



The Coalition Report

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Take Action!

The Bureau of Land Management is proposing to reopen lands around Chaco Culture National Historical Park for drilling, including right on the boundary of the park. Please take a moment to sign this letter in support of continued protections for Chaco Culture National Historical Park and the surrounding landscape.

Sign the Letter

Please join the National Parks Conservation Association for a webinar, “Defending Clean Air in National Parks” The Clean Air Act’s Regional Haze Rule is intended to improve air quality and scenic views specifically in national parks and wilderness areas, but to date, none have achieved the Clean Air Act goal of natural visibility. There is much work to do.

Register

Coalition Actions

The Coalition joined 14 other organizations in [a letter](#) to the Prince William (VA) County Board of Supervisors in opposition to a new data center proposal adjacent to Prince William Forest Park, and within the park’s legislative boundary (land that could one day be part of the park).

We joined the National Parks Conservation Association in submitting [comments](#) to the Office of Personnel Management opposing a proposed rule that would allow performance ratings to be considered during a Reduction in Force.

The Coalition joined several dozen organizations in [a letter](#) to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations in strong opposition to provisions within the Fiscal Year 2027 budget for the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of the Interior that prioritize AI environmental reviews and infrastructure, and data center construction.

We joined a group of organizations, Tribes, businesses, and community members in [a letter](#) to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Mining, Land, and Water, opposing Contango Silver and Gold's flawed reclamation plan for a proposed mine on an inholding in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

The Coalition joined three other organizations in [comments](#) on the Bureau of Land Management Montana-Dakota Office's Q3 2026 Oil and Gas Lease Sale, opposing the leasing of parcels near Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the Maah Daah Hey Trail. We also joined several other organizations and the Western Environmental Law Center in submitting [comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management's Montana-Dakota Office's Q4 2026 Oil and Gas Lease Sale, urging it to complete a full environmental review before moving forward.

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

- [Trump is lifting restrictions on hunting in national parks, refuges, and wilderness areas](#), *The Washington Post*
- [The Year of Doing Less with Less: At the National Park Service, landscape architects are facing brutal cuts and what they consider affronts to the agency's mission](#), *Landscape Architecture Magazine*
- [New rule could allow Park Service job cuts based on performance](#), *National Parks Traveler*
- [Ensuring Colorado's furbearer policies are science-based](#), *The Daily Sentinel*, op-ed by Executive Council member Elaine Leslie

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.

- *Tight controls on NPS website editing* - *E&E News* published an [article](#) about a Department of the Interior policy to review any changes to NPS websites since February. Previously, about 1,000 employees had editing rights. The DOI has stated that this move is "to ensure clarity, consistency, and accountability in how information is shared with the public...The goal is effective communication, not control." Source: *E&E News*
- *DOI overturns hunting rules* - On April 21, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum issued a memo ordering changes to hunting regulations and restrictions on federal lands, including those in place to protect habitats or people at several NPS units. This includes the removal of a rule at Curecanti National Recreation Area prohibiting firing weapons toward or across

trails, a ban on cleaning game animals at restrooms in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, a requirement for hunting dogs to have safety tags at Ozark National Scenic Riverways, and protections for reptile species at Jean Lafitte National Historical Park.

Source: [The New York Times](#)

- *New national wildland fire agency* - Oregon Public Broadcasting published [an article](#) about the new U.S. Wildland Fire Service, its challenges and opportunities, including an interview with its first chief, Brian Fennessy. *The Breakthrough Institute* also published [an article](#) about the agency, arguing that the reorganization may not be as effective as the previous federal structure for wildland firefighting. Source: Oregon Public Broadcasting, *The Breakthrough Institute*
- *"All-time low" morale at NPS* - The National Parks Conservation Association published an article about the morale crisis at the NPS right now, outlining the current challenges for employees, including staffing shortages, hiring barriers, interference with annual reviews, seasonal position changes, incentivized retirements, and staffing reassignments. Source: [National Parks Conservation Association](#)
- *Save Our Signs project* - *Panorama* published [an article](#) about censorship at parks and the Smithsonian, including the efforts by the Data Rescue Project, Safeguarding Research and Culture, and the University of Minnesota to safeguard existing interpretive materials through the Save Our Signs project. Source: *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art*
- *Gateway communities affected by international fees* - SFGate published [an article](#) about concern among gateway communities about the decline in tourism to the national parks that now have heavily increased fees for international visitors. Source: SFGate
- *"8 Victories That Give Hope in the Fight to Protect Public Lands"* - *Outside* published [an article](#) with this title, outlining recent expansions to public lands, including 67 acres adjacent to Saguaro National Park that were purchased by Pima County (AZ) to serve as a public access corridor, and a three-acre parcel in Maryland purchased to protect a quarter-mile stretch of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Source: *Outside*
- *Backlash to censorship* - CNN published [an article](#) about some of the backlash to censorship actions at NPS sites. [Editor note: The article references the lawsuit that the Coalition is involved in, though the Coalition is not mentioned.] Source: CNN
- *Trajectory of NPS over time* - *Islands* published [an article](#) documenting legislation and other managerial changes over time that have shaped the National Park Service. Source: *Islands*

Around the Parks

Reports are in alphabetical order by park/program name.

- *Alaska Region, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve* - On May 6, the Department of the Interior announced the transfer of 1.4 million acres of Bureau of Land Management lands along the Dalton Utility Corridor, in accordance with the Alaska Statehood Act. The land includes portions of the Trans-Alaska pipeline system, the Dalton Highway, and proposed routes for the Ambler Road (which would cross Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and have ramifications for the greater ecosystem). Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Assateague Island National Seashore* - On April 2, the park changes its rules, removing weight and dimension restrictions to travel in the over-sand vehicle area. Source: [OC Today-Dispatch](#)
- *Big Bend National Park* - Customs and Border Protection officials now say they are no longer planning to construct a border wall within the park. They instead plan to pave roads along the border, and make use of drones and other digital surveillance equipment. This comes after weeks of flip-flopping on the issue and backlash from local communities and politicians on both sides of the aisle. Source: [The Texas Tribune](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - The NPS announced that the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse will remain closed through 2026 due to ongoing renovations, which began in early 2024. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - *The Washington Post* published [an article](#) about the challenges of protecting houses in Buxton, North Carolina, along Cape Hatteras due to rising sea levels. 19 homes have collapsed since September, and the shoreline has been retreating at an average rate of five feet per year since 1985. Superintendent Dave Hallac is quoted in the article. Source: *The Washington Post*
- *Cape Hatteras National Seashore* - On May 18, Dare County (NC) will begin a beach nourishment project, which will require the closure of the parking lot at off-road vehicle ramp 38, south of Avon, NC. The project is expected to continue through July 15. Source: [Cape Hatteras National Seashore](#)
- *Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park* - On May 8, a ribbon-cutting was held at Brotherton Cabin to celebrate a restoration project preserving the park's historic roads and stoneworks. The \$8.1 million project was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act. Source: [Chattanooga Times Free Press](#)
- *Chilkoot National Historic Trail, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park* - Despite trail repairs that have reopened the U.S. section of the Chilkoot Trail for the first time since 2020 (see 4/1/26 *Coalition Report*), hikers cannot hike the full length of the trail due to its current lack of status as an official port of entry. Source: [Alaska Public Media](#)
- *Death Valley National Park* - *National Public Radio's* "Short Wave" published [a segment](#) about the Devils Hole pupfish, including the possible ramifications of introducing captively-

raised pupfish in 2025 to bolster the population. Source: *National Public Radio*

- *Denali National Park and Preserve* - On May 5, the park announced the opening of the Puppy Cam, which features this year's crop of sled dog puppies, Sequoia, Mammoth, Rainier, Teton, Mesa, and Acadia. Source: [*Denali National Park and Preserve*](#)
- *Gettysburg National Military Park* - On May 9, the park began a 160-acre grassland restoration project around the Pennsylvania Monument and Eternal Light Peace Memorial. The effort will restore historic battlefield views while improving habitat and reducing erosion. Work will occur in stages over the next several years, with temporary trail closures at times. Source: [*Gettysburg National Military Park*](#)
- *Glacier National Park* - The park published an article about the challenges of managing traffic on the Going-to-the-Sun Road, efforts to mitigate it and through ticketed entry, and the scientific monitoring in place to measure its impacts. Source: [*National Park Service Office of Communications*](#)
- *Golden Gate National Recreation Area* - On May 4, the park announced that new DNA evidence has revealed that the coyote that swam to Alcatraz Island in early 2026 likely swam from Angel Island State Park rather than mainland California. After being observed and photographed on Alcatraz on January 24, park staff began monitoring the island and had planned to capture the coyote to protect native bird colonies. However, the coyote was never seen again in-person or on recording devices, and its current whereabouts are unknown. Source: [*Golden Gate National Recreation Area*](#)
- *Great Smoky Mountains National Park* - On April 30, the park transitioned its backcountry permit reservation system to *Recreation.gov*, which now include a non-refundable permit fee and have removed maximum permit fee caps. Source: [*Great Smoky Mountains National Park*](#)
- *Harpers Ferry National Historical Park* - The NPS has issued a Request for Expression of Interest for use of Cook Hall, a historic structure that was originally a dormitory for Storer College. Source: [*National Park Service Office of Communications*](#)
- *Independence National Historical Park* - On July 1, the NPS and the Independence Historical Trust will hold a ribbon cutting for the renovation of the historic First Bank of the United States. The project included major infrastructure, utility, and accessibility upgrades, as well as exhibits developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of State and Drexel University. The \$43 million project took several years, and was funded by the Great American Outdoors Act and the Independence Historical Trust. Source: [*Independence National Historical Park*](#)
- *National Capital Parks - East, National Mall and Memorial Parks, Rock Creek Park* - On May 8, the NPS announced that it will partner with the National Links Trust, Fazio Design, First Tee of Greater Washington, DC, Western Golf Association, and the Evans Scholars

Foundation to begin renovations of the East Potomac, Langston and Rock Creek Golf Courses to make them “into the country’s premier public golf courses, while keeping them affordable and accessible for all.” National Links Trust will continue operating all three courses. This reverses efforts by the Trump administration to terminate the National Links Trust’s 50-year lease. The litigation by other parties regarding the redesign of East Potomac remains in place (see “Legal Actions” below). Source: [The Athletic \(The New York Times\)](#)

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - President Donald Trump has stated that a forthcoming settlement between the federal government and social media platform TikTok, estimated at \$400 million, will be directed to beautification efforts in Washington, DC, such as the proposed arch near Arlington Cemetery. Source: [ABC News](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - *The New York Times* published an article highlighting the history and challenges of managing the reflecting pool at the Lincoln Memorial. The recent project by the Trump administration to seal its floor with an “American flag blue” coating was done through a \$13.1 million contract, given without bid through an emergency exemption to a contact who purportedly did previous work at one of President Donald Trump’s golf clubs. President Trump had originally stated the project would cost \$1.8 million. (See “Legal Actions” below for a lawsuit on the project.) Source: *The New York Times* ([5/8](#), [5/11](#))
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - WAMU published [an article](#) titled, “The many ways Trump wants to change DC, from buildings to statues to parks.” Several of the changes listed are NPS properties, including the Lincoln Memorial, Lafayette Square, The White House, and DC golf courses (also see notes above). Source: WAMU
- *Olympic National Park* - On April 29, the NPS announced a prospectus for a 10-year contract providing lodging, food and beverage, retail, group camping, firewood, and other related services at Kalaloch Lodge. Proposals are due August 3, and the new contract would begin on October 1, 2027. Source: [Olympic National Park](#)
- *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks* - FireRescue1 published [an article](#) about efforts by a broad coalition of organizations to reduce the chances of losing giant sequoia groves to wildfires after fires in 2020 and 2021 killed 20% of the world’s sequoias. Source: *FireRescue1*
- *Shenandoah National Park* - On April 30, King Charles III, king of the United Kingdom, visited the park, spending time learning about educational programs, including becoming a Junior Ranger, and receiving a park passport. He unveiled two commemorative stones to honor a new partnership between Shenandoah and the Cairngorms in the Scottish Highlands. He also met Chief Shields of the Monacan Indian Nation, who said they would “renew and reaffirm our Nation-to-Nation relationship that was first established in the 1680 Treaty of Middle Plantation between our Monacan ancestors and King Charles II.” Source: [People](#)

- *Virgin Islands National Park* - On May 7, the park announced a request for proposals for the redevelopment of Caneel Bay. The resort has been closed since Hurricanes Irma and Maria damaged the structures in 2017, and it changed from private ownership to the NPS in April 2024 (affirmed by a court in May 2025). Proposals are due July 8. Source: [Virgin Islands National Park](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The *Cowboy State Daily* published [an article](#) about the 1988 Yellowstone fires, which burned 793,880 acres, noting that current drought conditions are similar to that year. Source: *Cowboy State Daily*
- *Yosemite National Park* - *SFGate* published [an article](#) about rising visitation in the park since the reservation system was rescinded. Long lines, parking challenges, and crowds have been observed in the park. Source: *SFGate*

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.

- *Big Cypress National Preserve* - On April 21, a federal court of appeals ruled that Florida's agreement with the Department of Homeland Security to build, then hand over operations of the immigration detention camp known as "Alligator Alcatraz", does not trigger National Environmental Policy Act requirements because the construction remained in state hands. This reverses a lower court ruling that ruled that because DHS had asked the state to construct it and promised financial reimbursement, NEPA should apply. The detention center sits within the boundaries of Big Cypress. Other NEPA lawsuits are ongoing. Source: [Bloomberg Law](#)
- *Grand Canyon National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area* - On April 29, the Center for Biological Diversity gave a 60-day notice of intent to sue the Department of the Interior and five other federal agencies over the Grazing Action Plan, which would increase and expand public lands livestock grazing, potentially jeopardizing many Endangered Species Act-listed species. Among the lands the Bureau of Land Management has identified as "federal grazing lands potentially available" are lands inside Grand Canyon and Lake Mead. Source: [Center for Biological Diversity](#)
- *National Mall and Memorial Parks, The White House and President's Park* - On May 3, the DC Preservation League and two residents filed a petition asking a federal judge to block the Trump administration from continuing to dump debris from the White House ballroom project on the East Potomac Park Golf Course, arguing that the Trump administration is illegally altering the course. President Donald Trump has stated that his administration will renovate the course to be "a beautiful, world-class, U.S. Open-caliber course." On May 4, the court ruled that the earth movement will not be stopped. During the proceedings, National Mall and Memorial Parks superintendent Kevin Griess said that current plans only

include the removal of dead and dangerous trees, and regular maintenance. The three plaintiffs have an ongoing lawsuit about the golf course that will proceed accordingly.

Source: [The Hill](#), [WTOP](#)

- *National Mall and Memorial Parks* - The Cultural Landscape Foundation filed a lawsuit against the TNPS and Department of the Interior for their efforts to resurface the Reflecting Pool at the Lincoln Memorial “American flag blue.” The lawsuit argues that the government is not following law and proper procedures, including the National Historic Preservation Act, Congressional review, and fair bidding. Source: [CBS News](#)
- *National Park Service* - On April 29, 15 House Democrats filed a proposed amicus brief seeking to join the Center for Biological Diversity in its lawsuit against the NPS and Department of the Interior for putting President Donald Trump’s image on the “America the Beautiful” annual park passes. They argue that it poses a direct threat to Congressional power. Source: [E&E News](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - On April 27, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility filed a whistleblower disclosure, stating that the park has exposed residents in park housing to harmful levels of lead, despite having documented and made plans to abate the conditions five years ago (see next entry for separate ongoing lawsuit about lead paint in Yellowstone housing). Source: [National Parks Traveler](#)
- *Yellowstone National Park* - The Department of Justice filed a motion to dismiss an ongoing lawsuit from a Yellowstone employee whose two young children experienced detrimental effects from lead poisoning (see [6/11/25 Coalition Report](#)). The motion argues that the government is not liable for because the employee’s family was placed in housing at the discretion of the employee. Source: [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)

Personnel Changes

- *Yosemite National Park* - On April 23, the park held an “assumption of responsibility ceremony” for Ray McPadden as superintendent. Ray began serving as superintendent in Spring 2025. Source: [Yosemite National Park](#)

Park People

Deceased

- John Randolph Davis, Jr., 89, passed away on January 17. John worked for the NPS for several decades, including time at Shenandoah National Park, the Albright Training Center at Grand Canyon National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Crater Lake National Park, Lava Beds National Monument, Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, and Petersburg National Battlefield.

Source: [Legacy/Richmond Times-Dispatch](#)

- Kenneth Frank Goskey, 72, passed away on April 9. Kenneth worked for a time in Yellowstone National Park. Source: [The News-Herald](#)
- Renold “Ren” Paul Landon, 93, passed away on December 28, 2025. Ren worked for the NPS for many years, including at Sequoia National Park. Source: [Spurgeon Funeral Home](#)
- Barbara “Barb” Osbourn, 92, passed away on April 20. In college, she “spent summers working and living in Yellowstone National Park.” Source: [Steamboat Pilot and Today](#)
- Darlene Peterson, 86, passed away on April 15. Darlene worked at Big Bend National Park for 15 years, first as “a telephone operator,” later retiring in 1994 as the “executive administrator of the park.” Source: [The Alpine Avalanche](#)

In the News

- The University of Maine published [a profile](#) of Eddie Nachamie, a graduating senior, who will work in fire effects and fuel monitoring in Zion National Park later this year. Source: *The University of Maine*
- *Jefferson Public Radio* published a lecture called “Wildfire: How to Mitigate and Stay Ensured, Managing Your Land and Protecting Your Property in a Wildfire Environment,” given by Miranda Stuart. Miranda spent most of her career working in wildland fire, including two years as the fire effects monitor at Big Thicket National Preserve. She currently works as a wildfire insurance company consultant, specializing in risk assessment and modeling. Source: [Jefferson Public Radio](#)

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.

- *Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail* - Public comment is [open through May 15](#) on a management plan for Kauleoʻī, a 95-acre shoreline parcel on the South Kona coast. Source: [Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail](#)
- *Los Angeles Coastal Area Special Resource Study* - Public comment is [has been extended through May 23](#) on a Special Resource Study of the Los Angeles coast for possible inclusion in the National Park System. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#), [Los Angeles Daily News](#)
- *Mount Rainier National Park* - Public comment is [open through May 29](#) on a White River flood and erosion risk reduction project on State Route 410 by the Washington State Department of Transportation. Source: [Mount Rainier 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

April 27 - The Senate received notification of the withdrawal of the nomination of Scott Socha, of New York, to be Director of the National Park Service, which was sent to the Senate on February 11, 2026

April 29

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 2280, to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain parcels of federal land in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and the bill was then passed. S. 2280 will transfer administrative jurisdiction over approximately 25 acres of federal land in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park from the Secretary of the Interior to the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, to be administered as part of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Advanced Training Center in accordance with applicable law. The federal land transferred by the Secretary of the Interior is excluded from the boundary of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Administrative jurisdiction over 3 parcels of federal land totaling approximately 71.51 acres in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, is transferred from the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to the Secretary, to be administered by the Secretary as part of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and in accordance with applicable law.

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources concluded a hearing to examine the President's

proposed budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Doug Burgum, Secretary of the Interior.

May 1-9 - The Senate was on designated "district work period."

House of Representatives Actions

April 29 - The House filed a report providing for consideration of the bill S.1318, which would direct the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish a program to identify American-Jewish servicemembers buried in United States military cemeteries overseas under markers that incorrectly represent their religion and heritage, and for other purposes. The House then passed S. 1318, by a yea-and-nay vote of 235 yeas to 191 nays.

May 1-9 - The House was also on designated "district work period."

Other Relevant Department of the Interior News

- *Public Lands Rule rescinded* - On May 11, the Department of the Interior published a final notice of the rescission of the Public Lands Rule on Bureau of Land Management lands. The rule was meant to codify multiple use management, balancing recreation and ecosystem preservation alongside extractive industry. Source: [The Wilderness Society](#)
- *First Tribal energy agreement* - On May 11, the Department of the Interior announced the signing of the U.S. first-ever Tribal energy resource agreement, with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. “The agreement will allow the Tribe to enter into and manage energy-related leases, rights-of-way, and business agreements without obtaining approval from Interior for each lease, right-of-way, or agreement, eliminating repetitive approvals and reducing processing delays.” Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Two more wind leases bought out* - On April 27, the Department of the Interior announced two new agreements for Bluepoint Wind and Golden State Wind to “voluntarily end their offshore wind leases, with the respective affiliate companies agreeing to make financial investments in reliable conventional energy projects.” The press release called these leases “impractical to develop without relying on taxpayer subsidies” and said the deal moves investments to “proven conventional solutions.” Source: [Department of the Interior](#)
- *Revocation of bison grazing permits* - On May 8, the Bureau of Land Management posted a notice of final decision to modify permits held by American Prairie. They are no longer allowed to graze bison, only cattle. Montana Governor Greg Gianforte said, “We must ensure that public lands remain accessible and productive, rather than being locked away for the vision of special interests.” Local ranchers argued that the non-profit, backed by rich donors in New York in California, had bought out hundreds of thousands of acres to graze bison, locking them out of ranching. Source: [Billings Gazette](#), [The Times](#)

Incidents

Listed alphabetically by park/program.

Various NPS Units

Brain-eating amoeba

A new study published in *ACS ES&T Water* found *Naegleria fowleri*, sometimes known as brain-eating amoeba, in 63 of 185 water samples taken across five NPS units. It was present at Grand Teton National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and Yellowstone National Park, in hot/warm spring areas. Though the concentrations are within the limits of known infections that may lead to death, no fatalities have been reported at any of the locations tested. Source: [Gear Junkie](#)

Big Bend National Park

Heat rescue

On April 23, a 68-year-old hiker suffered heat stroke “in a remote area of the park”. She was “unconscious but responsive.” The individual was extricated by a Customs and Border Protection helicopter and taken to Big Bend Regional Medical Center. Source: [Chron, Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations \(Facebook\)](#)

Glacier National Park

Bear attack fatality

On May 4, a 33-year-old went missing, with last known plans to hike to the Mount Brown Fire Lookout. An extensive search ensued, and on May 6, crews found the individual deceased about 2.5 miles up the trail to the lookout, in a densely wooded area. The individual's injuries were consistent with a bear attack. The park closed all trails originating from the Sperry Trailhead, and is assessing the area for bear activity. Agencies involved in the search and recovery were the NPS, Flathead County (MT) Search and Rescue, North Valley Search and Rescue, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Minuteman Aviation, Civil Air Patrol, Montana Army National Guard, Flathead County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Wildland Fire Service, Montana Disaster and Emergency Services, U.S. Geological Survey, ALERT, Border Patrol, Malmstrom Air Force Base, and the U.S. Air Force Rescue. Source: [Flathead Beacon](#), [Glacier National Park](#)

Grand Canyon National Park

Missing person found deceased

On April 28, the park received a report of a missing 26-year-old, who was believed to be in possession of a black backpack and wearing “athletic clothing.” They were thought to have hiked the Rim Trail along the Hermit Road between Bright Angel Lodge and Mohave Point between 4pm and midnight on April 27. On April 28, a black backpack believed to be theirs was turned into staff at the Bright Angel Lodge, but the staff did not ask any follow-up questions. The NPS released a photo of the individual who turned in the backpack in hopes of interviewing them to get clues about where the missing person might be. On May 9, the individual was found deceased below the rim near Verkamp's Visitor Center. They were recovered via technical rope rescue techniques. The incident is under investigation by the NPS and the Coconino County (AZ) Medical Examiner's Office. Source: *Grand Canyon National Park* ([4/29](#), [5/1](#), [5/12](#))

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Vulture poaching

On April 6, NPS staff observed 33 deceased black vultures dumped on Foothills Parkway West. The bird is a federally protected species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, making it illegal to kill them without a permit. Furthermore, dumping anything in the park is also illegal. The NPS is looking for any information the public can provide. Source: [Great Smoky Mountains National Park](#)

Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area

Sunken boat

On May 6, a boat sunk near Marcus Island. Bystanders called in the emergency. Stevens County (WA) deputies, knowing how long a response could take, called a local resident to help. The local resident took a kayak and life jackets and paddles about a mile to the individuals. They were outfitted with the lifejackets and remained in the water until an NPS boat arrived 30 minutes later. They were recovered from the water and brought to the shore for medical care. Source: [KHQ](#)

Little River Canyon National Preserve

Fall

On April 26, a 14-year-old fell from the top of the main falls at the park. Emergency personnel responded to the area and used technical rope rescue techniques to extract the individual. A medical helicopter transported the individual to a nearby hospital for medical attention. Agencies involved in the incident include the NPS, Fischer Rescue Squad, DeKalb Ambulance Service, Fort Payne (AL) Fire Department, Adamsburg Fire Department, and AirEvac Lifeteam. Source: [WHNT](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks

Armed individual

On May 4, an armed individual was observed just south of the White House near the Washington Monument when a motorcade with Vice President JD Vance passed through. The Secret Service approached the individual, who began running away and firing shots at them. Secret Service agents fired back and hit the individual, who was arrested and taken to the hospital with multiple gunshot wounds. A 15-year-old bystander was also shot and treated for a non-life-threatening gunshot wound. Several streets in the area were shut down for several hours for the investigation. Source: [The New York Times](#)

National Mall and Memorial Parks, The White House and President's Park

Toxic debris

Debris from the White House ballroom project that has been dumped on the East Potomac Park Golf Course has tested positive for lead, chromium, and other toxic metals, according to data published by the NPS. The data, which was collected by a consultant, shows "relatively low levels of these contaminants," and the Interior Department has stated that "the soil was tested, multiple times by multiple parties, and this project passed all standards set by law." All samples meet Environmental Protection Agency standards, though some argue that "there is no safe level of exposure to lead." Source: [The New York Times](#)

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

River rescue

On May 3, a Carter County (MO) deputy responded to a report of a medical emergency near the Current River. When the deputy arrived, the individual entered the river. Additional personnel from the NPS, Missouri State Highway Patrol, West Carter Ambulance, and the Carter County Sheriff's Office responded, coping with high water and heavy fog conditions. The NPS staff found the

individual in the river experiencing a medical crisis. They removed the individual from the water, and they were transferred to a medical facility for further care. Source: [Dexter Statesman](#)

Padre Island National Seashore

Missing person found deceased

On May 1, an individual went missing after last being seen near Windward Drive on Padre Island. On May 6, the individual was found deceased on Padre Island. No further details have been given. The incident is under investigation by the Texas Rangers and Corpus Christi (TX) Police Department. Source: [KIII](#)

Yellowstone National Park

Bear attack

On May 4, two hikers, ages 15 and 28, on the Mystic Falls Trail were attacked by a mother bear with two or three cubs. Both sustained injuries. Emergency personnel responded to the scene and provided aid to the two hikers. They were extricated by helicopter. The area northwest of Old Faithful has been closed, and the incident is under investigation. Source: [Yellowstone National Park](#)

Wildfires

- *Everglades National Park* - On April 27, a wildfire was reported in the northeastern corner of the park. Several areas of the park were closed. As of May 2, the Highway 41 Fire was 9,149 acres and 77% contained. Closures were lifted at that time. It was expected to be 100% contained in short order. Source: *Everglades National Park* ([press release](#), [Facebook](#))

Follow-ups on Previously Reported Incidents

- *Glacier National Park* - On April 17, a federal appeals court ruled in favor of the homeowners that built a home on a private inholding next to McDonald Creek (see [3/22/23](#), [11/1/23](#), [11/29/23](#), [2/21/24](#), and [2/19/25](#), and [3/19/25 Coalition Reports](#)), allowing them to keep their home in place. The judge ruled that Montana's stream protection law does not apply within the boundaries of Glacier National Park and the Flathead Conservation District cannot enforce state laws there, with exclusive federal jurisdiction. Source: [SFGate](#)

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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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