration of historic properties during fire management activities. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

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

July 21 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on National Parks concluded a hearing, after hearing testimony from Senator Adam Schiff (CA); and Charles Cuvelier, Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, to examine:

- S. 1674, to modify the boundary of the Mammoth Cave National Park in the state of Kentucky by allowing the Secretary of the Interior to acquire approximately 551.14 acres of land for inclusion in the Mammoth Cave National Park
- S. 2498, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service, to extend any NPS lease without complying with the requirements of sections 18.7 or 18.8, which require public notice and competitive proposals, if the lessee has a) already held the lease for at least five years; b) has no violations of its lease; and c) the NPS director deems the lease is in the best interests of the NPS
- S. 2767 and H.R. 5254, 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
- S. 2801, to authorize a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating the Canterbury Shaker Village National Heritage Area in Merrimack County, New Hampshire
- S. 2887, to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Route 66 National Historic Trail
- S. 2933, to re-designate a playground in the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve in the State of West Virginia as the “Hearts of Gold Playground: In Honor of West Virginia Children and Families Impacted by Childhood Cancer”
- S. 2969, to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide that State law shall apply to the use of motor vehicles on roads within units of the National Park System. This bill makes the law of the state in which a National Park System unit is located applicable to the use of motor vehicles, including off-highway vehicles, on roads within a system unit
- S. 3131, to provide for the inclusion on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall of the names of the lost crew members of the *USS Frank E. Evans* that were killed on June 3, 1969
- S. 3194, to authorize a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land in California as the Monterey Bay National Heritage Area, located in Monterey, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and San Luis Obispo counties
- S. 3313 and H.R. 6365, to issue a right-of-way for an emergency exit known as the Wintergreen Emergency Egress on the Blue Ridge Parkway
- S. 3456 and H.R. 183, bills to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a free annual National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass for law enforcement officers and firefighters
- S. 3501, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Calumet National

Heritage Area in the states of Indiana and Illinois

- S. 3524 and H.R. 7618, to modify certain cost-sharing requirements for grant programs under the American Battlefield Protection Program. Specifically, the bill extends through Fiscal Year 2036 grant programs for the acquisition, interpretation, modernization, and restoration of certain U.S. battlefields. The bill also requires the NPS to prepare or certify studies of locations tied to significant events during the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) for potential preservation
- S. 3542, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the Upper Raritan River Watershed in the state of New Jersey for study for potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System
- S. 3720, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bay Area Ridge Trail as a national scenic trail
- S. 3785, to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving, and expediting contractor approval for the clearing, rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of areas of the Grand Canyon National Park and Kaibab National Forest damaged by wildfires
- S. 3925, to establish the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park to commemorate the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald and to recognize the impact of the Rosenwald Schools, which were constructed between 1912 and 1932 in 15 states, and educated more than 600,000 African American children, including a number of graduates who became leaders in the civil rights movement
- S. 4238, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Endless Mountains National Heritage Area in the state of Pennsylvania;
- S. 4538, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating Washington's Trail-1753 as a national historic trail. The trail extends approximately 500 miles from Williamsburg, Virginia, to Waterford, Pennsylvania
- S. 4595, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the Mullica River watershed in New Jersey for study for potential designation as a wild and scenic river
- S. 4767, to extend the authorization of the African American Civil Rights Network from 7 to 10 years
- H.R. 2306, to reauthorize the Adams Memorial Commission through 2032, whose purpose is to establish a permanent memorial in Washington, DC, to honor John Adams and his

legacy. The bill also specifies that the Adams Memorial shall be located within the area specified by the [Adams Memorial Commission in a February 25, 2025 map](#)

- H.R. 5729, 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 Grand Canyon grounds that have been impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire

July 23 - The Senate filed reports on the following bills:

- H.R. 1550, to re-designate Saratoga National Historical Park as Saratoga National Battlefield Park
- S. 290, to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to “next generation 911 systems.” Specifically, the NPS must assess the implementation status and estimated costs of such systems at existing emergency communications centers in NPS units, and must develop a plan for their installment
- S. 815, to designate the outdoor amphitheater at the Blue Ridge Music Center in Galax, Virginia, as the “Rick Boucher Amphitheater”
- S. 1353, to extend the authority for modifications to the Second Division Memorial in President’s Park in the District of Columbia, with an amendment. This bill extends through September 30, 2032, the authority of the Second Indianhead Division Association, Inc., Scholarship and Memorials Foundation to place additional commemorative elements or engravings on the raised platform or stone work to honor the members of the Second Infantry Division who have given their lives in service to the United States
- S. 1516, to conduct a special resource study of the Cahokia Mounds, Emerald Mounds, and Pulcher Mounds in the state of Illinois for potential addition to the National Park System, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.
- S. 1518, to re-designate the Saratoga National Historical Park as the “Saratoga National Battlefield Park”
- S. 2102, to establish the Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., National Historic Site in Atlanta, Georgia, as a unit of the National Park System
- S. 2881, to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over certain federal land in the state of California, with an amendment. This bill exchanges administrative jurisdiction over specified parcels of federal land between Yosemite National Park and Stanislaus National Forest in California. Cattle are grazing on the land currently managed by the National Park Service. However, grazing on federal lands primarily occurs on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management or the U.S. Forest Service. The transfer would allow the land with cattle grazing to be managed by the Forest Service, which has

a multiple-use management plan that is consistent with grazing

- S. 3878, to establish the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Jefferson College as affiliated areas of the National Park System

July 29 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered favorably reported the following: S. 2498, S. 2767 and H.R. 5254, S. 2801, S. 2887, S. 2933, S. 3194, S. 3313 and H.R. 6365, S. 3720, S. 4238, and S. 4538 (see descriptions above).

It also ordered favorably reported S. 3715 and H.R. 6380, to re-designate Chiricahua National Monument as Chiricahua National Park in the state of Arizona, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The bill also directs the NPS to ensure the protection of traditional cultural and religious sites in the park and provide access to those sites by members of Tribes for traditional cultural and customary uses

House Actions

July 21

The House passed H.R. 9770, making continuing appropriations for Fiscal Year 2027, by a yeas-and-nays vote of 220 yeas to 205 nays. This bill provides continuing FY27 appropriations for federal agencies through the earlier of December 4, 2026, or the enactment of the applicable appropriations act. It is known as a continuing resolution (CR) and prevents a government shutdown that would otherwise occur if the FY27 appropriations bills have not been enacted when FY27 begins on October 1, 2026. This CR funds most programs and activities at the FY26 levels with several exceptions that provide funding flexibility or additional appropriations for various programs.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency held a hearing entitled “Rewriting American History: Examining the Smithsonian’s Efforts to Reshape the Past.” Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

July 22

The Committee on House Administration held a hearing entitled “Oversight of the Smithsonian: Radical Revisionism at the National Museum of American History.” Testimony was heard from Elizabeth MacMillan Director, National Museum of American History; and public witnesses.

The Committee on Natural Resources held a markup on:

- H.R. 309, the “National Law Enforcement Officers Remembrance, Support and Community Outreach Act,” allowing for the award of a grant to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund for the expenses associated with operating and enhancing the community outreach, public education, and officer safety and wellness programs of the National Law Enforcement Museum. In general, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the Interior to carry out this section \$6,000,000 for each of the first 7 fiscal years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act. If in any fiscal year the amount appropriated pursuant to the authorization is not the full amount provided

to the Secretary, the Secretary may transfer such sums as may be necessary from the National Park Service

- H.R. 4931, about extending NPS leases (see S. 2498 above)
- H.R. 5063, the “Safe Beaches, Safe Swimmers Act.” If the Secretary determines there is a staffing shortage with respect to a designated swim location, the Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with one or more local government agencies to enable lifeguards employed by those local government agencies to adequately staff such designated swim location during normal seasonal operating hours; and ensure visitor safety and provide rescue and first aid services at the designated swim location as necessary. In entering into such an agreement, the Secretary shall ensure that the local government agency providing the lifeguard services is reimbursed for all reasonable costs incurred by the local government agency in carrying out the agreement
- H.R. 8121, to designate the Christiansted Bandstand at the Christiansted National Historic Site, St. Croix, Virgin Islands, as the “Peter G. Thurland, Sr., Bandstand”
- H.R. 8454, to provide for the transfer of administrative jurisdiction over certain federal land in California (see S. 2881 above)
- H.R. 1693, to re-designate the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming, as the “Barbara L. Cubin National Historic Trails Interpretive Center”

H.R. 8454, H.R. 8121, H.R. 5063, H.R. 4931, and H.R. 309 were ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 1693 was ordered reported, without amendment.

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 enough impact on the National Park Service that we note them here.

- On July 16, Representatives Rudy Yakym (R-IN) and Pat Fallon (R-TX) introduced a bill to end the ban on carrying firearms into buildings on federal lands. Source: [E&E News](#)
- On August 3, Representatives James Walkinshaw (D-VA) and Eleanor Homes Norton (D-DC), as well as Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), introduced legislation to provide lifetime identity protection coverage for federal employees and contractors whose personal information was compromised in the 2015 Office of Personnel Management cyberattacks. Current identity protection is slated to end on September 30. Source: [U.S. Representative James Walkinshaw](#), [Government Executive](#)

Other Relevant Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service (Dept. of

Agriculture) News

- *Proposed Alaska drilling* - On August 3, the Department of the Interior announced a proposed rule through the Marine Minerals Administration to rescind regulations governing exploratory oil and gas drilling on the Arctic Outer Continental Shelf. The press released called the current regulatory framework “burdensome” and stated that new rules will “provide operators with clearer, more flexible compliance options while preserving federal authority.” Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Coal potential* - On July 23, the U.S. Geological Survey released a report on coal resources beneath federal lands, estimating 4.2 billion short tons of reported coal reserves associated with active mines and 356 billion short tons of available coal resources. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Chattahoochee National Recreation Area

Raft rescue

On July 25, six individuals were floating on the Chattahoochee River near the East Palisades Trail, when they flipped on some rocks. The individuals found themselves stranded on the riverbank beneath the interstate bridges. River currents were said to be higher than normal due to recent rains. The group called for emergency support. Atlanta Fire Rescue personnel responded to the scene by boat and were able to safely extricate them. No injuries were reported. Source: [11Alive](#), [Fox 5 Atlanta](#)

Gateway National Recreation Area

Drowning

On July 23, two people went swimming in the ocean at Beach B at Sandy Hook. One began yelling when their companion went underwater. A bystander pulled the struggling swimmer from the water and began CPR. Personnel from the NPS, Sea Bright (NJ) Fire Rescue, and Hackensack Meridian Health responded to the scene. The individual was later pronounced deceased at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch, NJ. Source: [NJ.com](#)

Glen Canyon National Recreation Area

Boating fatality

On July 30, a child fell from the bow of a boat on Lake Powell, then was struck by the boat. NPS personnel responded to the scene and provided medical care. They transported the individual to Antelope Marina, where they received further care from the Page (AZ) Fire Department. They were then transported by Intermountain Health Air Medical to a local hospital, where the individual succumbed to their injuries. Source: [KUTV](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Missing person found

On July 21, an 83-year-old went missing while hiking with one other person on the North Rim on Dog Saddle near the northeast boundary along Forest Service Road 610. A search ensued, with personnel from the NPS, Coconino County (AZ) Search and Rescue, and Kane County (UT) Search and Rescue. On July 22, the individual was located on a helicopter reconnaissance flight, about 2.5 miles from where they were last seen. Rescue personnel were able to use a MegaMover seated device to carry the individual to Road 610. The individual was evaluated by emergency medical personnel and transported from the scene. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Heat stroke recovery

In May, a 20-year-old was backpacking with their parents and siblings in the Grand Canyon (location undisclosed), when they ran out of water and began to feel ill. The individual tripped, and blacked out. Their family called for emergency support, and the individual was eventually taken by helicopter out of the canyon. The individual was diagnosed with heat stroke, kidney failure, and liver failure. They spent a month in the hospital, receiving dialysis and several blood transfusions. They were released in mid-June. Source: [FOX 10](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Equestrian rescue

On July 28, an individual was riding a horse in an undisclosed location in the park, when they were thrown off of it. Personnel from the NPS and Gatlinburg (TN) Fire Department Emergency Medical Services responded, transporting the individual to the Sugarland Visitor Center, where they were then transferred to a National Guard helicopter. The individual was flown to the University of Tennessee Medical Center for advanced medical treatment. No further details were given. Source: [Knox News](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

All-time low water

As of August 3, Lake Mead was measured at 1,040.98 feet above sea level, just inches from its all-time record low of 1,040.58 feet above sea level, set in July 2022. Boaters are cautioned to keep aware of emerging obstacles and report any new ones to the NPS so that they can mark them with buoys. Source: [FOX5Vegas](#)

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve

Climber fall

On July 25, a rock climber fell 30 feet while climbing on a cliff on the Endless Wall Trail near

Lansing-Edmond Road. Personnel from the NPS and firefighters from Fayetteville, Anstead, Pax, Oak Hill, and Nutwell (WV) responded to the scene and utilized technical rope rescue techniques to extricate the individual. The climber sustained only “minor injuries” in the incident. Source:

[WOAY](#)

Salem Maritime National Historic Site

Body in water

On July 28, a body was observed floating in the water near Central Wharf. Personnel from the NPS, and local police, firefighters, and an Atlantic ambulance responded to the scene. The individual’s body was pulled from the water and the investigation is ongoing. Source: [The Marblehead Independent](#)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Medical emergency

On July 23, a 79-year-old had a medical emergency while visiting the General Sherman Tree. NPS personnel responded to the scene and provided treatment, but the individual passed away at the scene. No further details were given. Source: [SFGate](#)

Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Hiker fatality

On July 19, a 37-year-old went hiking near the North Unit Riverbend Overlook. The following day, their family reported them missing. Personnel from the NPS, North Dakota Highway Patrol, and New Town (ND) Police Department, Badlands Search and Rescue Service, Civil Air Patrol North Dakota Wing, North Dakota National Guard, and the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services responded to the search, utilizing ground teams, dogs, and flight resources. On August 2, the individual was found deceased. Source: [InForum](#), [KFGO](#)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Unstable trail

On July 21, the park closed an area beneath an unstable hill on the Root Glacier access trail north of Kennecott Mines due to the danger of rockfall coming off the moraine. Source: [Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Out-of-bounds hikers

On July 19, two visitors were recorded walking off the boardwalk of the Fairy Falls Trail near Grand Prismatic Spring. Walking close to thermal features is illegal due to harms caused to the thermal features and the danger of visitors falling through thin soil crusts into extremely hot water. The video has been viewed millions of times in under 24 hours. The NPS has not stated publicly whether it will attempt to investigate the incident. Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#)

Yosemite National Park

Fatality

On July 20, a 24-year-old individual was “discovered injured” in the swimming hole below Swinging Bridge in Wawona on the South Fork of the Merced River. A 911 call was made, and NPS responders found the individual unresponsive. They applied lifesaving measures, but were unable to resuscitate the individual. They were pronounced deceased at the scene. One news source referred to the death as a drowning, but other news sources were inconclusive. Source: [SFGate](#)

Yosemite National Park

Fake viral video about rescue costs

A fake news account took a screen recording of an individual’s video of their 2024 rescue by NPS Search and Rescue personnel on the Mist Trail, and claimed there was a \$70,000 bill for the rescue. The video went viral, creating outrage about the charge. The NPS has publicly stated that rescue services continue to be free in national park units. Source: [Outside](#)

Wildfires

- *Devils Tower National Monument* - On August 1, the Left Creek Fire, believed to be caused by lightning, was found just southwest of the park boundaries. The park closed as a result. As of August 3, the fire was 100% contained at 282 acres. Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#), [Watch Duty](#)
- *Everglades National Park* - On August 2, a lightning-caused fire was detected in the park nine miles east of Shark Valley and a quarter-mile south of Highway 41 at Mile Marker 26. As of August 3, the fire was 815 acres and 75% contained. Source: [Everglades National Park](#)
- *Grand Portage National Monument* - On July 20, the NPS closed the Fort Charlotte Campground due to high fire danger in the region. It reopened on July 30. Source: [Grand Portage National Monument](#), [Grand Portage National Monument \(Facebook\)](#)
- *North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area*
 - On June 24, a series of lightning strikes hit the area, causing several fires north of Little Beaver Creek and west of Ross Lake. Of them, the Luna Fire, located east of Big Beaver Creek and north of McMillan Creek, continues burning. As of August 2, the fire was 950 acres. [Editor note: We incorrectly called this fire 100% contained in our 7/8/26 Coalition Report.] Source: *North Cascades National Park* ([7/27](#), [7/31](#), [8/2](#))
 - The week of July 12, lightning struck the area east of Ross Lake, igniting the Border 1 and Border 2 Fires. As of August 2, the Border 2 Fire was 5,028 acres. Source: [Whatcom News](#), *North Cascades National Park* ([7/27](#), [7/31](#), [8/2](#))

- *Olympic National Park* - On June 23, a lightning storm moved through the area. On June 24, backpackers reported a fire on “a remote mountain slope” on the west side of the park. As of July 21, the Mt. Tom Creek Fire was 69 acres and 27% contained. Source: [Olympic National Park](#), [Watch Duty](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Channel Islands National Park* - An NPS spokesperson stated recently that 60-80% of the endangered Torrey pines on Santa Rosa Island will die due to the human-caused Santa Rosa Island Fire in May (see [6/10/26 Coalition Report](#)). Fires often lead to delayed mortality, so the full extent of the damage remains to be seen. The loss of trees may lead to genetic bottlenecks, as well as larger ecosystem effects on the island. Source: [CNN](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - Following a review of the grizzly bear encounter that left a 33-year-old hiker deceased in May (see [5/13/26 Coalition Report](#)), the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee determined that they will not take any management actions against the bear. They found that the “attack was likely brief and intense and not prolonged,” and that due to dark conditions and numerous trees in the area, the bear and the hiker probably did not see each other until already quite close to one another. The bear had no previous history of human conflict, aggression, or capture, and there was no evidence of predation or caching at the scene. The individual did deploy a full can of bear spray, but it is unclear whether the spray made contact with the bear. Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - The individual whose vehicle was hit by rockfall on the Going-to-the-Sun Road on July 11 (see [7/22/26 Coalition Report](#)) died of injuries sustained in the incident. Source: [Daily Inter Lake](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - On July 27, a court filing in the case against one individual accused of damaging the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool was made public, showing that an NPS staff witness testified that the area of the pool liner was already damaged prior to the suspect’s presence at the site. The court filing also indicated “irregularities that reflect a misleading presentation to the grand jury” in the case. The suspect has pleaded not guilty, saying that they merely touched a floating piece of the liner in the pool. On July 31, the Department of Justice moved to dismiss the criminal case, acknowledging the damage to the reflecting pool “was the result of flawed installation by the contractor.” They claimed they only learned of the evidence pointing to the “rushed and flawed installation process” during the indictment by a grand jury. The pool’s renovation had been rushed due to the desire to have it completed before the 250th anniversary of the United States on July 4. On August 1, President Donald Trump said he disagreed with the decision, and continued that it was vandalism that damaged the pool. Interior Department Secretary Doug Burgum also stated that vandals have “repeatedly caused damaged” to the pool. On August 3, the federal government dropped charges against the other three individuals accused of damage to the pool. Source: [The Guardian](#), [ABC News](#), [National Public Radio](#)

- *U.S. Park Police* - In the wake of a 46-year-old bystander being killed during a high speed chase by U.S. Park Police (see [7/8/26 Coalition Report](#)), U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM), sent a letter to the Department of the Interior and the chief of the U.S. Park Police calling into question Executive Order 14339, which has allowed for high speed chases for nonviolent crimes. Source: [Senator Martin Heinrich](#)

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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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