



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

Coalition Actions

On June 12, a federal district court ruled in favor of [our co-sponsored lawsuit](#) against the Department of the Interior and National Park Service for censoring science and history on interpretive materials across the National Park System. (See more in “National/Regional NPS Updates” below.)

Coalition Executive Council member Mike Ward [testified](#) before the Committee on Natural Resources at a legislative field hearing for the proposed Great American Outdoors Act 250 (see more in “Proposed Legislation of Note” below).

We co-signed [a letter](#) to Congress with five other conservation groups requesting formal oversight review for current proposed land exchanges at Cumberland Island National Seashore, arguing that they conflict with statutory mandates (see more in “Around the Parks” below).

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

- [Judge orders restoration of national park plaques removed under Trump directive](#), *The Guardian*
- [Judge blocks national parks from removing ‘negative’ signs](#), *The New York Times*
- [Behind the facade, Yosemite is in chaos](#), *National Parks Conservation Association* (quote from Coalition Executive Council member and 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.

- *Censorship ruled illegal* - On June 12, a federal district court ruled that censorship of science and history on interpretive materials across the National Park System under an Executive Order by President Donald Trump is illegal and all materials must be restored within three weeks. On June 15, the Trump administration filed an appeal seeking a preliminary injunction. On June 23, a court of appeals temporarily paused the July 3 deadline to restore materials to allow for appeals proceedings to take place first, stating that they plan to rule on the issue “promptly.” The court proceedings have shown that over 50 exhibits have been removed from parks, with 16 of those already “discarded.” Source: [ABC News](#), [SFGate](#), [KELO](#)
- *LEOs to soon be marked “police”* - New guidance was recently issued by the NPS for new law enforcement uniforms and vehicles. Uniform changes will include external ballistic vest carriers that say “police federal officer”, as well as rank insignia patches that denote rank, while vehicles will say “police.” Vehicles are expected to be updated by 2027. The Department of the Interior has stated that the changes are “intended to improve immediate identification.” Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Intermountain Region unionizes* - On June 17, the National Treasury Employees Union announced that employees at the Intermountain Region voted 217-11 to join, forming a new Chapter 247, with 650 employees. They join two other NPS-based chapters, at the National Capital Region and NPS Headquarters. Source: [National Treasury Employees Union](#)
- *Congressional reps ask DOI for appropriations explanation* - On June 10, a group of U.S. Senators sent a letter to the Department of the Interior asking for transparency in how Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act funds are being spent at the National Mall and Memorial Parks and diverted from other needs across the National Park System. On June 12, a group of U.S. Representatives submitted a similar request. Source: [Government Executive](#)
- *Flag pin controversy* - On April 13, an NPS memo asked “all non-uniformed and administrative employees” they “are highly encouraged” to wear Freedom 250 American flag pins, and NPS employees were authorized to wear them while in uniform. Some NPS staff have reportedly been ordered to wear the pin at celebrations for the U.S.’ 250th anniversary, or face disciplinary action. Freedom 250 is the organization created by the Trump administration to bypass America250, the bipartisan, Congressionally-mandated and -overseen organization originally created to organize this year’s celebrations. Critics have argued that requiring personnel to wear the pin is illegal, as it is engaging in partisan political activity. Source: [Mother Jones](#)
- *Parks with rarest animals* - Yahoo!news published [an article](#) listing the national park units with the most threatened and endangered animal species. The top three were Golden Gate

National Recreation Area, Everglades National Park, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Source: [yahoo!news](#)

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Curecanti National Recreation Area, Dinosaur National Monument, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* - On June 2, Colorado Governor Jared Polis and the Colorado Tourism Office launched the Colorado Stargazing Trail, a way to see the state's 13 International Dark Sky Parks (including the NPS sites listed above) and eight International Dark Sky Communities. Source: [Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade](#)
- *Bryce Canyon National Park* - On June 22, the park began a project to stabilize the Navajo Loop Trail. Intermittent partial closures will be in place on weekdays "for the rest of the 2026 season." Source: [SFGate](#)
- *Cumberland Island National Seashore* - *The Current* published [an article](#) about proposed land swaps between the NPS and private landowners, an attempt to consolidate park land on the island. Critics have argued that the NPS is not being transparent about the process, with preliminary agreements and draft deeds already created before environmental review and public input has taken place. [Editor note: *The Coalition is opposed to the land swaps and has requested formal oversight from Congress on the issue. See "Coalition Actions" above.*] Source: *The Current*
- *Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - *High Country News* published [an infographic](#) about the effects of drought on the Colorado River and possible future impacts. Source: *High Country News*
- *Grand Teton National Park* - On June 9, the NPS announced the award of a 15-year concessions contract to Grand Teton Lodge Company, starting on January 1, 2027. The contract includes lodging, campgrounds, food and beverage, retail, marina services, transportation, guided float trips, guided horseback rides, corrals, service stations, and shower and laundry facilities. Source: [Grand Teton National Park](#)
- *Indiana Dunes National Park* - On June 15, the park reopened the Mount Baldy access site after a major sand relocation effort. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moved ~27,000 tons of sand to support visitor infrastructure and return sand to Lake Michigan beaches. The Mount Baldy summit and dune face remain closed due to ongoing safety concerns. Source: [Indiana Dunes National Park](#)
- *John Day Fossil Beds National Monument* - On June 11, the park announced the completion of a restoration of the historic Cant barn and shearing shed. The project

utilized personnel from an NPS Maintenance Action Team, and interns and staff from the Historic Preservation Training Center. Source: [John Day Fossil Beds National Monument](#)

- *Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On May 14, the park temporarily suspended its dive team operations due to staffing shortages and unmet equipment and training needs. In its internal memo, it stated, “current team membership is not sufficient to safely or reliably support dive operations in accordance with National Park Service standards, operational readiness expectations, and risk-management requirements.” The park is working to assess staffing availability and audit the program. During the suspension, dive-related incidents will be performed by local agencies, such as the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Search and Rescue Dive Team. Source: [The Nevada Independent](#)
- *Minute Man National Historical Park* - The park recently finished a three-year rehabilitation project of 15 historic structures, 22 historic monuments, six cultural landscapes, and the Battle Road Trail. The \$27 million project was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *Mount Rushmore National Memorial* - The Oglala Sioux Tribe signed a resolution opposing the July 4 fireworks show planned at the park due to drought conditions and the high risk of wildfires in the region. Source: [KELO](#)
- *Natchez Trace Parkway* - On June 22, the park began a major road rehabilitation project between State Route 12 (milepost 165) and State Route 413 (milepost 180), with a detour around the section. The project will include “full-depth roadway reconstruction, bridge repairs, drainage improvements, and paving,” and is expected to continue through mid-2027. This is the second phase of a three-phase rehabilitation of 83 miles of the parkway. 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* - According to new documents posted by the NPS, the proposed Triumphal Arch at Memorial Circle “envision[s] 20 hours per day of construction on the arch, year-round, in hopes of completing the project within two to three years.” The arch is also proposed to be built with concrete clad in granite, unlike the majority of monuments around Washington, DC, which are built of stone, likely to also cut the time needed to build. Source: [The Washington Post](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - Within days of the completion of a project to renovate the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool and paint it “American flag blue,” algae started forming in the pool. On June 16, a contractor installed an ozone “nanobubbling” system and has applied hydrogen peroxide to kill algae. The Department of the Interior has stated that the algae came from water in the pipes left stagnating while the pool was being renovated. It remains to be seen whether the renovation will be successful at keeping algae out of the pool. Later, chunks of the pool’s blue coating were observed peeling off into the pool. On June 22, the Trump administration said they had arrested five people and cited five others with “vandalism” at the pool (see “Incidents” below). The pool is likely to

need to be drained again to address the issues. Source: [E&E News](#), [The New York Times](#), [NBC News](#)

- *Ninety Six National Historic Site* - On June 24, the park reopened its museum after the installation of new exhibits, including a tactile map, an interactive called “Voices of Ninety Six,” and a collection of newly displayed artifacts. Source: [Ninety Six National Historic Site](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - On July 6, the park will begin a project to replace a 13-mile underwater powerline that provides electricity to Kettle Falls and upgrade other electrical components, including an enhanced emergency backup generation system. The project is being funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. It is expected to continue through October 2026, with “additional, less extensive work ongoing in Summer 2027.” Temporary closures may be in place on parts of Namakan Lake this summer. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)
- *Voyageurs National Park* - In July, the park will continue its ongoing wetland habitat restoration, focusing on cattail removal in Black Bay narrows, Gold Portage, Irwin Bay, and Mud Bay. The project is expected to continue through October. The project is being supported by the NPS, Outdoor Heritage Fund, Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, Jefferson National Park Association, Voyageurs Conservancy, National Park Foundation, and Clean Air Act Settlement Fund. Source: [Voyageurs National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On June 13, a small hydrothermal explosion occurred in Biscuit Basin, forming a new pool. Biscuit Basin has been closed to the public since a 2024 explosion. No one was present at the time of the explosion. Source: [ABC News](#)

Legal Actions

Legal actions involving the National Park Service. If the Coalition is involved in a lawsuit, those will be recorded in “Coalition Actions” above.

- *Department of the Interior* - On June 17, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility filed a lawsuit against the DOI for refusing a Freedom of Information Act request to turn over documents demonstrating the implementation of Secretarial Order 3431, which seeks to censor interpretive materials across public lands agencies. The request was filed on September 5, 2025, and the DOI has not responded. Response is required within 30 working days under FOIA. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Independence National Historical Park* - On June 18, an appeals court overturned a federal court decision that had prevented the Trump administration from replacing an exhibit about George Washington’s ownership of enslaved people. The appeals court found that the exhibit’s removal did not legally constitute an “agency action” subjects to court review under the Administrative Procedure Act. However, due to the ruling on June 12 that ordered the restoration of all censored exhibits (see “National/Regional NPS Updates”

above), the original exhibit may still need to be reinstalled. Source: [KSL](#)

- *Yosemite National Park* - On June 12, a federal judge dismissed the lawsuit by Shannon “SJ” Joslin against the NPS for wrongful dismissal, citing that they must instead file a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel because of their probationary status, which they have done. SJ’s lawsuit stems from being fired after flying a transgender pride flag on El Capitan while off-duty in May 2025. The termination letter called it a demonstration outside the designated protest and demonstration area without a permit. The Office of Special Counsel is expected to issue a final determination in August. Source: [KQED](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site* - Ashley Pipkin was selected as the new superintendent. Ashley has 15 years of NPS experience, most recently as the acting program manager of the NPS Overflights Program. She will begin her new role on June 24. Source: [Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site](#)

Park People

Deceased

- Shirley Beccue passed away on May 29. Shirley worked at Acadia National Park for nearly 20 years, retiring as the assistant chief of interpretation. She also worked for a time at Everglades National Park. Source: [Mount Desert Islander](#)
- Sara Jeanne Marks, 50, passed away on April 26. Sara worked for a time on “plant identification projects for the U.S. Geological Survey” at Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Wind Cave National Park. Source: [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)
- Rod Folsom Paine, 86, passed away on June 16. Rod worked for a time at the Canyon Hotel in Yellowstone National Park in his early life. Source: [Legacy/Hall Funeral Home - Percellville](#)
- Eva “Ginger” Sullivan, 92, passed away on June 15. She served on the board of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts for a time. Source: [Legacy/Murray Brothers Funeral Home, Inc. - Cascade Chapel](#)
- John A. Taylor, 66, passed away on May 28. John worked one summer at Glacier National Park and another summer at Denali National Park and Preserve. Source: [Legacy/The Pantagraph](#)
- Leonard “Len” Wiskerchen, 90, passed away on June 12. Len spent a summer working in Yellowstone National Park after he graduated from high school. Source: [Bakken Young Funeral and Cremation Services](#)

In the News

- On July 28, a new book, *Borderlands: My Fight for an Inclusive America*, by former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, will be released. The book chronicles his life, from his upbringing to his time at the federal government, as well as his thoughts on how to bring unity to the United States. Source: [The Denver Post](#)

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](#) 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](#)
- *Amache National Historic Site* - Public comment is [open through July 15](#) on a General Management Plan for the park. Source: [National Park Service Planning, Environment and Public Comment](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - U.S. Customs and Border Protection has opened [public comment through July 13](#) on a plan to construct a vehicle border barrier system and roads in Brewster County, Texas, including a 17-mile non-contiguous system in four locations in the park, as well as 205 miles of roads. Source: [The Guardian](#)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - Public comment is [open through July 17](#) on a proposal that would increase the number of vehicles per day by roughly 60% on miles 15-90 of the Denali Park Road. Source: [Anchorage Daily News](#)
- *Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park* - Public comment is [open through July 1](#) on a comprehensive site management plan for the Kahuku Unit. There is [a storymap](#) for the project. Source: [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#)
- *Yosemite National Park* - [Public comment is open through July 13](#) on a proposal to improve the John Muir Trailhead and the Mist Trail corridor. Source: [Yosemite 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 this period.

Senate Actions

June 10 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered favorably reported the following business items:

- S. 1288, to amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to designate as a component of the National Heritage Area System the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area in the state of New York;
- S. 3743, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a feasibility study on a selective water withdrawal system at Glen Canyon Dam, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;
- S. 3878, to establish the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Jefferson College in Natchez, Mississippi, as affiliated areas of the National Park System

June 11 - The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources was discharged from further consideration of S. 1377, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act to ensure the maintenance of a herd of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and the bill was then passed by the Senate. This bill directs the Department of the Interior to maintain a genetically diverse herd of horses, with a population of no fewer than 150 individuals, in the South Unit of the park. The Interior Department must develop a management plan to protect the horses while ensuring that the natural resources within the park are not adversely impacted.

June 17 - The Senate reported S. 1547, to amend title 54, United States Code, to reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. No written report was filed with the bill. A summary of the bill is in progress.

House of Representatives Actions

June 5 - The House filed H.R. 9171, making appropriations for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and related agencies for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2027, and for other purposes. It is now is ready to be debated and voted on by the House of Representatives.

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.

- Representatives Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Ryan Zinke (R-MT), and Jared Huffman (D-CA) introduced the Great American Outdoors Act 250, which would provide an additional \$6.6 billion over five years to address the maintenance backlogs across public lands. It would also codify and expand recent changes to the NPS' non-resident fee policy. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#), [GearJunkie](#)

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

Agriculture) News

- *Grand Staircase protections upheld* - On June 12, an effort by Congressional representatives from Utah to disapprove the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument management plan via the Congressional Review Act passed its 60-day session limit. The resolution now requires 60 Senate votes to pass. Source: [Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance](#)
- *Gray wolf release delayed by grazing advocate* - Records recently obtained by *Public Domain* revealed that Interior Department associate deputy secretary Karen Budd-Falen ordered U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff to halt the release of endangered Mexican gray wolves in June 2025, shortly after attending meetings with the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association. Some of the attendees at the meeting were former clients of Budd-Falen. The release was pushed to August 2025, outside of the agency's favored June-July window to maximize survival of the wolves and their pups. Source: [Public Domain](#)
- *Court sides with endangered species* - On June 9, a federal court judge sided with a coalition of four conservation groups in their lawsuit against the Bitterroot National Forest for failing to adequately consider the impact of road densities on endangered grizzly bears and bull trout in its planning efforts. Source: [Missoula Current](#)
- *Chainsaws permitted in Wilderness* - *High Country News* published [an article](#) about current initiatives to allow chainsaws in federal wilderness areas on U.S. Forest Service lands in order to open trails, roads, and airstrips. The Wilderness Act bans motorized and mechanized uses in designated wilderness "except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration," which is a grey area for agencies to work within. Source: *High Country News*
- *\$733 million in PILT* - On June 23, the Department of the Interior announced \$733 million in Payments in Lieu of Taxes program funding for 1,900 state and local governments. The funds help defray costs associated with maintaining community services in jurisdictions with tax-exempt federal lands. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Oil and gas development changes* - On June 22, the Bureau of Land Management announced proposed revisions to oil and gas development. Proposed changes to the oil and gas leasing rule would shorten public participation from 90 days to 10 days, change filing fees, and lessen bond amounts, among others. Proposed changes to the waste prevention rule would eliminate requirements for waste minimization plans and self-certification statements and established firm definitions for avoidable and unavoidable losses, authorized venting and flaring, emergencies, and measurement standards. Public comment on these changes will open to the public soon. Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Another wind lease settlement* - On June 17, the Department of the Interior announced another settlement agreement with an offshore wind lease holder, Invenergy. The company

will terminate its four leases, located in New York, California, and Maine in exchange for their value, \$765 million, redirected “towards other domestic energy sources with the demonstrated capability to deliver reliable, affordable power.” [Editor note: See [4/1/26 Coalition Report](#) for previous lease settlement with TotalEnergies.] Source: [Department of the Interior](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Shenandoah National Park

Norovirus

An outbreak of norovirus recently took place in the park, including a positive detection at Blackrock Hut. The park and the Virginia Department of Public Health remind visitors to wash their hands, treat all water, and dispose of waste properly. Source: [WJLA](#)

Baltimore-Washington Parkway

Road rage shooting

On May 24, an individual was traveling northbound on the parkway near Landover Road in Cheverly, Maryland, when “a road rage incident resulted in the victim’s vehicle being struck by gunfire.” On May 28, the U.S. Park Police arrested a suspect with first-degree assault in relation to the incident. They also recovered a firearm believed to have been used in the shooting. The U.S. Park Police are looking for any information the public may have about the incident. Source: [U.S. Park Police](#)

Capitol Reef National Park

Missing person

A 77-year-old went missing, last seen at the Days Inn in Torrey, Utah, adjacent to the park. The individual may have gone hiking in the Chimney Rock area between June 6 and June 8. A search is ongoing, including personnel from the NPS, Bureau of Land Management, Wayne County (UT), and Sevier County (UT). The park is looking for any information the public might have. As of June 22, the individual had still not been found. Source: [Capitol Reef National Park](#)

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Great Falls Park

Drowning

On June 14, a 20-year-old was swimming in the Potomac River near the Billy Goat Trail just south of Sandy Landing when they found themselves in distress while trying to swim from the Maryland to Virginia side. They called to their friends for help, went under the water, and never resurfaced. Personnel from Fairfax County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department and Montgomery County Fire and Rescue (MD) responded to the scene, but were unable to locate them. Personnel from other rescue teams and the U.S. Park Police helped over the following two days, and the individual

was found deceased on June 16. Source: [Inside NOVA](#), [NBC Washington](#), [USA Today](#)

Fort Raleigh National Historic Site

Theft

On June 6, an individual stole personal items from a table in front of the park's visitor center while a high school graduation ceremony was taking place nearby. The suspect was caught on camera taking the items, and the NPS released a photo to the public for help identifying them. As of June 18, the park stated that they "have enough tips to move forward with this investigation." No further details were released. Source: [Fort Raleigh National Historic Site](#)

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Cliff rescue

On June 13, an individual became stranded on a cliff at Dead Man's Point in the Land's End area. Dense fog prevented a helicopter extraction. The individual descended the cliff face in a "controlled slide," landing on the shoreline and sustaining "minor injuries." San Francisco (CA) Fire Department rescue swimmers stationed in the water assisted the victim through heavy surf to a rescue boat, and the individual was transported to the hospital. One rescue swimmer also sustained minor, non-life-threatening injuries during the operation and was taken to the hospital. They are expected to make a full recovery. Source: [ABC7](#)

Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Sneaker wave

The week of June 14, a sneaker wave hit Baker Beach, carrying a seven-year-old into the ocean. Their parent jumped in to attempt a rescue, and was also taken under by waves. Bystanders were able to help rescue both of them and bring them out of the water. Personnel from San Francisco Fire Department responded to the scene and provided medical care. Both were taken to a local hospital and survived the incident. Source: [ABC7](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Heat fatalities

On June 12, a 72-year-old was hiking on the South Kaibab Trail when they passed away from heat-related illness. On Jun 16, a 67-year-old and a 68-year-old were hiking on the North Kaibab Trail when they passed away from heat-related illness. In both incidents, aerial support and rapid response was initiated, but the individuals could not be resuscitated. Source: [Grand Canyon National Park](#)

Haleakalā National Park

Hikers rescued

On June 22, two hikers experienced "altitude-related difficulties" while hiking on the rim of Haleakalā Crater. They requested emergency assistance. A crew from Maui Rescue 10

responded via helicopter and transported the pair to Kula Park, where personnel from Kula Fire Station evaluated them. NPS personnel also supported the emergency response. Source:

[MauiNow](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Algal blooms

On June 11, the park announced the presence of cyanobacteria algal blooms at Nelson's Landing and Cottonwood Cove, and warned the public to limit body contact with the water.

Source: [KVVU](#)

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Drowning

On June 6, three adults jumped into the water off a rented pontoon boat. When one of the individuals began struggling in the water, another individual on the boat jumped in and brought a "Type IV throwable floatation device." The struggling individual was able to use the flotation device to return to the boat. While other passengers helped the swimmers from the water, strong winds caused the boat to drift farther away from the rescuer. The individual, at first, seemed to not be in distress, floating on their back. However, they were later observed submerging, surfacing once more, then disappearing beneath the water. Nevada Department of Wildlife game warden responded to the area, but were unable to find them. NPS personnel continued the search through the weekend, but the search was unsuccessful. The water is estimated to be between 125-175 feet deep at the location (undisclosed). Source: [KVVU](#)

Lincoln Home National Historic Site

Wind damage

On June 11, a historic tree, believed to be the last still standing from President Abraham Lincoln's time at the site, was damaged by wind in a storm. The NPS removed the tree, which had split in half. Source: [The State Journal-Register](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Vandalism

Around June 10, the numbers "86 47" were marked in the grass on the National Mall. The numbers show as brown grass, and it is unclear what substance was used to kill it. "86 47" is a reference to "86" (get rid of) the 47th President (Donald Trump). The U.S. Park Police is investigating the vandalism, including taking samples of the grass for testing. Source: [ABC News](#)

On June 20, President Donald Trump claimed that individuals "put a 250 foot long gash" into the reflecting pool at the Lincoln Memorial with "some form of knife or blade" and "poured corrosive and destructive chemicals into the pool." On June 22, the Trump administration stated they had arrested five individuals and cited five more for vandalism at the pool. One of the arrested individuals stated that after hearing about the peeling coating, they went to touch it, and were

arrested. On June 22, President Trump called it a “350-foot slit” that was cut with a “box-cutter or a knife of some kind.” He also suggested that fertilizer had been added to the pool, increasing the algae. Charges for the arrests have not yet been announced. Source: [NBC News](#), [ABC News](#), [CBS News](#)

New River Gorge National Park and Preserve

Employee theft

Between October 2025 and February 2026, a 38-year-old employed by the NPS at New River Gorge National Park and Preserve stole about \$150 from a donation box at the Canyon Rim Visitor Center. The individual covered surveillance cameras to avoid detection. On June 10, the individual pleaded guilty to theft of government property. They will be sentenced on August 19. Source: [U.S. Attorney's Office: Southern District of West Virginia](#)

Obed Wild and Scenic River

Train derailment

On June 11, a Norfolk Southern train carrying ethanol derailed near Lansing, Tennessee. Out of an abundance of caution, the NPS asked visitors to stay out of the Obed River in the areas of Rock Creek Campground and Nemo Day Use Area due to the possibility of ethanol in the water. Source: [WVLT](#)

Olympic National Park

Human remains identified

On June 10, the park announced that new DNA sampling has facilitated the identification of human remains found inside a sleeping bag in a tent in the Sol Duc River drainage in July 2000. At the time, investigators were able to identify the individual as being between 30- to 50-years-old, and noted they had been deceased from six months to four years. In 2024, a forensic anthropologist with the King County (WA) Medical Examiner's Office submitted a DNA sample to a lab. In 2025, they identified possible family connections. The National Park Service's Investigative Services Branch then contacted relatives in several states. The deceased individual was originally from Hawai'i, and had been in Washington before they went missing. The family had not heard from them since 1998. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)

Saguaro National Park

Aircraft crash

On June 13, a powered paraglider crashed in the Rincon Mountains just west of Juniper Basin Campground. The incident also ignited a wildfire (see “Wildfires” below). The pilot *did not* survive the crash. The individual's body was recovered from the scene on June 16. Source: [KOLD](#)

Virgin Islands National Park

Drowning

On June 4, visitors observed a “floating body” Salt Pond Beach near Red Head Trail. Personnel from the NPS, St. John (VI) Rescue, and the Virgin Islands Police Department responded and found a deceased 43-year-old that likely drowned and had evidence of trauma from a marine animal (likely post-mortem). Source: [Virgin Islands National Park](#), [The Virgin Islands Daily News](#)

Wind Cave National Park

Bats with rabies

On May 5, a deceased bat was found near the Elevator Building. On May 28, another bat was found near the Visitor Center entrance, alive, but unable to fly. A third bat was found deceased at the campground. Park personnel collected the animals for testing, which came back positive for rabies. No visitors were known to have come in contact with the bats. The park is working with the South Dakota Department of Health and the NPS Office of Health and Safety and Wildlife Health Branch to monitor the situation. Source: [Wind Cave National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Kayaker drowns

On June 8, visitors boating on the northwest shore of Yellowstone Lake near Rock Point, close to Bridge Bay, discovered a deceased 41-year-old floating in the water. NPS personnel responded to the scene and recovered the individual’s body, as well as a capsized kayak and personal belongings. The incident is under investigation. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Bee truck overturns

On June 16, a semi-truck carrying dozens of beehives crashed and overturned on Highway 191 within the park. Personnel from the NPS, Gallatin County (MT) Sheriff’s Office, Hebgen Basin Fire/EMS, the Montana Department of Transportation, and the Montana Department of Agriculture responded to the scene. No injuries were reported in the accident or bee recovery. It was estimated that 50-60% of the hives were lost in the accident, and questions remain about how to salvage the colonies in a way that protects the local ecosystem. Source: [Cowboy State Daily](#)

Yosemite National Park

Hiker fatality

On June 20, a 22-year-old slid into the Merced River, just above Nevada Fall, a 594-foot waterfall. A 20-year-old bystander, a former lifeguard, saw the individual getting swept up in the current. They jumped into the water to attempt an intervention, but also started to be swept away. Another bystander was able to extend a hiking pole help the would-be rescuer out of the water. The original party was swept over the falls. A helicopter and personnel on foot were dispatched to the scene. On June 21, a body bag in a litter was observed being taken down the Mist Trail. No further details have yet been released. Source: [SFGate](#)

Yosemite National Park

Ranger assault sentencing

For several weeks in July 2022, an individual had been repeatedly making nonemergency calls to the park's 911-system from a location near the Pohono Trail above Tunnel View. The caller had been camping there illegally without a permit. On one of the calls, they stated they wanted to "shoot a cop and go to prison." The week of July 15, NPS staff found the individual's campsite, which consisted of "tarps erected into some sort of temporary structure." On July 22, two law enforcement rangers hiked out to find the individual and discuss their misuse of the 911-system. Upon seeing the officers, the individual stated, "if I had a gun, I would shoot you right now." One of the officers walked behind the suspect and grabbed their arm, resulting in the suspect punching the officer in the mouth. The suspect was placed into handcuffs, taken to Tunnel View, and then into custody. The officer required stitches to their lip. On March 23, 2026, the individual pleaded guilty to assault on a federal officer with bodily injury, camping without a permit, and intentionally interfering with a government employee engaged in official duties. On June 8, the individual was sentenced to time served and three years of probation, and they were then released from custody. Source: [SFGate](#)

Yosemite National Park

BASE jumping

On June 19, three individuals base jumped off El Capitan and were recorded on camera by a bystander. The bystander claimed "rangers chased the group but were unable to locate them after they landed." BASE jumping is illegal in the park. Source: [New York Post](#)

Zion National Park

Safety chain damage

On June 10, the park closed the popular Angels Landing trail for "emergency repairs" to a safety chain post in the last half-mile. Repairs were completed the morning of June 12. It is unclear how the post became damaged. Source: [SFGate](#)

Wildfires

- *Everglades National Park* - On June 17, lightning started the Coptic Fire in the northeastern area of the park, south of Highway 41 and west of the L-31N Canal. As of June 19, the Coptic Fire was 4,793 acres and 40% contained. Source: [Everglades National Park](#)
- *Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument* - On June 15, lightning caused a fire south of Mount Dellenbaugh. As of June 22, the Dellenbaugh Fire was 796 acres and 95% contained. Source: [ABC4](#), *Watch Duty* (app)
- *Saguaro National Park* - On June 13, a powered paraglider crashed in the Rincon Mountains just west of Juniper Basin Campground, causing a wildfire (see Incidents above). As of June 16, the Box Fire was 100% contained at 145 acres. Temporary trail and

backcountry campground closures were in place, and have now been lifted. The cause of the fire is under investigation. Source: [Saguaro National Park](#), *WatchDuty* (app), [KOLD](#)

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Channel Islands National Park* - New details have emerged about the 67-year-old boater whose vessel sparked a fire on Santa Rosa Island. Just one week before the incident, on May 6, during a small craft weather advisory warning, the individual stranded their boat on the shoreline of Santa Cruz Island near Prisoners Harbor. The Coast Guard responded and called a towing company to bring the boat back to Oxnard, California. Their report stated that the boat experienced engine failure and lacked proper safety equipment. Despite this, the boat set sail one week later, on May 14, and wrecked on Santa Rosa Island, igniting a fire that burned over 18,000 acres. Source: [Santa Barbara Independent](#), [Channel Islands National Park](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - Titus Canyon Road reopened for the first time since flash floods in August 2022. The road will be open until October 1, then be closed through at least April 30 for additional repairs and flood-resilience improvements. Source: *Death Valley Natural History Association* (via newsletter)
- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - On June 11, the park announced the successful retrieval of the bodies of the three deceased climbers who perished in a fall near Denali Pass on May 28, and the climber who experienced a medical emergency on the West Buttress route on May 31 (see 6/10/26 *Coalition Report*). Source: [Denali National Park and Preserve](#)

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If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to: report@protectnps.org.

The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service.

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