



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Coalition Actions

Editor note: As of publishing, the Coalition's website was down for maintenance, so links to our webpage may not work until later this week. Thanks for your patience.

The Coalition submitted [comments](#) to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commissioners in support of their effort to restore wolverines to the state.

We joined four other conservation groups in submitting [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management Utah Office, in opposition to the Quarter 2 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale, which would open 54,000 acres across 39 parcels to development near Arches National Park, Dinosaur National Monument, and the Old Spanish National Historic Trail, and ignores land management decisions made through prior public engagement processes.

We continue to provide statements and interviews to the media highlighting challenges to the National Park System. Recent work includes:

- Press release on [objection to Utah oil and gas lease sale](#)
- [Trump eyes land on Potomac River for statue garden](#), *Greenwire*
- [International visitors now have to pay more at America's most visited national parks](#), *Marketplace*

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.

- *Fee for foreigners creates chaos* - *The Guardian* published [an article](#) about the effects of the newly-enacted fees for foreign visitors to NPS sites, including long lines at entrance stations, potential visitors opting out, and difficult interactions with staff. Source: *The Guardian*
- *SO to expand hunting and fishing access* - On January 7, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum signed Secretary's Order No. 3447, with the intent to expand hunting and fishing access and ensure consistency across its public lands agencies. The NPS was specifically ordered to review superintendent compendiums and park regulations "to identify restrictions on hunting or fishing that exceed statutory mandates or unit enabling authorities," identify opportunities to expand hunting and fishing in units where it is already legal, bring all closures or limitations on hunting and fishing directly to the NPS Director for review and approval, and ensure that decisions are coordinated with local agencies and gateway communities "to the maximum extent legally practicable." Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Inventory and monitoring program in danger* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about the challenges to the NPS' inventory and monitoring program due to layoffs, incentivized buyouts, budget cuts, travel bans, and the threat of a Reduction in Force. Source: *SFGate*
- *New Wildland Fire Service launched, not funded* - On January 12 the Department of the Interior announced the official establishment of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service, including the appointment of Brian Fennessy to serve at its first chief. However, Congress has denied a \$6.5 billion request to fund the agency in its latest appropriations bills. Wildland firefighting will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Interior Department agencies, and "no structural changes requiring congressional authorization are being implemented at this stage." However, the new agency has stated that it will work toward a "phased unification." Source: [Boise State Public Radio](#), [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Investigation into 250th anniversary funds* - On January 15, the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility submitted a letter to the Department of Interior and the Senate and House Committees on Natural Resources, asking them to clarify and ensure that public funding from the America250 campaign to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, is not being inappropriately diverted to Freedom250, an entity not subject to the same structures, safeguards, and accountability as America250. Source: [Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#)
- *FOIA lawsuit over censorship on public lands* - On July 31, the Sierra Club filed Freedom of Information Act Requests from public land agencies, asking for a records request for the implementation of the censorship of American history, per Executive Order 14253. The Bureau of Reclamation and Bureau of Land Management responded to the requests, but several others did not, including the National Park Service and Department of the Interior. The Sierra Club has now filed a lawsuit for a failure to comply with the FOIA request. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)

- *5th annual threatened and endangered parks* - *National Parks Traveler* published its 5th annual [Threatened and Endangered Parks report](#), this year focused on “the deterioration of the history in national parks.” It listed historic structures that are closed or in very poor condition and the lack of funding to restore them. Source: *National Parks Traveler*
- *Op-ed in support of higher fees for international visitors* - *The Hill* published [an op-ed](#) arguing in favor of the currently-enacted policy of charging foreign visitors more to visit national parks, arguing that the funding stream is needed and it is in alignment with many other similar practices elsewhere. Source: *The Hill*
- *Op-ed for privatizing public land* - *Reason* published [an op-ed](#) arguing that massive privatization of federal land would be helpful because public lands “grossly stifle private investment and skew real estate development.” Source: *Reason*
- *ParkForum proposals open* - The George Wright Society has opened a call for proposals for the 2026 ParkForum, which will take place October 19-22 at the University of Tennessee. They are looking for speakers to share insights, successes, problems, and experiences related to parks, other protected areas, and other types of place-based conservation. Source: [George Wright Society](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Acadia National Park, Yosemite National Park* - The NPS is enacting a new technology pilot program at the two parks, consisting of self-driving shuttle buses, and drones and other robotic devices using sensor data to “predict traffic, enhance emergency response, and schedule restroom cleanings.” Source: [Greenwire](#)
- *Chickasaw National Recreation Area* - On January 20, the park began a project to remove downed trees from an April 2024 tornado incident on Bison Trail, Bromide Hill Trail, and SW Perimeter Road. Temporary closures may be in place during the project, which is expected to last for two to three weeks. Source: [Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - The NPS has opened a Commercial Use Authorization application period for commercial dog sled trips. The CUA will be a one-year temporary trial through December 31. Applications are due by February 4. Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#)
- *Dinosaur National Monument* - During a project to remove a section of asphalt in the Quarry Exhibit Hall parking lot, fossils were found exposed just under the surface of the pavement. They are believed to belong to a Diplodocus. Construction was halted so the fossil could be removed, which was completed in October by a group of NPS staff, a Utah Conservation Corps crew, volunteers, and the construction crews. Roughly 3,000 pounds of fossils and rock were removed. The fossils were moved to the Utah Field House of

Natural History State Park Museum in Vernal, where they will be cleaned and studied.

Source: [ABC4](#)

- *Fort Raleigh National Historic Site* - On January 14, the NPS signed a Finding of No Significant Impact for an environmental assessment for a shoreline stabilization project to control erosion. Source: [The Outer Banks Voice](#)
- *Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site* - In April 2025, the park began a \$4.2 million renovation of the Olmsted residence. The project is being executed by contractor Icarus Construction of Worcester, Massachusetts. It is expected to be complete by the end of 2026. The park will remain open for its usual season, April through December. Source: [Brookline News](#)
- *Freedom Riders National Monument* - On January 20, the park announced a Finding of No Significant Impact for the master plan and environmental assessment for the Bus Burning Site. Source: [Freedom Riders National Monument](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - On January 14, the parkway reopened all lanes of the north section during rush hour after an extensive rehabilitation project. The remaining work will take place during off-peak hours. The project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On January 9, the Bureau of Reclamation released its draft Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead. The 1,600-page document outlines five alternatives proposals to guide water management when the current operational guidelines expire in August 2026. Public comment on the alternatives is [open through March 2](#). Source: [Nevada Current](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park* - On January 16, the park announced that it has received funding through the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to purchase safety equipment, support community outreach events, and maintain overtime hours for DUI Task Force Operations and other enforcement events. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - *The New Yorker* published [an article](#) about the search and rescue team at the park. Source: *The New Yorker*
- *Independence National Historical Park* - The NPS recently announced the upcoming installation of a sculpture inspired by Benjamin Franklin's "JOIN OR DIE" cartoon, which called for unity among the colonies in 1754. The sculpture will include interpretive panels that explore unity and independence. The groundbreaking for the project will take place in July, in honor of the nation's 250th anniversary, with completion expected in late fall. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)

- *Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve* - On February 2, the park will begin a major trail improvement and facility enhancement project. Trails that were damaged during Hurricane Ida in 2021 will be rebuilt and restored, and an administrative trailer will be removed. The visitor center and several trails will remain closed during the project. The Twin Canals parking lot, trail, and canoe launch will remain open. Source: [Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve](#)
- *Joshua Tree National Park* - On January 6, the park closed the Fortynine Palms and Cholla Cactus Garden Trails for repairs and rehabilitation. They expect for both projects to be complete in late spring. Source: [Joshua Tree National Park](#) (Facebook post)
- *Lassen Volcanic National Park* - On January 8, *National Public Radio* published a piece about the efforts of scientists to reintroduce cascades frogs to the park since they were wiped out by a fungus in 2007. Source: [KUNM](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East* - The NPS is partnering with non-profit Casey Trees to launch a community-driven fundraising campaign to plant 250 “native and historic trees” across the capital in honor of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Source: [PoPville](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - President Donald Trump and his administration are “closing in on” a site for the proposed Garden of American Heroes, at West Potomac Park, just south of the National Mall. The installation is intended to be 250 life-size statues of American historical figures, to be completed by July 4 for the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Due to the late date, it is unclear whether or not it will be completed in time. Source: [The Art Newspaper](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The NPS has opened a Request for Proposals to develop telecommunications infrastructure within the National Mall and surrounding park areas of Washington, DC. Proposals are due February 16. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Pacific West Region* - Scott Henrickson was selected as the 2025 NPS Engineer of the Year for his efforts managing a portfolio of projects across 12 Pacific Island NPS sites. Source: [National Park Service Office of Communications](#)
- *Petrified Forest National Park* - In the episode “The Thing About Things” on *This American Life*, one story focused on people who feel “cursed” in life due to having taken a piece of petrified wood from the park. A park staff member, identified as “Ranger Matt,” was interviewed for the episode, and took one of the show’s hosts to see a pile of rocks returned by such individuals. Source: [This American Life](#)
- *Zion National Park* - *National Parks Traveler* published [an article](#) about the park’s new Discovery Center, which is currently under construction at the eastern gateway of the park. The center is expected to include “interpretive outdoor spaces and play areas that include

indoor and outdoor classrooms, immersive exhibits, and an agricultural demonstration area that honors Indigenous stewardship and pioneer heritage.” The center is being developed by the NPS, Zion National Park Forever Project (the park’s philanthropic partner), state and local governments, Tribal partners, and private landowners. It is expected to open in Spring 2027. Source: *National Parks Traveler*

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

- Gary William Johnson, 78, passed away on January 5. Gary worked for the NPS for 36 years, during which time he worked “with and for 56 National Park units,” including time at the Denver Service Center and as the chief of resource planning at Blue Ridge Parkway. He received the Appleman-Judd-Lewis Award in 2011 for excellence in cultural resource management, the NPS Special Achievement Award, and several NPS Performance Awards. He retired from the NPS in 2011. Source: [Anders Rice and Roper Funeral Home and Cremation Center](#)
- Bennie C. Keel, 91, passed away on January 11. Bennie was an archaeologist for the NPS from 1976-2008, including time as the NPS assistant director of archaeology in Washington, DC, and as regional archaeologist and center director at the NPF Southeast Archaeology Center in Florida. Source: [Dignity Memorial](#), [Wikipedia](#)
- Gail K. Stark, 89, passed away on January 3. Gail was the partner of Jack Stark, who worked for the NPS for many years, including as superintendent at Grand Teton National Park. Source: [Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)
- James T. Stensvaag, 78, passed away on December 29. Jim volunteered from 2013-2019 in Rocky Mountain National Park. Source: [Times-Call](#)
- Gerald “Gerry” Alva Walters, 83, passed away on January 5. Gerry worked at Glacier National Park for a time, “on trails and fire lookout towers.” Source: [The Western News](#)
- Vernon Clayton Wright, 73, passed away on January 6. Vernon worked for the NPS for over 30 years, “relocating throughout the United States.” Source: [Legacy/Willis Funeral Home](#)

In the News

- On December 7, Jim Webster retired from volunteering with the Grand County (UT) Sheriff’s Search and Rescue team after 20 years. He served as the team’s commander for 12 years. Prior to that stint, Jim worked with the NPS for 28 years, including 14 years as

chief ranger at Arches National Park. Source: [The Times-Independent](#)

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.

- *Bandelier National Monument* - Public comment is [open through February 1](#) on a fire management plan for the park. Source: [KRQE](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - Public comment is [open through February 6](#) on a visitor use management plan, which would increase daily visitation and camping capacity, add two beachfront pavilions, add backcountry campsites, allow for on-island retail and kayak/canoe rental, and establish bicycle access. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *George Washington Memorial Parkway* - Public comment is [open through February 12](#) on a proposed plan for improvements near the Old Town North neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia, including new trail connections to the Mount Vernon Trail, more access to the Potomac River, more public space, and transportation upgrades. Source: [George Washington Memorial Parkway](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East* - The NPS and Washington, DC's Department of Energy and Environment have opened public comment through January 23 on an ecological restoration of Kingman Lake. Source: [National Capital Parks - East](#)
- *Olympic National Park* - Public comment is [open through January 21](#) on an initial design plan for the Hurricane Ridge Day Lodge, which burned down in May 2023. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *St. Croix National Scenic Riverway* - Public comment is [open through February 21](#) on a comprehensive river management plan. Source: [St. Croix National Scenic Riverway](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The NPS and the Federal Highway Administration have opened [public comment through February 4](#) on a proposal to reconstruct a new permanent North Entrance Road to recover from the 500-year flood event in June 2022. A temporary road has been in place since October 2022, and a more permanent solution is needed. Source: [Yellowstone 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

December 26, 2025 - Public Law 119-62 - This Act may be cited as the “Modernizing Access to our Public Waters Act of 2025” or the “MAPWaters Act of 2025.” It provides for the standardization, consolidation, and publication of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of federal waterways among federal land and water management agencies (including the National Park Service).

The law requires the U.S. Forest Service and Department of the Interior to jointly develop and adopt interagency standards for collection and dissemination of geospatial data relating to public outdoor recreational access of federal waterways and federal fishing restrictions. The standards must ensure compatibility and interoperability among applicable federal databases with respect to collection and dissemination of such data. Also, within five years, the USFS and DOI must digitize and make publicly available online certain geographic information system data about (1) federal waterway restrictions, (2) federal waterway access and navigation information, and (3) federal fishing restrictions, and must update that data at least twice per year. Data about fishing restrictions must be updated in real time as changes go into effect. Finally, the USFS and DOI must develop a process to allow members of the public to submit questions or comments regarding the data regarding waterway restrictions, waterway access, and navigation information.

Senate Actions

January 8 - The Senate began consideration of H.R. 6938, the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026, making consolidated appropriations for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2026.

January 12-14 - The Senate resumed and continued consideration of H.R. 6938.

January 15 - The Senate, by a vote of 82 yeas to 15 nays, passed H.R. 6938, without amendment. The appropriations language for the National Park Service as found in the bill is as follows:

- Operation of the National Park System: For expenses necessary for the management, operation, protection, and maintenance of areas and facilities administered by the National Park Service and for the general administration of the National Park Service, \$2,877,195,000, including:
 - \$11,661,000 for planning and interagency coordination in support of Everglades restoration
 - \$148,285,000 for maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation projects for constructed assets
 - \$157,950,000 for cyclic maintenance projects for constructed assets and cultural resources
 - \$12,500,000 for National Park Foundation (for expenses authorized under section 101122 of title 54)
 - not to exceed \$15,000 may be for official reception and representative expenses
 - \$3,300,000 of the funds provided under this heading shall be made available for the purposes specified by the 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act
 - an amount equal to the amount deposited in this Fiscal Year into the National Park Medical Services Fund established pursuant to such section of such Act, to remain

available until expended, shall be derived from such Fund.

- National Recreation and Preservation: For expenses necessary to carry out recreation programs, natural programs, cultural programs, heritage partnership programs, environmental compliance and review, international park affairs, and grant administration, not otherwise provided for, \$91,596,000, to remain available until September 30, 2027, of which \$250,000 shall be for projects specified for Statutory and Contractual Aid in the table titled “Interior and Environment Incorporation of Community Project Funding Items/ Congressionally Directed Spending Items.”
- Historic Preservation Fund: For expenses necessary in carrying out the National Historic Preservation Act, \$205,059,000, to be derived from the Historic Preservation Fund and to remain available until September 30, 2027, including:
 - \$25,500,000 shall be for Save America’s Treasures grants for preservation of nationally significant sites, structures and artifacts as authorized by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009
 - \$1,250,000 is for competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks associated with communities currently under-represented, as determined by the Secretary
 - \$24,000,000 is for competitive grants to preserve the sites and stories of the African American Civil Rights movement
 - \$5,000,000 is for competitive grants to preserve sites related to the struggle of all people to achieve equal rights in America
 - \$11,000,000 is for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities
 - \$7,906,000 is for competitive grants for the restoration of historic properties of national, state, and local significance listed on or eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places
 - \$4,907,000 is for a competitive grant program to honor the semiquincentennial anniversary of the United States by restoring and preserving sites and structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places that commemorate the founding of the nation
 - \$62,150,000 is for State Historic Preservation Offices
 - \$23,750,000 is for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices
 - \$15,596,000 is for projects specified for the Historic Preservation Fund in the table titled “Interior and Environment Incorporation of Community Project Funding Items/ Congressionally Directed Spending Items”
- Construction: For construction, improvements, repair, or replacement of physical facilities, and related equipment, and compliance and planning for programs and areas administered by the National Park Service, \$88,461,000, including:
 - \$3,190,000 is for projects specified for Line item construction and maintenance in the table titled “Interior and Environment Incorporation of Community Project Funding Items/ Congressionally Directed Spending Items”
- Centennial Challenge - For expenses necessary to carry out challenge cost share

agreements, \$5,000,000, to remain available until expended, for Centennial Challenge projects and programs.

- Administrative Provisions (including transfer of funds):
 - In addition to other uses set forth in section 101917(c)(2) of title 54, United States Code, franchise fees credited to a sub-account shall be available for expenditure by the Secretary, without further appropriation, for use at any unit within the National Park System to extinguish or reduce liability for Possessory Interest or leasehold surrender interest. Such funds may only be used for this purpose to the extent that the benefitting unit anticipated franchise fee receipts over the term of the contract at that unit exceed the amount of funds used to extinguish or reduce liability. Franchise fees at the benefitting unit shall be credited to the sub-account of the originating unit over a period not to exceed the term of a single contract at the benefitting unit, in the amount of funds so expended to extinguish or reduce liability. For the costs of administration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, the National Park Service may retain up to 3 percent of the amounts which are authorized to be disbursed under such section, such retained amounts to remain available until expended.
 - National Park Service funds may be transferred to the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, for purposes authorized under 23 U.S.C. 203. Transfers may include a reasonable amount for FHWA administrative support costs.
 - The National Park Service shall maintain staffing levels in order to fulfill the mission, including to protect natural and cultural resources, provide and maintain appropriate access and recreation for visitors, provide safety precautions for visitors and staff, maintain physical and natural infrastructure, provide information and respond to stakeholders and the general public, conduct Tribal consultation, provide for administrative support, administer historic and other preservation programs, and carry out other activities in support of effectively operating the National Park System and carrying out programs administered by the National Park Service in a timely manner.

House of Representatives Actions

January 7 - The Committee on Rules concluded a hearing on a number of bills including H.R. 6938 (see above). The rule passed by the committee under a closed rule.

January 8

The House passed H.R. 6938, making consolidated appropriations for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2026, by a yea-and-nay vote of 397 yeas to 28 nays.

The House failed to override President Donald Trump's veto of H.R. 504, the Miccosukee Reserved Area Amendments Act, in a roll-call vote of 236 Yeas to 188 Nays (2/3 Yeas required to override). H.R. 504 would have amended the Miccosukee Reserved Area Act to authorize the expansion of the Miccosukee Reserved Area in Everglades National Park to include the area

known as “Osceola Camp” in order to carry out activities to protect structures within the Osceola Camp from flooding, and for other purposes.

January 14

The House filed reports on:

- H.R. 4386, to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to clarify entrance privileges for vehicles with respect to the America the Beautiful interagency pass, with an amendment. The bill would revise the definition of vehicles to include motorcycles and states that “such pass shall cover the entrance fee and standard amenity recreation fee—for a passholder entering by motorcycle; the passholder and any passengers on the motorcycle; and one additional motorcycle, including passengers, accompanying the passholder”
- H.R. 4467, to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the state of Mississippi, and for other purposes, with an amendment. The bill would authorize the transfer of land to the state of Mississippi from Vicksburg National Military Park.
- H.R. 5103, to establish a program to Beautify the District of Columbia and establish the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Commission, with an amendment. The bill would establish a program to beautify the District of Columbia and establish the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Commission. Section 2 of the bill directs the Secretary of Interior to (1) coordinate, and maintain, the cleanliness, of federal and District of Columbia facilities, monuments, land, public spaces, sidewalks, parks, highways, roads, transit systems, and other commonly visited areas within the District of Columbia, including through the removal of graffiti; (2) restore federal public monuments, memorials, statues, markers, and similar properties that have been damaged or defaced or inappropriately removed or changed; and (3) encourage private-sector participation in the efforts of the program.”

The Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on several bills including:

- H.R. 926, “Fort Pillow National Battlefield Park Study Act,” a bill that would direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Fort Pillow Historic State Park in Henning, Tennessee, to determine if it should be designated as the Fort Pillow National Battlefield Park for inclusion in the National Park System
- H.R. 4038, the “Wildfire Response and Preparedness Act of 2025,” which would require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to establish a standard for the response time to wildfire incidents. The term “response time,” with respect to a wildland fire incident, means the period of time between ignition of the wildland fire and evaluation for purposes of suppression of that wildland fire, on the ground or in an aircraft, by a federal, state, or local public safety officer; or a public safety volunteer. The areas to be addressed are the federal lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and in consultation through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency with the United States Fire Administration relating to

wildland fires in the wildland-urban interface.

Testimony was heard from Representatives Cohen, Neguse, Kim, Kennedy of Utah, and Hageman; John Crockett, Deputy Chief, U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture; Tyler Clancy, Representative, District 60, Utah House of Representatives; Matthew M. McCombs, State Forester and Director, Colorado State Forest Service; Pat Russell, Fire Chief, Anaheim Fire and Rescue, California; and a public witness.

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

- *New Grand Staircase management plan* - On January 6, the Bureau of Land Management issued a Record of Decision for an approved resource management plan for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (a unit of the BLM). On January 15, the Government Accountability Office determined the plan is subject to the Congressional Review Act, and the plan will next go to the House of Representatives and the Senate, as well as the Comptroller General for review. Source: [U.S. Government Accountability Office](#)
- *UT handed power to influence national forests* - On January 8, the State of Utah and the U.S. Forest Service signed a 20-year cooperative agreement giving the state greater decision-making power in USFS management, particularly “to expand sustainable timber production, wood utilization, accelerate landscape-scale restoration, and increase the pace and scale of forest fuel reduction treatments.” Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *DOI official’s spouse profits from approved mine* - A lithium mine approved by the Bureau of Land Management near Orovada, Nevada, paid \$3.5 million to Interior Department Associate Deputy Secretary Karen Budd-Falen’s husband for water rights, pending permit approval by the Interior. This deal was not disclosed in her public financial disclosure reports, despite federal ethics laws requiring it, suggesting corruption. Source: [SFGate](#), [The New York Times](#)
- *Plan to drill in Bay Area and Central Coast of CA* - On January 12, the Bureau of Land Management released a draft supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to drill for oil on over 1 million acres of land adjacent to Pinnacles National Park, Mount Diablo State Park, Henry W. Coe State Park, and Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve in California. The draft supplemental EIS is a requirement from a federal court decision that sided with a lawsuit arguing the original plan to drill did not effectively evaluate environmental effects. The draft supplemental EIS has determined that emissions are “not expected to affect air quality or public health” and risks to water and wildlife are “minimal.” Public comments on the proposal are [open through January 23](#). Source: [Local News Matters - Bay Area](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Canyonlands National Park

Suspected murder-suicide

On January 9, park staff were alerted to a suspicious vehicle parked on the Shafer Trail. When they arrived, they found a 6-year-old unresponsive in the vehicle. They began life-saving efforts and transported the child to the hospital, where they were pronounced deceased. The child's parent was found deceased outside the vehicle in the same area. The two had been reported missing by the parent/spouse. The San Juan County (UT) Sheriff stated that "this case is being investigated as a homicide and a suicide." Source: [SFGate](#)

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Missing person

On January 12, NPS staff found a truck stuck on the beach in the park. On January 16, the owner of the truck was declared a missing person, last in contact with their family on January 9. The park believes the individual may have been traveling with a German shepherd, and has asked the public for any information they may have. Source: [WCTI](#)

Gettysburg National Military Park

Vandalism

On January 5 and 6, 23 monuments in the park were "defaced with an oil-based substance." The park described the intention as possibly "symbolic or ritualistic," and reminded the public that adding oil does not honor the memory of the soldiers. Source: [Gettysburg National Military Park](#) (Facebook page), [ABC27](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Waterline break

On January 11, another break occurred on the Transcanyon Waterline. The following day, the waterline was shutdown, and a "boil water advisory" was instituted for storage tank water supplies at Phantom Ranch. On January 17, the park closed Phantom Ranch to overnight lodging. The park is working to repair the line, and the 4-year rehabilitation of the waterline is still underway, with completion expected in 2027. Source: [SFGate](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Road rage

On December 22, two cars crashed into one another near the Deep Creek Picnic Area. An individual unassociated with the crash began to approach the two vehicles, and one of the vehicles drove away. The driver of the other vehicle motioned for the individual to approach, then pulled out a gun and pointed it at them. The person on foot fled the scene and heard multiple gunshots being fired. The driver then pulled away, as well as a third vehicle "believed to be

associated with the group.” The park is looking for any information the public may have in relation to the incident. Source: [WSMV](#), [WCYB](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Hiker fall

On January 14, a hiker took a fall in Goldstrike Canyon, about 1.5 miles from the trailhead. Personnel from the NPS, Boulder City Fire Department, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, and the Henderson Fire Department responded, and extracted the individual via a litter. They were then transported to a nearby hospital by Community Ambulance. A firefighter was also injured during the rescue. They were also brought to a hospital, and were “released shortly after.”

Source: [Boulder City Fire Department](#) (Facebook page), [News3LV](#), [Unofficial Networks](#)

Olympic National Park

“Trauma incident”

On January 1, an individual became injured in a “driftwood-strewn area” of Rialto Beach during inclement weather, and “became immobilized” (no other details). Responders from the NPS, Three Rivers (WA) Fire Department, Forks Ambulance, La Push Police Department, Quileute Fire Department, and Forks Fire Department worked together to extract the individual, and they were transported to a local hospital. Source: [Forks Forum](#)

Point Reyes National Seashore

Hiker rescue

On January 4, two hikers became stuck on a “steep, rocky outcrop” above the ocean just south of Pelican Lake. A California Highway Patrol helicopter was able to carry out a skid landing so that a paramedic could disembark. The hikers were moved to a safer location, where the helicopter was able to land. The individuals were transported to safety, where an ambulance provided medical evaluation and care. Other agencies involved in the rescue included the NPS, Marin County (CA) Fire Department, and Marin County Sheriff’s Office. Source: [Active NorCal](#)

The White House and President’s Park

Asbestos lawsuit

On January 7, an advocacy group, Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, filed a lawsuit seeking records about asbestos inspection and removal during the demolition of the East Wing of the White House. Source: [Mesothelioma.net](#)

Acknowledgements

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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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