

 **NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

2013



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WASHINGTON,  
MAY 20  
1925

**LETTER FROM  
THE BOARD CHAIR  
AND ACTING PRESIDENT**



When the bill establishing Yellowstone National Park landed on President Ulysses S. Grant's desk in 1872, America was reeling. Shots still rang out through Southern states where feuding militias forestalled peace; Congress debated Confederates' right to vote in the newly reunited nation.



Amidst such crises, geysers and steam vents might have seemed like frivolous sideshows to leaders embroiled in the weighty issues of Reconstruction.

Fortunately, for us and for future generations of Americans, President Grant recognized their true value and finalized the park's creation on March 1, 1872. Even during the country's toughest times, Americans saw the importance of protecting special places, and they still do.

Thousands of NPCA members and other Americans rallied in support of the national parks during this year's budget crisis, which threatened to deprive our parks of the critical funding needed to welcome visitors and protect invaluable resources. Their voices made it clear that, even during fiscal difficulties, the parks remain a priority.

In fact, the National Park System actually grew this year to include three new park units, bringing the system total to 401. Engineering these expansions took tremendous effort on the part of NPCA's regional and legislative staff, who worked closely with the Park Service and pursued creative funding solutions with local partners to rally support in the midst of

economic challenges. These national park sites will endure long after the recent budget crunch becomes old news.

And they'll appeal to a broad population. Sites that interpret the stories of Harriet Tubman, Colonel Charles Young, and Cesar Chavez resonate with multicultural audiences. By telling all of America's stories, the Park Service achieves greater inclusivity, which will strengthen the agency through its second century.

That second century will start with several new leaders overseeing the work of the Park Service and NPCA. This spring, Ken Salazar stepped down from his post as Secretary of Interior, making way for Sally Jewell, former CEO of REI and a former member of NPCA's board of trustees. As this report went to press, NPCA's board selected W. Clark Bunting as our new President and CEO, a man who brings with him years of experience leading the Discovery Channel.

As we all know, change creates challenges, but it also creates new opportunities. We look forward to advancing NPCA's agenda and building momentum toward the 2016 centennial of the National Park Service. Protecting America's treasured places unites us in a singular mission that's worthy of our investment, in good times and bad. NPCA donors and members understand that the parks' values are constant and unwavering, and so we thank you for your continued support.

**Thomas F. Secunda**  
Board Chair

**Theresa Pierno**  
Acting President

## INTRODUCTION

Causes don't win converts—people do. Ask NPCA's key donors to describe what triggered their support for the organization, and chances are they'll point to an impassioned NPCA member or staffer who inspired them to join in the effort to safeguard America's national parks.

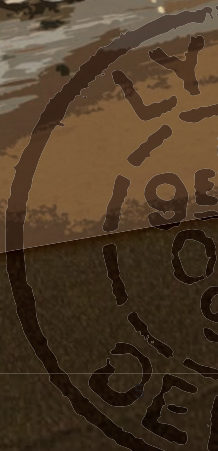
At every level, people define NPCA's success. Its leadership commands respect on Capitol Hill, where NPCA is recognized as one of the most successful government affairs shops in Washington. Its regional staff is just as influential, forging alliances with local organizations and businesses and motivating stakeholders to take action against threats. And all the NPCA members and supporters who add their shoulders to the collective wheel help the organization grow in size and influence, effectively promote its issues, and achieve bigger wins for our parks.

This year's victories became reality because of people who care deeply about our parks. Their stories serve as reminders of the difference one person truly can make.





Golden Gate





"Visiting the  
parks is  
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There's no  
price tag that  
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## MARTHA “MARTE” FRANKLIN

In a touch-screen age when parents struggle to engage kids in anything beyond video games and mobile devices, Marte Franklin introduced her six-year-old grandson John to migrating salmon—and watched him become so engrossed with schools of fish that he spent hours squatting on a rock, gazing at fins fighting upstream.

“It just opened his mind and his whole heart to the wilderness,” she said of their week-long trip to southeast Alaska and its national parks.

“Visiting the parks is invaluable. There’s no price tag that can be put on it,” says Marte, who is both an annual donor and a member of the Mather Legacy Society, a special donor group that recognizes individuals who include NPCA in their estate plans. Her forward-looking gift captures the spirit of

NPCA’s work—protecting and enhancing parks for future generations. “To pass this legacy on to my grandson, knowing that he will also pass it on, is very important to me.”

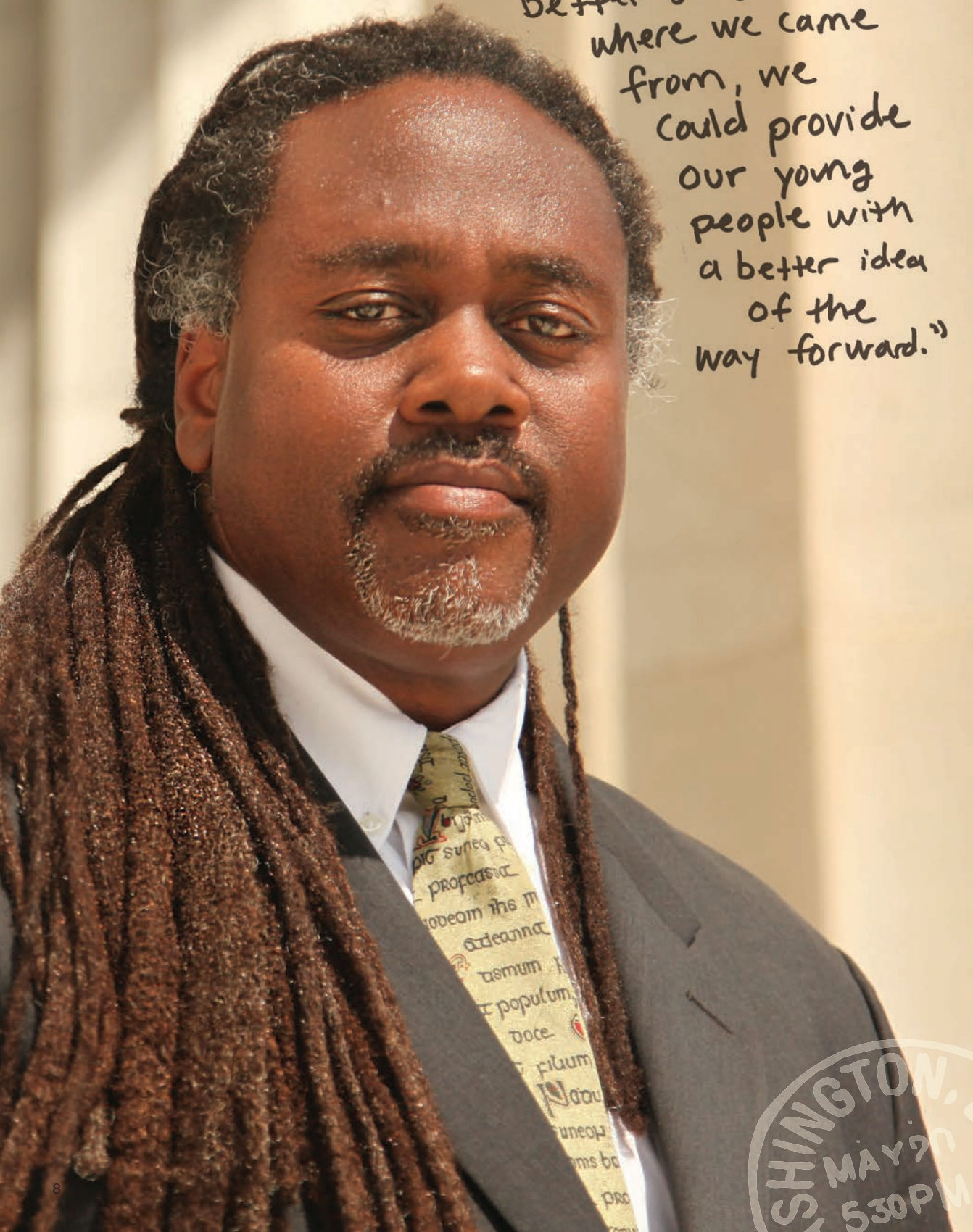
Her own love of America’s parks began when she herself was a child, driving through Bryce, Mount Rushmore, and Zion with her parents and her sister. Discovering these untamed places made a profound impression on her. “I love being in a place that’s just wild,” she explains. As an adult, she’s hiked the Chilkoot Trail three times, traveled to Alaska to watch grizzlies up close, gazed at Denali, hiked eight times into the Grand Canyon, and rafted the Colorado River, where her boat flipped at Lava Falls and dumped her into raging waters. Marte won’t be attempting Lava Falls anytime soon, but she’s been back to the Grand Canyon nine times since then, because she simply can’t stay away.

Marte donates to NPCA so that others can appreciate the vast power and beauty of Grand Canyon and other American parks. “Not only do the national parks possess beauty, they also preserve our nation’s history,” she says. “Although I live on the West Coast and may never get to see our historic national parks in the East, I know that my donation to NPCA will help preserve our history for millions of people to come.”



GRAND CANYON

"If we all had a better sense of where we came from, we could provide our young people with a better idea of the way forward."



WASHINGTON, DC  
MAY 20 2011  
5:30 PM

## ESTABLISHING NEW NATIONAL MONUMENTS: ALAN SPEARS

In his 14 years with NPCA, Alan Spears has helped create four new national monuments: Fort Monroe, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad, First State, and Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers.

“These successes demonstrate how effective NPCA advocacy has been despite a very challenging political environment,” says Alan.

His crackerjack record might seem surprising to anyone standing in his Washington, D.C., office, looking at the piles of papers cluttering his desk. “It’s a disaster area,” he admits, “but whenever I clean up, I lose stuff.” So he lets his piles develop layers of complexity that would delight any archaeologist assigned to excavate his mess, and he focuses instead on the people he works with as one of NPCA’s legislative representatives.

Alan has a knack for relating to government staffers on a human level, rather than seeing them as targets to be talked at. “I think it helps that I’m on the introverted side, because it makes me more of a listener,” he observes. By listening, Alan learns what’s important to people, and comes to understand their needs and oppositions—which puts him in a better position to offer solutions. “I’ve seen people wade in and not provide enough space for others to explain who they are and where they stand, and stuff gets missed,” he explains. That’s a problem in a political arena where every meeting matters. “In our business, the first impression—or the most recent impression—counts for a great deal.” So Alan listens carefully to what people need in order to support the parks, then speaks with intelligence and conviction about the value of historical preservation.

A trained historian with a Master’s degree from Howard University, Alan specializes in cultural resources. “I think that if we all had a better sense of where we came from, we could provide our young people with a better idea of the way forward,” he explains. Yet too often, says Alan, remnants of the past sink out of sight and memory.

As an example, he describes an African-American cemetery in Northeast D.C. that dates from the 1860s, when Blacks were buried separately from Whites. Among those laid to rest there is Blanche Kelso Bruce, the first African-American to sit for a full term in the U.S. Senate. Today, the vandalized cemetery is behind a locked gate, overgrown with weeds in a blighted neighborhood where virtually nobody knows it exists. “If you lose track of your history, there’s a larger tendency to suffer from lower self-esteem, which can lead young people, especially from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, to make poor life choices,” explains Alan.

Preserving cultural sites doesn’t just create recreational attractions: It improves people’s self-worth. “That’s what’s really so rewarding about working with the National Park Service,” says Alan, who feels that for people of color, historic and cultural sites make it easier to establish a connection to our National Park System.

“Any number of African Americans and Latinos might love to climb mountains and get up close and personal with grizzly bears, but for many, those landscapes seem remote and far away,” explains Alan. Instead, stories of Harriet Tubman, Cesar Chavez, or the Tuskegee Airmen are more likely to resonate with members of multicultural groups. And expanding the parks’ appeal to include nontraditional audiences helps protect all park resources—cultural and natural—and helps NPCA achieve its goals. “As an advocacy organization, we need the broadest possible constituency to protect these amazing places, whether we’re talking about Yellowstone or the Frederick Douglass Home.”

“Every time I return from a trip to another country, I'm amazed at what we've been able to preserve. But it's up to us to protect it.”



## MARY BARLEY

“Everyone should spend a day in a national park,” declares Mary Barley. “They would feel a deeper connection to their land and their country.”

That’s certainly been true for her, an NPCA board member, who cherishes the vast landscapes the park system preserves. Badlands, Canyonlands, the Everglades (where she serves on the board of the Everglades Foundation), and Yosemite are among her favorites, because they let you “stretch your eyeballs to see forever,” she says. “You can appreciate all the different formations that Mother Nature makes, all right here in our own country.”

So that others may appreciate such places, she works hard to preserve them. Mary is a member of Trustees for the Parks, dedicated donors whose annual gifts of \$1,000 or more advance NPCA’s work to protect national parks for future generations.

She’s contributed to NPCA since the 1990s, because “there simply isn’t another voice in the country for our national parks,” she says. “The problem with many of our parks is that you can’t just put a boundary around it and think that’s enough,” explains Mary. “NPCA

addresses climate change, air quality, and other big-picture issues that impact the parks, but it can also home in on a park’s particular needs,” she explains. NPCA keeps track of everything the parks protect and commemorate, from the thinkers, artists, activists, and politicians that authored America’s past to its inconceivably vast landscapes.

When she was a child growing up in Wisconsin, her family’s lack of means kept Mary from visiting many parks. “We didn’t even own a car, so we weren’t going very far,” she observes wryly. But eventually she made her way to Florida and felt that she’d found home. “The Everglades, with its water features, critters, all the birds—it’s just a marvelous, marvelous place,” she explains. So she and her husband, George (one of the two originators of the Everglades Foundation), became active in its conservation. And after a plane crash claimed his life, Mary stepped in to fill the void he’d left at the organization.

She also stepped up when NPCA asked her to become a Trustee for the Parks. “I saw it as an opportunity to help the parks and all this land that really belongs to us,” she explains. And unlike other countries, which have already turned their special places into “man-made everything,” she says, America maintains something rare and special. “Every time I return from a trip to another country, I’m amazed at what we’ve been able to preserve,” she says. “But it’s up to us to protect it.”





# RECOVERING FROM HURRICANE SANDY: NEW YORK STATE REP. MICHAEL GRIMM

Superstorm Sandy battered New York City with unprecedented force, causing more than 50 deaths, damaging 70 national park units, and generating economic losses of nearly \$18 million. In its wake, Rep. Michael Grimm (R-Staten Island/Brooklyn) championed park reconstruction.

“It’s an important part of the healing process,” he says. For the hundreds of families who lost every worldly possession, New York’s natural places offer more than solace: They foster hope and resiliency. “Rebuilding our parks sends a message that we’re making progress,” says Grimm. “Putting everything back together again is a long process, so providing some opportunity for a sense of normalcy in the meantime helps people see light at the end of the tunnel.”


Grimm threw his support behind a bill (HR-152) allocating \$398 million to rebuild

the national parks and \$360 million to shore up coastal infrastructure to better withstand future storms. Signed into law by President Obama on January 29, 2013, the bill funded repairs to the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and lesser-known zones within Gateway National Recreation Area—places so important to local residents that, in some cases, they’d begun restoration efforts themselves. After Sandy wiped out access ramps at Great Kills Marina, locals came in with their own equipment, diving into the water to pull out debris and accelerating the job of repairing the docks.

Re-opening Miller Field (a recreational area and former Army Air Corps base on Staten Island), repairing Gateway’s jogging and biking paths, and cleaning up Gateway’s beaches provided New Yorkers with places to gather and re-establish a sense of community. “It feels like a neighborhood barbeque,” says Grimm, who notes that at a time when few Americans can afford luxurious vacations far from home, local resources become that much more important. Strolling the beach or heading down to the marina to watch the boats—these are experiences that not only serve as people’s vacations but also provide everyday places of respite for a community in crisis. That’s why funding their restoration has made such a difference to locals’ sense of courage. More than just facilitating recreation today, these recovery projects instill hope for the future.

“REBUILDING OUR  
PARKS SENDS A MESSAGE  
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“Ever since  
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## AUDREY PETERMAN

“Did you know that at 62, you can buy a national parks pass for \$10 and it’s good for the rest of your life?” asks Audrey Peterman, an NPCA board member who asks the “did you know?” question a lot.

Her website, [www.legacyontheland.com](http://www.legacyontheland.com), promotes visits to national parks, particularly among people of color. She’s also authored two books on that theme: *Legacy on the Land: A Black Couple Discovers Our National Inheritance and Tells Why Every American Should Care* and *Our True Nature: Finding a Zest for Life in the National Park System*. “You don’t have to convince people of color to visit the parks, but you do have to inform them,” she explains.

Audrey herself once lacked familiarity with the parks. While she was traveling to Belize with her husband, locals asked her about parks such as Badlands and the Grand Canyon, and she had to admit she knew nothing about them. “I was embarrassed,” she says, adding that as soon as they returned to the United States, she

and her husband launched into a full-blown park tour. “Ever since I found out about the park system,” she says, “it’s become my meat and drink.”

Acadia National Park was the first stop. There, she drove to the top of Cadillac Mountain and savored a view that uplifted her spirit. “I realized that the same entity that created that beautiful scene also created me, and just as it’s beautiful and perfect, I must be beautiful and perfect too,” she explains. “It was an experience of feeling close to the center of creation, and being a part of it.”

From there, they traveled 12,500 miles on an eight-week journey through 14 park units. Now she’s up to 170 units, including Valley Forge, her favorite “sleeper” park. “Did you know that there were Blacks and Hispanics at Valley Forge?” she asks, incredulous.

Thunderstruck by what she discovered at America’s national parks, she resolved to share her knowledge with communities of color, who don’t see many park images in the issues of *Jet* and *Ebony* that sit on their coffee tables. Audrey donates to NPCA through her gifts of talent and time, including volunteering more than five hours a week as an NPCA Trustee on task forces and program efforts. And she continues to visit the parks: This year, on her 62nd birthday, she celebrated by driving to Everglades to claim her senior pass.



"Wilderness areas are where humanity and the planet interact."



CROWN  
*of the*  
CONTINENT



THE LAST GREAT WILDERNESS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS  
Foreword by IVAN DOIG  
RALPH WALDT  
PHOTOS BY DR. CHARLES JONKEL AFTERWORD BY DOUGLAS CHADWICK

## RESTORING MARINE WILDERNESS: KEN SALAZAR

The cowboy hat and bolo tie he's fond of wearing make Ken Salazar look like a rancher. Indeed, he was originally a rancher, and the West's wide-open spaces are something he knows and loves well, having grown up in Colorado's rural San Luis Valley.

He carried on that stewardship ethic as Secretary of the Interior. Salazar scored an important conservation victory when he made the controversial decision not to extend the lease for commercial oyster harvesting in Drakes Bay. His decision allowed this part of the Pacific to become part of the West Coast's first marine wilderness under the law.

Technically, the potential wilderness area was designated in 1976, when Congress determined that Drakes Estero (an estuary known as the "ecological heart" of Point Reyes National Seashore) deserved wilderness designation. A commercial oyster operation was then under way on property purchased by the Park Service a few years earlier, and its owner had negotiated a 40-year lease allowing the business to continue through November 30, 2012, when the estuary would finally become protected, as directed by Congress.

But the oyster company changed hands a few years ago, and the new investors, Drakes Bay Oyster Company, fought the approaching closure and asked Salazar to extend its lease. Amidst the ensuing controversy, Salazar listened to the factions, scrutinized the relevant documents, and visited Drakes Estero himself to meet with the oyster company and

wilderness advocates. "I did so because I felt the decision would have a monumental impact on the precedent relating to wilderness," Salazar explains. "And I knew people's lives would be affected."

While in California, Salazar took in more than just pleas and arguments. He also witnessed, firsthand, the astonishing beauty of Drakes Estero. "It's one of the most beautiful marine wilderness areas in the country," he says. "I could see why [former Interior Secretary] Stewart Udall and others wanted it protected."

But ultimately, says Salazar, his decision not to extend the commercial lease was simply a matter of following the terms of a contract and park policy. "My decision upheld the letter of the law, according to the deal struck decades ago," he says. "Nothing was being taken away from anybody. A deal is a deal."

Legalities also explain why Salazar's multipart decision extended the terms of the cattle ranching leases in the national seashore. It isn't that Salazar likes beef more than seafood; it's because the law creating the national seashore allows the cattle ranches at Point Reyes to continue operating and they are on lands that have not been designated by Congress as wilderness. To Salazar, the wilderness designation is special—and worth defending.

"Wilderness areas are where humanity and the planet interact," he explains. "These places need to be as unaffected as possible by human activity. It's important for us to have places like that. We need to protect them for ourselves, and for future generations."

Which may explain why, despite the controversy, Salazar feels at peace about the decision. "Protection doesn't mean that designations are going to be changed down the road because of political pressure. I did what the creators of the Drakes Bay Wilderness Area wanted," he explains. What it really does, says Salazar, is issuing a strong statement that "protection means something."



"If we pay a little  
to keep NPCA going,  
we'll save a LOT in  
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the road."



## CULLEN GEISELMAN

An evolutionary ecologist by training, Cullen Geiselman, PhD, uses a plain business card that advertises only her name and contact info. “I don’t really have a title,” she laughs, explaining that she serves on an array of local boards and helps run a family foundation.

In fact, she was working with the Houston Wilderness coalition, formulating the concept for a Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area in Texas, when she met NPCA’s Texas regional director, Suzanne Dixon.

“She’s such an amazing person, so enthusiastic and optimistic,” says Cullen, who saw Dixon’s offer of assistance as a ray of hope. “Without NPCA coming in, we’d still just be talking about a good idea.” None of the Houston Wilderness volunteers had any experience with creating a new park unit, but NPCA’s savvy kept the idea from losing momentum, and also gained a young recruit: 38-year-old Cullen

joined NPCA’s Texas Regional Office Caucus in 2012. “As a scientist and a member of a younger generation, I try to bring a different perspective,” she says.

Cullen is no stranger to the parks, thanks to a series of family vacations in the outdoors. “I remember as a kid going to Yellowstone, and still have pictures of being there with my cousins,” she says, laughing at how those juvenile fist-fights in front of Old Faithful live on in her cherished photo album. As a young adult, she and her family traveled to Big Bend. “Now, I frequently try to make parks the focus of my travel,” Cullen says.

That’s why she’s part of the effort to turn part of Galveston Bay into a national recreation area. She traveled to Washington, D.C., in April 2013 as part of an NPCA contingent that discussed park needs with members of Congress. “It was so interesting for me to see how the system works,” says Cullen.

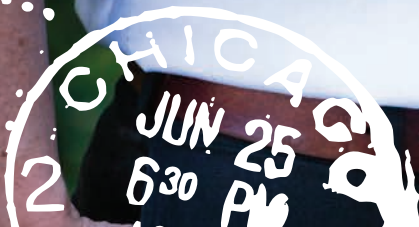
NPCA, she says, delivers a worthy return on her financial investment. As proof, she points to her Lone Star project. “If each group of local park supporters had to reinvent the wheel, it would be so wasteful,” she says, adding that NPCA’s outside expertise gets the job done efficiently. “If we pay a little to keep NPCA going, we’ll save a lot in other ways down the road.”



"NPCA is definitely the leader in enforcing park air-quality laws."



n to



## ENSURING CLEAN AIR: NATHAN MILLER



Nathan Miller's job doesn't exactly make for good cocktail-party conversation. In his four years as an air-quality analyst with NPCA, Nathan examines the intricacies of combustion, scrutinizes emissions and the feasibility of making improvements at power plants, and translates the dizzying data for politicians, conservationists, and NPCA members.

"Even within the organization, the stuff I do is a little wonky and niche," he laughs. But it's also effective: Nathan's efforts have helped achieve landmark clean-air victories across the nation, from Nevada to New York.

In the Four Corners region, NPCA secured the closure of three coal-fired power plants and pollution-control improvements at 13 others. Those changes will mean clearer air at Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, and other national parks in the Southwest. Voyageurs National Park will also enjoy improved air quality, thanks to cleanup measures at industrial plants in Michigan and Minnesota that Nathan helped secure. And NPCA's insistence on stringent cleanup measures in New York and Nevada will result in the shuttering of even more coal-fired power plants.

Through it all, Nathan's ability to decode technical data and determine what measures are feasible to protect park air quality played a critical role in NPCA's effectiveness. "NPCA is definitely the leader in enforcing park air-quality laws," Nathan says, with characteristic modesty that excludes any mention of his

own part in the wins. But his insight (gleaned from on-the-ground consulting experience as well as coursework in environmental studies and engineering at Washington University in St. Louis) is invaluable to his colleagues, who rely on his expertise to wage critical battles in defense of clean air.

Nathan's input helped NPCA win a lawsuit requiring states to produce air pollution cleanup plans. For decades, states and the Environmental Protection Agency had dodged compliance with the Clean Air Act's visibility protection program, which requires states to protect the nation's most iconic parks by eliminating human-caused haze in these public lands. In March 2012, after years of missed deadlines, the court finalized NPCA's consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency and forced states to start down the path toward cleaner air. "We don't agree with every detail in the plans coming out," says Nathan, "but each one is a victory," since their very existence represents a move in the right direction.

Some make big gains indeed: in Minnesota and Michigan, seven historically under-regulated taconite plants (which process a low-quality iron ore used for steel making) must implement the "best available retrofit technology" to reduce emissions by a total of 24,000 tons annually—resulting in clearer air from Voyageurs National Park to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to Isle Royale National Park.

"If you're looking to protect the air quality in one particular park, it ends up benefiting a lot of areas around it," explains Nathan, who believes air is the planet's keystone resource.

"It's just so pervasive," says Nathan. "Everything's got to breathe. And it's not only living things that are affected—buildings, statues, and monuments are also damaged from acid rain and other effects of air pollution." Polluted, hazy air can even foul remote landscapes that most people assume are beyond the reach of human impact.

But Nathan is heartened by data suggesting that most parks' air is cleaner than it once was. With minds like Nathan's spearheading the cleanup efforts, our parks are unquestionably headed toward a clearer, healthier future.