



Please Oppose H.R. 2954; Protect Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks

February 5, 2014

Dear Representative:

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. On behalf of our more than 800,000 members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to **oppose** H.R. 2954 when it comes to the House floor tomorrow. Specifically, we oppose provisions to remove protections at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (Title V) and Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks (Title VII).

- Preserve wildlife protections at Cape Hatteras National Seashore – NPCA **strongly opposes** this provision to overturn a multi-year public process that achieved balance between sea turtle and shorebird protection and beach driving at Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The provision would eliminate a National Park Service rule developed during four years of negotiation and public participation in favor of far less protection for the national seashore known for its incredible wildlife and family vacations. In 2012 and 2013, the first years of management under the NPS's Final Rule, visitation to the Seashore increased, tourism set record highs, and wildlife on the seashore rebounded. The National Park Service intensely manages this national park unit in order to allow ORV use on most of the seashore while successfully protecting natural resources. The National Park Service should be allowed to continue their balanced and successful management of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.
- Protect Yellowstone and Grand Teton's rivers and streams – NPCA **strongly opposes** this provision to mandate the National Park Service change its boating regulations on rivers and streams in three years or else non-motorized boating will be unregulated on roughly 7,500 miles of rivers and streams in Yellowstone and Grand Teton -- more total miles than the Mississippi, Columbia, Ohio, Colorado and Missouri rivers combined. Over 3 million visitors travel to America's first national park to enjoy watching bison, grizzly bears, and wolves, to fish the parks legendary rivers and streams, to backpack and hike, and to paddle on 163 of Yellowstone's lakes. Grand Teton visitors today come to climb, hike, and paddle on the Snake River or the park's many lakes. Over 60,000 visitors float the Snake River yearly through Grand Teton. For decades these parks have balanced access with conservation. The job of protecting wildlife and the visiting public is not taken lightly.

Allowing boats and other "hand-propelled vessels" through additional park rivers and streams will significantly alter the visitor experience in these special places. This is why the National Park Service would need to undertake a thorough review in Yellowstone and Grand Teton of potential impacts to wildlife habitat, conflicts with other visitors, public safety, search and rescue response and expense, intrusion of invasive species and many other issues. An analysis of these issues will be costly and time intensive for national

parks that are already financially-starved. The timeline virtually guarantees lengthy and costly litigation. This bill fails to provide additional funding to conduct these studies. Further, the bill attempts to elevate the wishes of one user group over others who visit and appreciate the parks and seeks to direct an outcome without regard to sound scientific analysis and cost.

NPCA considers this a significant vote to protect America's priceless heritage found in our national parks, and may use it in our biennial "**Friend of the National Parks**" scorecard for the 113th Congress.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Kristen Brengel
Senior Director, Legislation and Policy