

YOUR AMERICAN WEST

PARKS

White Sands National Park and Western National Parks Association Celebrate 80 Years of Partnership

Creating Connections—Capulin Volcano National Monument Team Welcomes 1,500 Park Protectors

Carlsbad Caverns National Park Celebrates 100 Years

EVENTS

John Muir National Historic Site Celebrates Earth Day

Annual American Indian Cultural Arts Festival

Honors Aztec Ruins Centennial

PRODUCTS

Holiday Gift Guide Inside!



Black Canyon of the Gunnison (courtesy of Anton Foltin, Shutterstock.com)

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Guadalupe Mountains National Park (courtesy of NPS/Laurence Parent)

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Details

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, serving more than 70 national parks in the western United States.

The Home Office and The National Parks Store are located at 12880 N Vistoso Village Drive, Tucson, AZ 85755. Learn more by contacting info@wnpa.org or visiting www.wnpa.org.



Letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer

As temperatures cool, days shorten, and landscapes transition to quieter sounds and softer colors, we reflect on the welcome challenges and opportunities for growth that the new year brings

to Western National Parks Association (WNPA) and our 71 partner parks. Looking back at the past year, we proudly celebrate the communities we serve, the lands we help to protect, and the commitment of the many people who come together in the spirit of conservation, education, and hope for the future. As fall turns to winter, we kindle our love for national parks and innovate new ways to advance our mission to ensure that national parks are increasingly valued by all.

This issue of *Your American West* highlights the recent achievements and highly anticipated upcoming events that make WNPA and our partner parks such an important part of the nation's story. As WNPA joins the National Park Service (NPS) in the prolonged celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026, we reflect on the significant role national parks play in upholding national ideals. With our organizational focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion, now more than ever WNPA is positioned to help bring more people to the parks and parks to the people—because everyone belongs when they're in a national park.

This past year, WNPA has had the opportunity to support many cultural and community events and interpretive programs at parks. As we tell these stories, we acknowledge the extraordinary effort, planning, and coordination that these unique events and programs require. It is only through the hard work of staff, volunteers, community members, artists, researchers, and storytellers that we are all able to provide the vital system of support that parks need. For upcoming events at WNPA in Oro Valley or at our partner parks, please visit wnpa.org/events/month.

This fall, I am thrilled to be strengthening philanthropy campaigns, outreach activities, and innovative strategies to bring our support for parks to another level. As we forge new partnerships and support the cultures and communities at our parks, we enrich the experience and improve accessibility so that all people can experience the benefits of visiting a national park. Parks are places of pure joy, responsible recreation, cultural and historical learning, and connection with family and friends. All parks—big and small—offer visitors something special, a place to experience something bigger that connects us to one another and to ourselves.

I am proud to share in this connection. When I visit a park, I am moved by the stories, the history, the culture, and the beauty. WNPA serves to protect and enhance that experience, to support the relationships between communities and the NPS, and to curate collections in park stores that contribute to the continuing stories of national parks.

As we look forward to a new year, we imagine all the new ways we can help improve equitable access to parks so that more people can tell their park stories. People of every age, from every neighborhood and culture, and of every ability deserve a park experience that can inspire health and happiness. Everyone can contribute to the preservation of these special places. As always, I continue to welcome your voices and stories, and I invite you to the joy of volunteering in public lands. As I have now had the absolute pleasure of serving WNPA for more than a year, I am awed by the community of park supporters and the many ways WNPA members advocate for our parks and public lands.

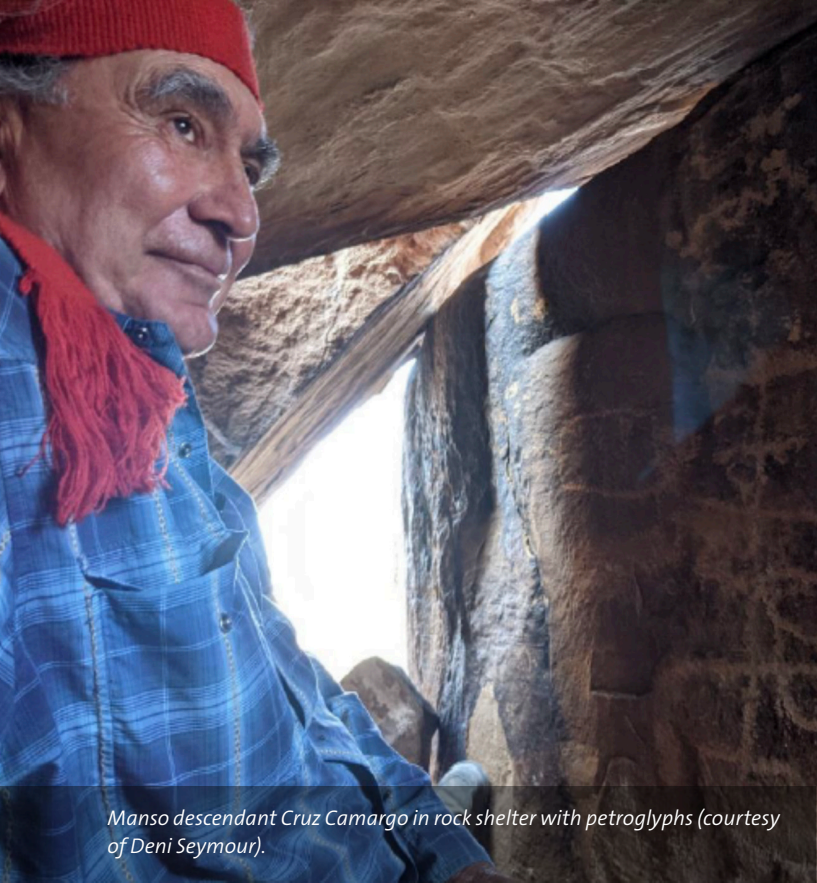
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Buck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marie" and last name "Buck" clearly distinguishable.

Marie Buck
President and Chief Executive Officer



Research Matters

Since 1938 WNPA has funded scientific research to help advance the management, preservation, and interpretation of our national parks and *Your American West* features one of these stories in each issue. Discover more of the historical, social, and environmental research projects WNPA has funded in recent years on our website at wnpa.org.



Manso descendant Cruz Camargo in rock shelter with petroglyphs (courtesy of Deni Seymour).

Valuing Indigenous Voices: The Journey toward a Deeper Understanding of the Southwest

In the heart of El Paso, where cultures have converged for centuries, the rich tapestry of nationalities and ethnicities is closely tied to the Camino Real, a historic trade route threading through this region. The Camino Real has shaped the local heritage, influenced by the shifts in population during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, a successful rebellion against the Spanish that strengthened the influence of Pueblo culture in the present-day Southwest. Amid this rich heritage, a complex relationship unfolds.

In June of 2023, a WNP-funded team of researchers led by Deni Seymour, PhD, interviewed tribal and local community members to better understand the effects of the cultural collisions experienced in this diverse region of the United States near the US-Mexico border and **Chamizal National Memorial**.

Here, Indigenous people grapple with questions of identity and culture, particularly in relation to Native heritage and the pursuit of federal recognition as a tribe.

This recognition holds significant weight, a confirmation sought after centuries of struggles. However, opinions differ; some believe that the government isn't the rightful judge of their ethnicity, posing a dilemma in this tight-knit community.

Seeking to Understand Tension and Complexity

Tensions arise, not only between Native groups and non-Natives, but also within factions claiming the true legacy of a specific ancestry or the right to seek federal recognition. These tensions often hide beneath the surface, occasionally surfacing in hurtful exchanges or lighthearted banter, reflecting the depth of the challenge for local tribal members.

In one recorded conversation, Nancy Lopez conveyed this complex struggle to claim heritage: "After we became band members in 2016, I had a second cousin reach out to me, and I guess the way she worded it, it's like, 'So when did I become Apache?,' and I was just laughing, I'm like, 'Well, either conception or birth, pick one.' And she just started laughing and she's like, 'I get it. I get it now.' I said, 'you've always been Apache. Do you mean when we became band members?' She's like, 'Yes. I guess I should have worded it that way.'"

This ongoing journey for recognition is not just about legalities; it's about reclaiming a sense of self and heritage in a changing world.

Valuing and Learning from Indigenous Voices

This ethnohistorical research seeks to understand the cultures and customs of Indigenous peoples in this community, focusing mostly on the Manso people, a lesser known culture that researchers came to understand more deeply.



Manso descendant Cruz Camargo makes a fishing net in the traditional way (courtesy of Deni Seymour).

Cruz Camargo is a descendant of the Manso tribe. Spending time with him at his home, culturally significant locations, and during casual conversations over meals, researchers experienced significant learning. The name “Manso” stems from Don Juan de Oñate’s 1598 expedition, during which the Manso people displayed peace and hospitality to the Spanish explorers.

Camargo explained that they were known as “tan pachos” because they skillfully managed the river flow, creating islands and changing its course. They were the blockers of the river, hence the name “tan pachos.” “The blockers. They were the blockers of the river. That’s why they got that name. Tan pachos, Tanpachoas and all that,” said Cruz Camargo.

The name “Tanpachoas,” given by early European explorers, stems from the Manso practice of diverting river water into channels to irrigate their mid-channel fields. This insight aligns with Bandelier’s observations that the Manso tilled the soil to a limited extent, shedding light on their farming practices.

Camargo emphasized the importance of their connection to the land, their farming practices in the valley, and their expertise in managing the river.



*The Nuestra Herencia mural at **Chamizal National Memorial** was painted by Carlos Flores in 1992 and touched up in 1997 (courtesy of NPS).*

Through conversations, researchers learned about traditional Manso practices, coming to understand that the Manso used the Camino Real, initially animal trails, to locate water and hunt game. These trails facilitated travel between villages and were especially important during social events like coming-of-age ceremonies. The trail eventually became the route for the first Europeans traveling into the present-day United States.



El Paso de Jacinto/Paso de los Indios (top) and El Camino Real (bottom) both remain places of historical and cultural significance (courtesy of Christopher Talbot, NPS)

Despite being interviewed multiple times in the past, Camargo shared that people simply did not ask these questions or did not pause long enough to record them. Camargo’s knowledge is a significant contribution to a more complete cultural and historical understanding of this land.

Resistance and Resilience

“Now, as for millennia, El Paso serves as crossroads of people of many nationalities and ethnicities,” wrote Deni Seymour. “This is precisely why the Camino Real went through this region. This aspect of the local heritage mix was accelerated by the retraction of Spanish and Native populations during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt that intensified, diversified, and increased the density of interethnic interaction. Recognizing these tensions, many locals say, as does Cruz Camargo, that we are all the same, all related.”

Despite this shared unifying sentiment, the interviews also shed light on the unique ways different cultures had to confront the impacts of colonizing forces.

“Native occupants of the region had at one time access to all of the land along the river and its adjacent environs,” wrote Seymour. “Certainly, there were intertribal and intervillage conflicts and daily activity might be restricted by resource availability, river flow, or the presence of enemies, but the land was not fenced nor the world organized by an overarching set of foreign laws, bisected by the royal road and railroad tracks, or overpowered by fast-changing and imposing technologies.”

It is important to understand that tribes resisted this. The resistance and responses were unique and specific to regions and communities, each facing different methods of colonization according to their different environments.

Camargo explained that the Manso tribe initially refused to be relocated to a reservation, having no desire to be restricted to a small area and being forced to live in one place.

Juan Benavides, another local participant in the research, noted, “My grandpa had 140 acres, but by the time he died he only had 45 acres; he had to sell. And like I said before, they would take him to court for something that they were accused, that they had stolen something or killed somebody; they had to go to court. That’s another way of taking their land away.” They would have to sell the land to pay for lawyers: “The cost of the lawyers mostly, they lost the land by paying the lawyers trying to defend themselves or one of their sons.”

Uncovering the Past: Decoding Old Stories

An additional element of this research involved the close examination and reinterpretation of significant records from Spanish explorers of the sixteenth century. These accounts offer valuable glimpses into the region, shedding light on its essence and its original Native inhabitants during the initial encounters. Some of these historical descriptions have left researchers with lingering questions, hinting that this journey toward a deeper understanding is far from over.

Reexamining these historical accounts offers more complete perspectives, enriching understanding of history that has largely lacked input from Indigenous peoples and the vast knowledge they have.

Ongoing Journey of Understanding

The Rio Grande Valley, stretching from Hatch to San Elizario, holds a rich history with various tribes calling it home. Initially, it was the territory of the Manso people after 1400. While other groups migrated or lived away from the river and the Camino Real, the Manso have remained relatively lesser known.

“We need to delve deeper into the stories and histories of these tribes. More interviews with individuals from these tribes, especially those representing different factions, would provide valuable insights” Seymour shared.

It’s crucial to continue in-depth interviews with people from various tribal backgrounds. Diversifying the interview pool by including different factions within these tribes will yield diverse stories, family histories, and unique perspectives on the historical and political factors that have shaped the region.



Navidad Camargo in the doorway to his choza (courtesy of Cruz Camargo).

People & Happenings



The sun sets at Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (courtesy of NPS).

ART INSTALLATION AT ORGAN PIPE CACTUS NATIONAL MONUMENT ADDRESSES HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Photographer Tom Kiefer presented his work documenting items taken from migrants crossing the United States and Mexico border. Kiefer's art installation, *El Sueño Americano/The American Dream*, has garnered nationwide attention and has been on exhibition in multiple locations across the country, including Ajo, Arizona, where the artist resides.

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument is a tri-national community, sharing its boundaries with Mexico and with the Tohono O'odham Nation. The effects of the border and recent border wall construction on the surrounding areas have been profound, and National Park Service staff works in partnership with tribal communities to preserve and protect this precious natural landscape, a sacred land for the Tohono O'odham.

Kiefer's work poignantly captures the stark realities of the journey migrants must face as they traverse these lands, with unknown fates waiting for them. During this meaningful presentation at the park, Kiefer talked about his experiences on the border, doing this important work. The everyday objects Kiefer photographs take on a new meaning in their artistic contexts, and visitors shared in his insights. Tom Kiefer's work is currently on display in Flagstaff at the Coconino Center for the Arts.

AMERICA 250: NPS COUNTS DOWN TO 250 YEARS OF NATIONHOOD

On July 4, 2026, the nation will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. To commemorate this significant occasion, the National Park Service (NPS) and the US Semiquincentennial Commission have partnered to "enrich efforts to educate and inspire as the nation begins the countdown to the largest and most inclusive commemoration in the nation's history," according to an NPS press release in 2020.

In 2023, the NPS has asked for all people to share their park stories, using the hashtag #myparkstory, to deepen the dialogue surrounding national parks and create a stronger union as we continue to grow in the strength of diversity and inclusion. WNPA's partner parks preserve and interpret history and culture of deep significance to the diverse stories of the nation.



James E. Cook grant recipient Rianne Kravitz took her students to Pinnacles National Park (courtesy of Rianne Kravitz).

NATURE'S CLASSROOM GRANT WINNER TAKES STUDENTS TO PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK

Rianne Kravitz, a teacher at a Buddhist boarding school, won the James E. Cook Nature's Classroom Grant, funding a four-night trip to **Pinnacles National Park** for eight students from Developing Virtue Secondary School. While at the park, students enjoyed an immersive experience, living in tent cabins and studying the park's unique geological features and biological diversity. Of particular focus was the plight and reemergence of the California condor.



Condor waits near egg at **Pinnacles National Park** (courtesy of Gavin Emmons, NPS).

Students worked with volunteers and researchers, gaining real-life experience with endangered species recovery and habitat restoration. Alongside this academic pursuit, Kravitz arranged activities that were designed to create a lifelong love and passion for the joy found in national parks. The application window for the James E. Cook Nature's Classroom Grant is currently open.

JAZZ AND A FULL MOON AT WHITE SANDS NATIONAL PARK

On September 29, **White Sands National Park** hosted the Rio Grande Revelers Dixieland Jazz Band during its September Full Moon Night program. Starting at seven in the evening, visitors gathered in the park's natural outdoor amphitheater, with the gypsum dunefield glistening in the moonlight.



Visitors hike under a full moon at **White Sands National Park** (courtesy of NPS).

The traditional jazz band played music, and the velvety notes wafted through the night air, mingling with the sands as people tapped their toes to the rhythm while the beautiful moonrise lit the night. With support from

Western National Parks Association, White Sands NP celebrated the cultural legacy of Southern New Mexico. With nearly two thousand visitors in attendance, this was the highest-attended full moon event in the 15-year history of the event!

JUNIOR RANGER EXHIBIT INSTALLED AT LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

On September 20, **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail** installed custom-designed panels that will serve as the hub for Junior Ranger activities inside the visitor center. With the support of Western National Parks Association and the Armstrong Foundation Fund, the park was able to purchase these one-of-a-kind panels, designed by park staff member Caiti Campbell, as well as equip the visitor center with tables made to support the many Junior Ranger activities the park facilitates. The panels feature whimsical illustrations of the trail, sure to activate the imaginations of future generations of park enthusiasts.



Junior Ranger exhibit at **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail** (courtesy of NPS).

In the Parks

BLACK CANYON ASTRONOMY FESTIVAL DELIGHTS VISITORS

Dark skies are not only beautiful; they also preserve an important culture, provide critical support for the functional life cycles of insects and other wildlife, and create opportunity for further scientific discovery. For generations, people from diverse cultural backgrounds have been studying the sky, telling its stories, and learning from the celestial bodies. Every year, AstroFest provides the opportunity for visitors to experience this threatened resource and learn about the importance of protecting it. This year, from September 14 to September 16, the National Park Service highlighted night skies along the Gunnison River corridor. With special events at **Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park** and **Curecanti National Recreation Area**, AstroFest offered visitors the opportunity to engage with night sky professionals, stargaze with rangers, and listen to cultural perspectives of the night skies in Stories of the Stars, a ranger-led evening program.

ANNUAL AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL ARTS FESTIVAL HONORS AZTEC RUINS CENTENNIAL

In honor of **Aztec Ruins National Monument's** centennial, the American Indian Cultural Arts Festival spanned two days this year—July 15 and July 16.



*Cultural demonstrations at **Aztec Ruins National Monument** celebrate Indigenous cultures and tribal nations (courtesy of NPS).*



***Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park** boasts festival-worthy skies (courtesy of G. Owens, NPS).*

This free event featured diverse artists from various Southwest nations including Diné, Laguna, Zuni, Hopi, Jemez, Santa Clara, Jicarilla Apache, and Santo Domingo. Artists demonstrated their techniques and sold their original creations, ranging from contemporary to traditional. Several dance groups performed, including Pueblo Enchantment Dancers and Jaip'o Harvier. As a special centennial treat, the festival hosted music with live performances from Innastate, Levi Platero Band, and Jir Project. Aztec Ruins National Monument truly celebrated the centennial with joy and cultural expression.

POETS HONOR NATURE AT GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

October is National Arts and Humanities Month, and **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve** celebrated in style—offering visitors the opportunity to practice art through sketches and poetry. With support from Western National Parks Association, watercolor artist and poet Nancy Arbuthnot led Nature Haiku workshops on October 7 and 8. Aspiring poets and nature enthusiasts of all ages were invited to participate in an immersive natural and creative process, which began with a hike through the park, observing the natural plant life through words and sketches. During this fully immersive artistic experience, participants decorated their haiku journals, then used ink pens and origami papers for final sketches, using examples of classic Japanese haiku as models.

WHITE SANDS AND WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION CELEBRATE 80 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the partnership between **White Sands National Park** and Western National Parks Association! Over the decades, our shared missions have supported growth in conservation, education, and responsible recreation. White Sands protects a unique landscape where visitors can explore the mesmerizing beauty of the world's largest gypsum dunefield.



Visitors at **White Sands National Park** enjoy the Full Moon Festival (courtesy of NPS).

With this partnership, almost as old as our organization, WNPA is proud to have provided support for groundbreaking research, community events, and full-length publications that educate the public and enhance the visitor experience.

This truly awe-inspiring park, nestled in the enchanting Tularosa Basin in New Mexico, is worth the trip. You can learn about the oldest known human footprints in North America, a recent scientific discovery that has revised long-established theories about the origins of humans in North America. With sunset strolls, full-moon hikes, and artist events, this fall is a great time to discover—or revisit—White Sands National Park! Happy anniversary, White Sands!

CREATING CONNECTIONS—CAPULIN VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT TEAM WELCOMES 1,500 PARK PROTECTORS



The staff at **Capulin Volcano National Monument** set records by welcoming 1,500 Park Protectors into WNPA's membership program. Park Protectors help fund educational programs, scientific research, and community-building events in parks, playing a vital part in the network of support national parks need. This community helps everyone enjoy the national park experience now and into the future. Caroline Lochner, WNPA associate director of regional programming and community outreach, visited the store to offer gratitude and congratulation on the achievement.

"Most people who work in the parks are happy when sharing them, and happiest when seeing the light of personal connection dawn in the eyes of a visitor," shared David Velk, park store manager. He added, "The Park Protector Program is another way to encourage the connection experience."

Cooperating associations provide much-needed support to national parks, and those associations are stronger when members join together in collective responsibility as park stewards. The staff members at Capulin Volcano NM represent exactly the kind of personal commitment that makes WNPA able to offer the support parks need.



Capulin Volcano National Monument preserves awe-inspiring and geologically significant landscapes (courtesy of NPS).

"I have seen firsthand what a good interpretation program can do to nurture and develop connections that can really make a difference." Velk added, "A good membership program is a powerful complement to any park's Interpretation."

The benefits of the Park Protector program reach beyond mere philanthropy:

Velk shared, "I really am a believer in the program. It certainly is a pleasure to be able to work in the parks, but the greatest pleasure is being able to share them with people, and bask a little in the reflected glow of visitors experiencing them with fresh eyes. Seeing their wonder rekindles memories of my own first-time impressions. I feel that the Park Protector program and this newsletter is great way of keeping that wonder fresh when visitors return to their homes, rekindling memories of their experiences with us in other places and times. Then it is an opportunity to discover new horizons, with new parks to explore. It is also a gentle reminder that we have a shared interest in keeping these places alive for those who will follow us, and not to take their future for granted."

Park stewardship is more than a job to David Velk, and to the entire team at Capulin Volcano NM. It is a passion, a lifelong pursuit, one that requires reflection, empathy, and genuine concern for humanity and the Earth.

WNPA thanks the entire staff at Capulin Volcano NM for their dedication. Their hard work has paid off, and the parks now have 1,500 new Park Protectors working to protect our vital natural and cultural resources for now and for all time.

JOHN MUIR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE CELEBRATES EARTH DAY

On April 22, **John Muir National Historic Site** hosted a festival to commemorate Earth Day's 53rd anniversary and John Muir's 185th birthday. With support from Western National Parks Association, the park arranged live music, a silent auction, and plenty of booths, exhibits, and activities for visitors of all ages. Park rangers led youth activities, and the California Section of the American Chemical Society hosted the exhibit, *The Curious Chemistry of Amazing Algae*, in which visitors discovered how algae make oxygen and had the opportunity to split water by electrolysis and make their own ultraviolet light-detecting bracelet!



John Muir
BIRTHDAY / EARTH DAY
CELEBRATION
Saturday, April 22, 2023

Celebrating John Muir's astonishing legacy,
Earth Day, nature and conservation
Event Open From 10am-4pm

Free Admission!

- Meet "John Muir" and the giant sequoia he planted 130+ years ago
- Exhibits and activities for all ages
- Live music and silent auction
- John Muir's 1882 Victorian home and orchards
- John Muir Conservation Awards
- Youth activities with National Park Service rangers
- Food and beverages are available for purchase

Free parking at the Alhambra High School (Alhambra Avenue at "D" Street) with shuttles to event
Visit 511.org, Amtrak.com or CountyConnection.com for public transportation options

For information: www.johnmuirassociation.org
Or call the John Muir National Historic Site at: (925) 228-8860, ext. 6400

John Muir National Historic Site
4202 Alhambra Ave, Martinez, California

John Muir
National
Historic Site
celebrated Earth
Day in style
(courtesy of NPS).

CROW AND NORTHERN CHEYENNE YOUTH PLACE FLAGS ON GRAVES OF FALLEN WARRIORS

Custer National Cemetery in **Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument** preserves the complex history of a pivotal, turbulent era. Buried within the cemetery are hundreds of warriors and soldiers, Indigenous warriors and US Army soldiers.

To prepare for an annual Memorial Day event, youth from St. Xavier and Lame Deer, Montana, placed an American flag on each of the hundreds of graves on May 25, 2023. This practice, heavy with meaning, is part of a tradition connecting students to the history of the park, ensuring that people do not forget the past.



Custer National Cemetery honors fallen soldiers (courtesy of NPS).

THE CHALON INDIAN COUNCIL PRESENTS AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

In the spring, Pinnacles National Park hosted the Chalon Indian Council's presentation of an educational program for young visitors. The council researched and prepared creative and educational cultural craft activities, which included handouts and giveaways, and travel and lodging for participants. Chalon tribal members and allies presented an informative and engaging session. Visitors were smudged by elders, and former Chairwoman Arianne Chow Garcia led a sacred prayer. This WNPA-supported event embodies the spirit of collaboration, healing, and cultural learning.

CARLSBAD CAVERNS NATIONAL PARK CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

October 25 marked the 100th anniversary of the establishment of **Carlsbad Caverns National Park**. Located in the northernmost part of the Chihuahuan Desert, the park protects hundreds of plant and animal species, including 17 species of bats! As part of its celebration, the park unveiled 20 "Story Walk" exhibits along the Lake Carlsbad Recreation Area, highlighting the park's history, cave formations, and biodiversity. With WNPA support, this exhibit will be on display throughout the year!



Carlsbad Caverns National Park celebrated 100 years (courtesy of NPS).



Focus On

WNPA PARTNERS WITH ALLTRAILS TO BRING MORE PEOPLE TO THE PARKS

To celebrate the joy of hiking in the vibrant fall settings of WNPA's national park partner sites, we partnered with AllTrails, the world's largest and most trusted outdoor platform, to help more people Do More Outdoors. During our Do More Outdoors promotion, which ran from October 16 through October 29, all customers received a free AllTrails+ three-month membership with any purchase made online and at all WNPA-operated park stores located in visitor centers. Additionally, all new and current members of WNPA's Park Protector program received a special one-time 20 percent discount on their entire purchase.

"It's only natural that the fall season, with its vibrant colors and cooler weather, inspires people to get outdoors and experience a national park. Both brands worked to support the connection between people and the joy that waits for them outside on the trail," said Michael Matthews, chief marketing officer for Western National Parks Association. "This exciting collaboration with AllTrails made hiking at our more than 70 partner parks just a little bit easier."

Shoppers who redeem their membership will have access to 200+ curated trail guides, downloadable maps, and all the features of an AllTrails+ membership. A big thank you to all who participated in the promotion—don't forget to redeem your AllTrails+ membership by December 31, 2023!



AllTrails partnered with WNPA for a fall promotion (courtesy of AllTrails).



WNPA celebrated 85 years as a cooperating association.

WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 85 YEARS

In July, Western National Parks Association celebrated 85 years of partnership with the National Park Service. In 1938, we began publishing books and guides to improve the visitor experience in 18 southwestern national monuments during the hard times of the Great Depression. Now, we support more than 70 national park sites throughout the West, raising funds to enhance and protect the awe-inspiring outdoor adventures, cultural connections, and educational opportunities that people experience when they visit a park. We would not be here without everyone who believes in national parks! Celebrate with us and start planning your next national park experience today!

WNPA SPONSORS THE INTERPRETING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) hosted the Interpreting Environmental Justice conference September 6 through September 8. The conference featured a variety of speakers, presentations, and workshops that explored the intersection of culture and nature, with special focus on NAI's two newest special-interest communities, the Sustainability Section and the Justice, Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Section. These two sections teamed up to coordinate the three-day conference, highlighting the disproportionate negative impacts of the environmental crisis on communities of color.

With WNPA's support, the conference provided networking opportunities for other NAI members and nonmembers interested in "engaging in meaningful conversations about the role interpreters play in environmental justice issues."

WNPA FUNDS AWARDS, GRANTS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS TO HONOR PARK ADVOCATES AND RESEARCHERS

Every year, WNPA funds important park research and honors those individuals who spread awareness of national parks, engage the public in national park ideals, and make parks accessible and relevant to a diverse audience. With seven distinct awards, grants, and

scholarships, WNPA's offerings are diverse, ranging from lifetime achievement awards to recognizing individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to scholarly research in the national parks and monuments over the course of a career or lifetime to scholarships for young adults pursuing careers that increase diversity in the workforce. Scholarships are awarded to those working with the NPS and similar government agencies, and nonprofit heritage conservation organizations.

"National parks preserve our shared natural and cultural heritage. Public lands thrive when people from every generation and diverse cultural backgrounds connect with the complex stories and precious ecosystems that parks protect," says Marie Buck, WNPA CEO. "As a researcher, you can help ensure that everyone sees themselves in a national park."

She adds, "We honor and support individuals who have devoted their lives to advancing our national parks in a myriad of ways and seek careers with the National Park Service and like organizations."

With increased funding and multiyear research grant opportunities, as well as awards and scholarships for teachers, students, and unique supporters of national parks and public lands, there are various opportunities for applicants and nominees to participate in this robust program. All submissions must be completed electronically through the WNPA website. Learn more about how to apply and nominate for awards, research grants, classroom grants, and scholarships.



Holiday Gift Guide

Check out these ideas to help you get started on holiday shopping.

Shop any time at store.wnps.org.

Under \$10

A. [I Belong in a Park Sticker](#)

B. [Smokey Bear Paisley Bandana](#)

C. [Smokey Bear Hiking Stick Medallion](#)

D. [Prickly Pear Gummi Bears](#)

E. [Prickly Pear Jelly Beans](#)



B



E



Holiday Gift Guide

Check out these ideas to help you get started on holiday shopping.

Shop any time at store.wnps.org.

Under \$30



F. [Passport to Your National Parks](#)

G. [Passport to Your National Parks—Collector's Edition](#)

H. [National Parks Small Badge Sticker Set](#)

I. [National Parks Postcard Set](#)

J. [Smokey Bear Ball Cap](#)

K. [Smokey Bear Plush Toy](#)

L. [See America's National Parks Camper Mug](#)

M. [Junior Ranger Vest](#)

N. [Brazilian Free-Tailed Bat Plush Toy](#)

O. [Passport to Your National Parks Junior Ranger Edition](#)

P. [Park Ranger Rubber Duck](#)

Holiday Gift Guide

Check out these ideas to help you get started on holiday shopping.

Shop any time at store.wnps.org.

R



\$30 and Up

Q. [Passport to Your National Parks—Explorer Edition](#)

R. [The Art of the National Parks](#)

S. [I Belong in a Park Insulated Water Bottle](#)

T. [Love + Protect Your Parks Hoodie](#)

U. [I Belong in a Park REPVE T-Shirt](#)

Q



T



U



S



Featured Events

Don't Miss the Holiday Reenactment at Fort Larned National Historic Site!

Every year, **Fort Larned National Historic Site** hosts its Christmas Past celebration. Visitors enjoy the traditions of an old-fashioned frontier Christmas at one of the best-preserved Indian Wars—era forts in the country, located on the Santa Fe Trail. Hot apple cider and popcorn, cultural and living history demonstrations, horse-drawn carriage rides, and, of course, a visit from Santa—there's no limit to the holiday fun! Save the date, December 9!

Luminaria Soon to Illuminate the Winter Nights

By the light of the winter moon, several of WNPA's parks host these special events, with glimmering luminarias lighting trails and cultural sites. Spanish for "small bonfire," the word "luminaria" was first recorded in the 1700s, when people lit bonfires along the roads to guide people to Midnight Mass on the final night of Las Posadas, a religious festival observed from December 16 through December 24. Annual luminaria events are hosted at **Tonto National Monument**, **Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site**, **Tumacácori National Historical Park**, and others.



*Luminaria nights at **Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site** provide fun and community for visitors (courtesy of NPS).*



Children partake in one of the many activities at the Tucson Festival of Books (courtesy of NPS).

Mark Your Calendars for the Tucson Festival of Books

The 2024 Tucson Festival of Books has been confirmed for March 9 and 10! Every year, WNPA hosts The National Park Experience Pavilion, with cultural demonstrations, author presentations, book signings, Junior Ranger activities, and so much more. Many of our partner parks will host interactive activities throughout the festival. Held on the University of Arizona campus, the Tucson Festival of Books is the third-largest book festival in the nation. Come visit us at The Pavilion!

Free Entrance Days in the National Parks

On designated holidays, National Park Service waives the entrance fee at national parks. Each site has something unique to offer—visit [NPS.gov](https://www.nps.gov) to plan your visit. Find yourself in a park and live your best park story.

Upcoming fee-free days:

- January 15, 2024—Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- April 20, 2024—First day of National Park Week

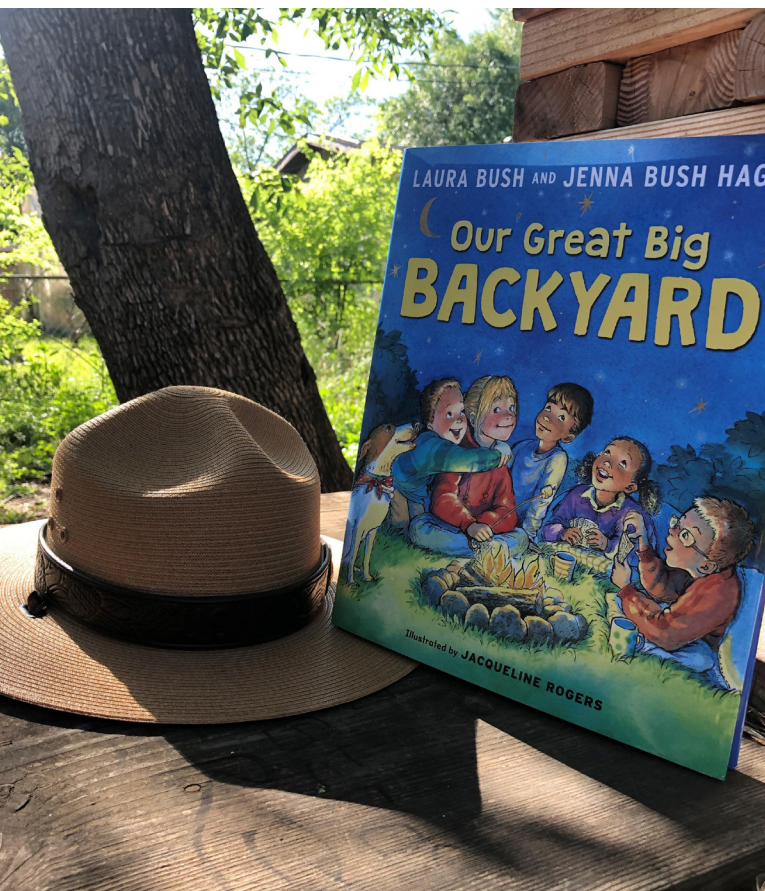
The entrance fee waiver doesn't cover amenity or user fees for activities such as camping, boat launches, transportation, or special tours.

For the most current event information at WNPA-affiliated sites near you, check out their websites. For events at The National Parks Store in Tucson, AZ, visit wnpa.org/events.

Kids in Parks

Reading with a Ranger Program at Brown v. Board Promotes Literacy and Diversity

Presented by Fatima Purvis, park guide at **Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park**, this literacy program brings together the joy of reading, the love of parks, and the nation's path to equality. Park visitors of all ages can listen and participate as Fatimah brings children's books from diverse authors to life. A former award-winning elementary school teacher, Fatimah shares her passion for civil rights history. Engaging, entertaining, and educational, this program reminds us of the significance of sharing the love of reading with future generations of park enthusiasts. [Click here](#) to watch her video presentations!



Rangers read to children to spread the love of literacy (courtesy of NPS).



Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area invites visitors to practice yoga under the shade of sycamore trees (courtesy of Sophia Wong, WNP).

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Hosts Family Yoga

Families were invited to join a fun and mindful environment with friends and children, taking full advantage of the health benefits of breathing and moving in the beautiful natural landscape of the **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area**. Participants gained world knowledge and practiced balance and mind-body coordination, as well as enjoying confidence in creative expression. Sessions involved positive affirmations and musical elements. Part of the popular Yoga on the Mountain series, these family sessions remind us of the importance of developing connections to outdoor spaces in childhood. In addition to the health benefits, time spent in the beauty of our national parks can foster a lifelong commitment to the preservation of these resources. Keep your eye out for more events like these, held outdoors in historic natural settings.

For the most current event information at WNPC-affiliated sites near you, check out the NPS app or their park page at wnpa.org. For events at The National Parks Store in Tucson, AZ, visit wnpa.org/events.

Arizona

[Canyon de Chelly National Monument](#)
[Casa Grande Ruins National Monument](#)
[Chiricahua National Monument](#)
[Coronado National Memorial](#)
[Fort Bowie National Historic Site](#)
[Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site](#)
[Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)
[Montezuma Castle National Monument](#)
[Navajo National Monument](#)
[Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument](#)
[Saguaro National Park](#)
[Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument](#)
[The National Parks Store](#)
[Tonto National Monument](#)
[Tumacácori National Historical Park](#)
[Tuzigoot National Monument](#)
[Walnut Canyon National Monument](#)
[Wupatki National Monument](#)

California

[Channel Islands National Park](#)
[Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site](#)
[John Muir National Historic Site](#)
[Mojave National Preserve](#)
[Pinnacles National Park](#)
[Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial](#)
[San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park](#)
[Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area](#)
[Whiskeytown National Recreation Area](#)

Colorado

[Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site](#)
[Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park](#)
[Curecanti National Recreation Area](#)
[Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve](#)
[Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site](#)

Kansas

[Brown v. Board of Education National Historical Park](#)
[Fort Larned National Historic Site](#)
[Fort Scott National Historic Site](#)
[Nicodemus National Historic Site](#)

Montana & Wyoming

[Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area](#)
[Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument](#)

Nevada

[Great Basin National Park](#)
[Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#)
[Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument](#)

New Mexico

[Aztec Ruins National Monument](#)
[Bandelier National Monument](#)
[Capulin Volcano National Monument](#)
[Carlsbad Caverns National Park](#)
[Chaco Culture National Historical Park](#)
[El Malpais National Monument](#)
[El Morro National Monument](#)
[Fort Union National Monument](#)
[Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument](#)
[Pecos National Historical Park](#)
[Petroglyph National Monument](#)
[Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument](#)
[White Sands National Park](#)

Oklahoma

[Chickasaw National Recreation Area](#)
[Washita Battlefield National Historic Site](#)

Texas

[Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument](#)
[Big Thicket National Preserve](#)
[Chamizal National Memorial](#)
[Fort Davis National Historic Site](#)
[Guadalupe Mountains National Park](#)
[Lake Meredith National Recreation Area](#)
[Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park](#)
[Padre Island National Seashore](#)
[Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park](#)
[San Antonio Missions National Historical Park](#)

Utah

[Golden Spike National Historical Park](#)
[Timpanogos Cave National Monument](#)

Trails

[Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail](#)
[Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail](#)
[Santa Fe National Historic Trail](#)
[Trail of Tears National Historic Trail](#)

Support Our Mission

EMPOWERING PARKS

As a nonprofit education partner of the [NPS](#), [WNPA](#) raises funds for our national park partners. Your contributions to our fundraising efforts help us to empower parks to protect vital natural, cultural, and historical resources now and for future generations.

Your generous gifts help us support more than 70 park sites in 12 states.

National parks are powerful places—from stunning canyons, towering volcanoes, and calming seashores to inspiring cultural sites, historical forts, and significant battlefields, our partner parks spark curiosity, joy, learning, and reflection. Your donation, along with the proceeds of sales in our park stores and online, help fund

- [Scientific research and discovery](#)
- [Junior Ranger programs](#)
- [Ranger-approved interpretive programs, events, videos, and books](#)

WNPA devotes 100% of our financial resources to support these goals.
We need your investment of \$75 or more to continue this critical work. If you have already donated, thank you for your support.



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Western
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Association

