



FIELDREPORT

Southwest Region • Spring | Summer 2016



YouthWorks in the Parks: Building the Next Generation of Advocates

During the first weekend of April, NPCA and our partners, Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks and YouthWorks of Salt Lake City, took 15 youth from Salt Lake City to camp in the Moab area and explore Arches National Park, many for the first time. They slept in teepees, spent a day in the park, and learned about career opportunities on public lands and in the tourism industry. They heard from inspiring guest speakers including former University of Utah football star and retired New England Patriot NFL player, Darryl Haley; former Bureau of Land Management Director for Utah, Juan Palma; and Moab area hotelier

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The Broad Shoulders of the National Park Service

During this yearlong centennial celebration for our national parks, indicators are showing Americans and visitors from all over the world are heeding the call to “find your park.” Visitation is anticipated to be over 330 million in 2016—a first.

Staff at National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and our Southwest Regional office have consistently identified many threats and challenges our parks confront. Air pollution, adjacent development (including oil and gas exploration, strip mines and massive resorts), drought, changing climate, inadequate funding and crumbling infrastructure ... it’s a long list.

We pose the question during this pivotal year: What will and what should our parks look like in the next hundred years? Can the foundational objective of the National Park Service in the 1916 Organic Act—“to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations”—be sustained?

Top: Bryce Canyon National Park from Rainbow Point, UT ©Alexey Stiop | Dreamstime **Left:** The Youthworks in the Parks Group in Arches National Park, UT ©SpyHop | Phase 2

What will and what should our parks look like in the next hundred years?

Certainly it is our goal to enlist and engage the American public to protect these places. Most park visitors and enthusiasts agree that it is everyone’s personal responsibility to look after our public lands. They need our attention; they cannot be taken for granted. And the women and men of the Park Service also need our support as they, too, strive to protect parks and provide for rich visitor experiences. While many surveys note that the most trusted federal employees are Park Service rangers, they often perform their duties anonymously, sometimes at great peril (search and rescue), but always with skill and dedication.

So in this edition of the Southwest Regional Field Report, we are featuring personal accounts from a park superintendent and some park rangers who day in and day out are doing the heavy lifting to fulfill the mission established in the Organic Act 100 years ago. We take our hats off to staff members and wish the National Park Service a very happy 100th Birthday!

FIELD REPORT

SPRING | SUMMER 2016

Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico & Utah

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Meet Our New Member of the Southwest Regional Team

ERNIE ATENCIO – New Mexico Field Representative

Ernie Atencio fell in love with parks and wild places at a young age and has spent most of his career working in and for those places. He is a cultural anthropologist and writer with deep Indo-Hispano roots in northern New Mexico, but grew up displaced in inner-city Denver. Ernie discovered the larger world—and the outdoors—through an Outward Bound “hoods-in-the-woods” trip, which led him into college and a career leading wilderness trips and environmental education programs. Ernie also spent many seasons as a national park ranger at Mesa Verde, both rims of the Grand Canyon, Bandelier National Monument, and taught for Yosemite Institute for several years. Eventually coming full circle back to his northern New Mexican homeland, he has worked for various conservation organizations, including nine years as executive director of the Taos Land



Trust, a couple of years as coordinator of the Valles Caldera Coalition, and numerous projects through his Land & Culture Consulting business. With a master's degree in applied anthropology and a lifelong interest in remote landscapes and traditional cultures, Ernie has conducted field research and written about sustainable development on the Tibetan Plateau, Havasupai oral history, Navajo forestry, cowboy culture, land-based Norteño culture, and community engagement in land conservation. He received a “Voice for the Land” award from The Wilderness Society and his many publications include two books about natural resources and environmental justice in northern New Mexico and features for High Country News. Ernie lives with his family next door to the Río Grande del Norte National Monument north of Taos.

Above: Ernie Atencio ©Bruce Brown

Meet the New Southwest Regional Council Member

JUAN PALMA — Chief Conservation Officer at HECHO (Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and the Outdoors)

Juan Palma is the Chief Conservation Officer at HECHO (Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and the Outdoors). Before that, he worked for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as the State Director for the Eastern States and most recently as the Utah State Director until his retirement in March 2015. Under his direction, Utah BLM was a leader in developing balanced solutions to oil and gas development while safeguarding our fragile environments and iconic Utah landscapes.



Supervisor on the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit from 1997 to 2000. That was followed by a period as Executive Director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, a bi-state compact agency overseeing regional land-use issues.

Raised in Toppenish, Washington, Juan's educational endeavors took him to Brigham

Young University and Oregon State University, where he graduated with a degree in Business Management. Juan also studied at the University of Nevada at Reno, earning his Master's degree in Environmental Sciences. In his spare time, Juan can be found tending his garden, spending time with family, or hitting the slopes as an avid snowboarder.

Above: Juan Palma ©Scott G Winterton, Deseret News

In 1984, Juan began his 30-year career in federal public service with the U.S. Forest Service, where he worked in a variety of positions including Budget Officer, Administrative Officer, District Ranger, and Deputy Forest Supervisor. He served as Forest

YouthWorks in the Parks: Building the Next Generation of Advocates

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and rancher, Colin Fryer—all NPCA Regional Council members. The group survived two cold nights of camping, were awed by the incredible starry night skies, learned about the cultural and natural resources of Arches from National Park Service staff, were introduced to some of the challenges of managing the Colorado River from our own David Nimkin, and



interacted with many other passionate public lands advocates throughout the weekend. With ongoing financial support from Park City, Utah donors, Kevin and Anne Parker, we will soon begin planning a second trip with YouthWorks for this fall! Check out pictures from the weekend adventure on our Facebook and Twitter posts:

<http://parkb.it/youthworksparks>
<http://parkb.it/youthworkstweet>

Above: The Youthworks in the Parks Group at Window section in Arches National Park, UT ©SpyHop | Phase 2

The Utah Public Lands Initiative: An Opportunity Lost

In March 2013, Utah Congressman Rob Bishop created the Utah Public Lands Initiative (PLI), with the goal of developing legislation to resolve long-standing conflicts over public land management in eastern Utah. As a stakeholder, NPCA encouraged an open, transparent process for determining land designations. Our goal for the legislative effort has been to protect and conserve the ecologically unique landscape in and around our national parks, while allowing for a variety of recreational opportunities, appropriate development and a robust local and state economy.

After many months, Utah Representatives Rob Bishop and Jason Chaffetz released a discussion draft of the Utah PLI on January 20, 2016. Despite our anticipation of a less-than-optimal bill from the conservation

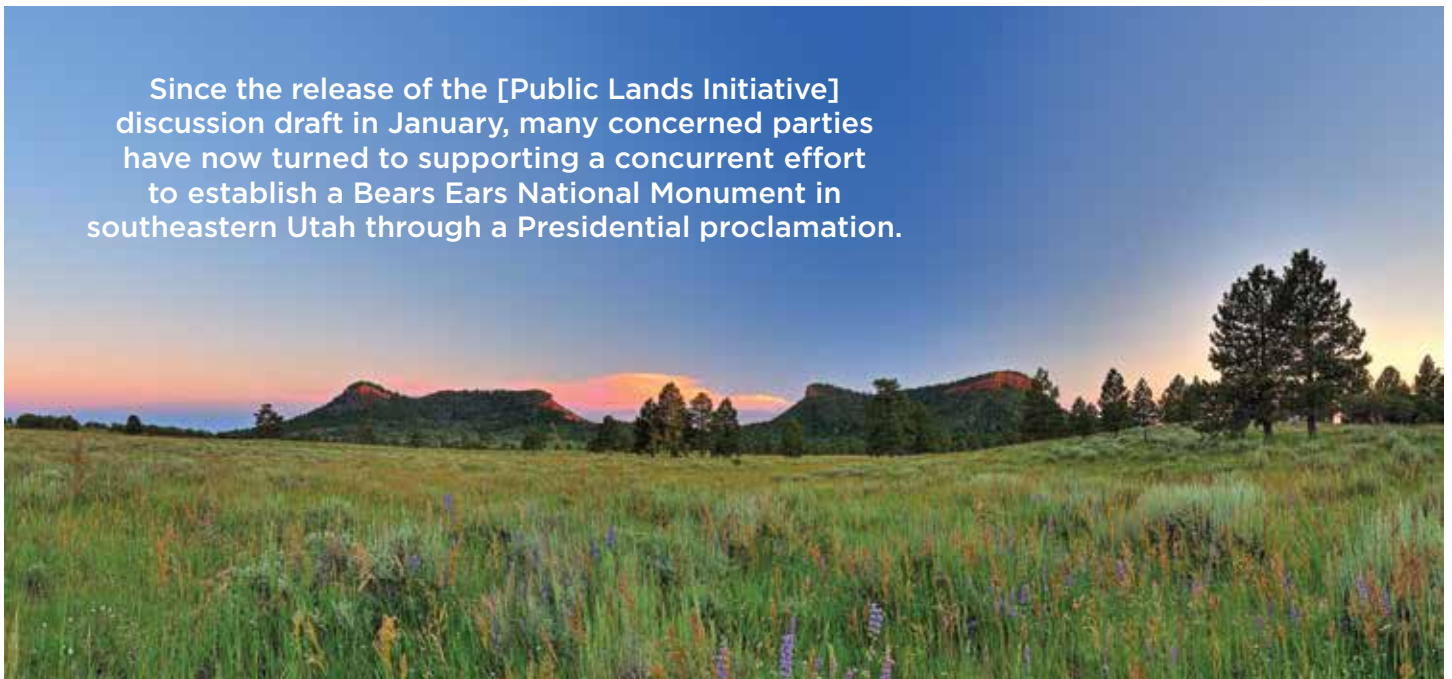
perspective, the discussion draft was far worse than we feared. While it does include an expansion of Arches National Park, we were shocked by many other policy provisions in the bill and much of the draft bill language. As currently written, the PLI would subject much of eastern Utah's public lands to excessive energy development and off-road vehicle use, while weakening environmental protections, allowing a spider web of disputed roads and undermining federal land management authority. In sum, the discussion draft is a missed opportunity to protect some of America's greatest national parks and surrounding public lands.

Since the release of the PLI discussion draft in January, many concerned parties have now turned to supporting a concurrent effort to establish a Bears Ears National

Monument in southeastern Utah through a Presidential proclamation. The proposed Bears Ears National Monument, as envisioned and lead by an Intertribal Coalition of members from the Hopi, Navajo, Uintah and Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Zuni tribes would provide much stronger protections for NPCA's top priority of expanded protections around Canyonlands National Park. We are excited about this proposal's prospects. More information can be found on our website at www.npca.org/articles/1120-national-parks-conservation-association-views-utah-public-lands-initiative.

Below: A panoramic sunset over Bears Ears conservation area in southeastern Utah ©Tim Peterson

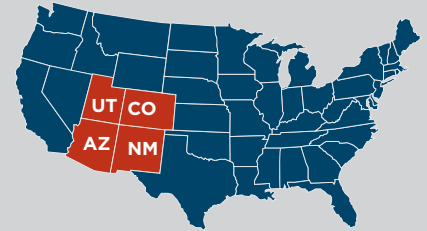
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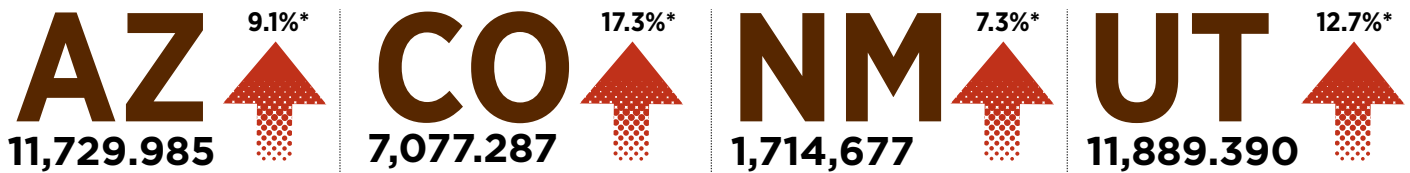
SOUTHWEST PARKS

THE NUMBERS + THE IMPACT

SOUTHWEST REGION
AZ: ARIZONA
CO: COLORADO
NM: NEW MEXICO
UT: UTAH



Recreation Visitors By State in 2015



Most Visited Park By State



ARIZONA'S GRAND CANYON NP
5,520,736 VISITORS



COLORADO'S ROCKY MOUNTAIN NP
4,155,916 VISITORS

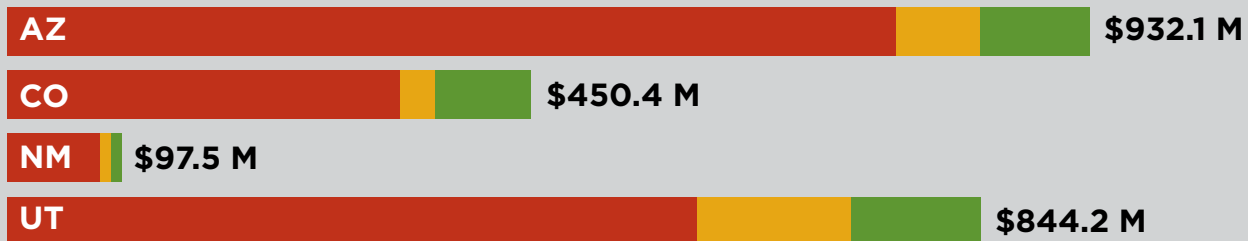


NEW MEXICO'S WHITE SANDS NM
497,506 VISITORS



UTAH'S ZION NP
3,648,846 VISITORS

Park Visitor Spending by State



KEY: 2013 2014 2015

Annual Park Visitor Spending and Its Economic Impact Nationwide in 2015

\$16.9 Billion
Spent In + Around NPS Lands

295,300
Jobs Supported

\$11.1 Billion
Labor Income

\$32 Billion
In Economic Output

* Percent change from previous year (2014)

SOURCE: <http://nature.nps.gov/socialscience/vse.cfm> • This interactive tool is a collaboration between the NPS and the U.S. Geological Survey and displays results from the Visitor Spending Effects report series. Economic contributions of NPS visitor spending are displayed at the national, state, and local levels. PDF Version: https://www.nps.gov/nature/customcf/NPS_Data_Visualization/NPS_VSE_2015_FINAL.pdf

True Confessions of a Park Superintendent

David Nimkin, NPCA's Southwest senior regional director, sat down recently with Jeff Bradybaugh, superintendent of Zion National Park in Utah. A Park Service employee for 34 years, Bradybaugh has seen a lot of transformation in the park system and in the visitors who come to play in these popular spots all across the country. He shares some thoughts and reflections on his career, Zion's challenges and what the future holds for the next century.

David Nimkin (DN):
Tell us a bit about your history with the National Park Service (NPS).



Jeff Bradybaugh (JB):

I started in Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota, and this was an ideal place to start as a park biologist, because this was where Roosevelt, already an accomplished naturalist, developed his conservation ethic prior to his political career. He will always be one of my greatest conservation heroes. From there, I went to Mammoth Cave National Park and then Zion—the first time. I spent the next 8 years in wonderful parks including Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, and Bryce Canyon. For the past year and a half, I have been back in Zion.

DN: Zion National Park is the most visited park in Utah each year—almost 4 million. As superintendent, what are the major concerns you see in the park with this kind of visitation?

JB: There are certainly challenges. When I was stationed here at Zion the first time, we were developing the plans and designs for the shuttle bus system. In 2000, we were around 2.4 million visitors and with Congressionally-appropriated funding, we implemented the current shuttle system to help manage parking and traffic congestion issues with what we thought at that time was a lot of visitors. Now we are experiencing over-capacity, concentrating too many people during peak periods in this relatively small area—Zion Canyon and Springdale. With concentrated use comes impacts to soil, vegetation, water, wildlife habitat, soundscapes and needs for facility development. Now that we are at a million more people than what the shuttle system was originally designed for, we are beginning to lose some of the values people are often seeking in the park that constitute an exemplary visitor experience including quiet, solitude and an escape from crowding.



Left: Jeff Bradybaugh, NPS **Right:** Zion National Park, UT ©Galyna Andrushko | Dreamstime

We also have had extraordinary growth in our backcountry use of the park—over 90 percent of the park is wilderness and in the last few years, we are maxing out available permits during peak periods. These situations indicate the need to plan how we are going to manage visitors and be visionary—for example helping people pre-plan their trip and, most importantly, really looking at what our visitor capacity is—that is the key.

DN: Should there be expectations when people come to visit the park and do you feel there is a role for the NPS to set what that expectation is?

JB: Absolutely, that is part of our proactive management plan—to educate visitors about what the mission of the Park Service is. We are a conservation agency that protects these extraordinary places for the public now and into the future. Conservation is a forward-looking concept, and if these parks are “forever” entities we need to manage them conservatively and actively. We are beginning a visitor use management plan where we are going to test a lot of concepts on managing visitors as well as looking at the visitor capacity of the park.

DN: Budgets have been tight for NPS for the past decade or so. Can you describe how you have to make choices with personnel and with infrastructure projects?

JB: In the last 5 years, our visitation has increased more than 35 percent and during that same period our operating base funds have declined by 5 percent. The operation of the shuttle system—which is critical to managing our visitors, visitor experience and resources—consumes about 75 percent

of our yearly entrance revenues. To keep things running smoothly, we have to move money around, and staff have been shifted to front-line visitor services with reductions in other park operations and programs. Over the last few years, available staffing for resources management has declined 26 percent. There is a lot of stress and strain on the staff especially since the peak season now goes from Presidents' Day in February to beyond Thanksgiving. Our current funding only takes us so far when we have people working overtime, or there are additional multiple emergency medical, rescue and fire response needs. I commend our staff who do a remarkable job.

DN: What would be your greatest hope for Zion in its second century?

JB: That our citizens will value these places and take care of them, and that the NPS as an agency will open our arms and welcome diverse communities. For example, it is important that the NPS ensures that American Indian communities with ancestral ties to the places that are now within national parks feel welcome and part of the cultural and conservation community integrated with these parks. The NPS must be welcoming and demonstrate that these places are available to them. Locally, NPS is working with the Southern Paiute Nation to assist them in teaching their children about these living landscapes and the cultural values these places hold for their people. I hope to see us (the NPS) reach out to all cultural and ethnic groups. Here at Zion, we work with a great community and wonderful conservation organizations like NPCA, with lots of interest and volunteer support for our park, and we hope that continues for the next 100 years.

My Life as a National Park Ranger: Casual Conversations with NPCA

featuring

Brittney VanDerWerff
Matthew D. Vandzura

As we head into the busy summer season at our most beloved national parks, we sometimes forget about the dedicated individuals who are diligently protecting these special places. Here, we highlight a few of the park rangers in our region who take care of resources, preserve landscapes and help visitors. Read on to learn more about who they are and why they do what they do.



Top Left: Chief Ranger Matthew D. Vandzura (left) and Ajo Station Border Patrol Agent Scott Good in Organ Pipe National Monument, AZ. ©M. Vandzura **Top Right:** Organ Pipe Cactus ©Anton Foltin | Dreamstime **Left:** Valles Caldera National Preserve, NM ©Peter Mautsch | Maranso GmbH | Dreamstime **Right:** Brittney VanDerWerff ©NPS



Matthew D. Vandzura

Chief Ranger, Grand Canyon National Park—Since March 2016

Previous Jobs: I worked 4.5 years as Chief Ranger at Organ Pipe National Monument and 10 years before that in Yellowstone National Park (including 6 years as a Snake River District Ranger).

Best Part of Current Job: I get to provide leadership and management support for the visitor and resource protection departments and get to meet new people and learn new things about the park. I really enjoy seeing things get done to protect the Grand Canyon. Even though I am new at the whole chief ranger thing here in Grand Canyon, I am very excited to work with the staff, build strong working interagency relationships and learn the dynamics of a big iconic park.

Best Part of Past Jobs: At Organ Pipe National Monument, I felt the most direct positive impact to the environment was capturing and arresting cross-border human and narcotic smuggling violators. This allowed us to stop the damage and prevent any further destruction to the environment. It was also a very rewarding job to organize clean-up projects to remove all of the smuggling stuff left behind in the border region of the park—carpet shoes, camouflage clothing, water bottles and trash—working with community volunteers and other conservation groups.

Greatest Hope for the Next Century: To engage the youth of today to come out and experience the parks—to make the parks relevant for this generation. Recently, we had a great “Alternative Spring Break” event in Grand Canyon where college students participated in service projects with the park’s wildland fire crew and learned about land management vocational opportunities. They got to put a little sweat equity into the park and do something different!

Favorite Park: Yellowstone National Park because the diversity is so rich, the weather patterns and wildlife are amazing, and the seasons are spectacular. As a kid, I took one trip there with my family, and that’s when I knew I wanted to be a back country ranger in Yellowstone. I am fortunate that I got to actually realize my dream!

Brittney VanDerWerff

Lead Interpretive Ranger, Valles Caldera National Preserve

Background: Graduated with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in Behavior, Education and Communication (with a focus on natural resources) from the University of Michigan. Participated in a summer fellowship at the Valles Caldera Trust working on interpretive displays and website development. Hired by the National Park Service this past year to head up their new interpretive and educational programs.

Best Part of Current Job: Talking to people about what they are excited about. There is so much passion out there. When you find an expert in something, their excitement is contagious and you learn so much.

Most Challenging Aspect of Job: There’s not enough time in the day to get everything done, especially at a new park unit. Everyone expects a brochure, a website,

social media or interpretive signage—and we just don’t have it yet. We really appreciate the patience of the visitors as we grow and expand at this exciting time.

Greatest Hope for the Next Century: A more nimble and creative agency that appeals to the younger generation. In particular, make it easier to apply to be a park ranger and keep recruiting good people who shine and are passionate about America’s best idea! I also hope that as a new park service unit that is instrumental in making science-based decisions with respect to adaptive management plans, Valles Caldera National Preserve can help lead by example.

Favorite Park: Well, I would have to say this park—Valles Caldera—because of the exquisite, wide-open spaces, the lack of crowds and the perfectly complete and safe human habitat. I also enjoy the unique methods of adaptive management that were explored and developed under the Valles Caldera Trust and remain a crucial guiding force in the park.

Grand Canyon Victory! ... But Still More To Do

In March, NPCA, along with many other advocacy organizations, celebrated a stunning victory when the Forest Service rejected an application to build access to a potential development near Grand Canyon National Park's entrance. You can read more here: <http://parkb.it/kaibabvictory>.

This doesn't mean we are out of the woods yet though. Voters of Coconino County stopped a similar proposal decades ago, and then it came back. It probably will come back again, in one form or another, but NPCA will monitor the situation, just as we do on many Grand Canyon issues.

For instance, a private company continues to lobby the Navajo government to let it build hotels, restaurants, shops, and a tramway to the bottom on an undeveloped part of the rim on Navajo land. Currently, the tribal council and president have turned this down. But one election could change that.

In a perfect world, and one that NPCA continuously works hard to attain, Grand Canyon would be free from threats and challenges: too many noisy helicopter visits, nearby uranium mines and coal-fired power plants, fluctuating releases from Glen Canyon dam that harm endangered fish and recreational beaches, invasive species (including a herd of hybrid bison that rip up precious meadows and springs), underfunding and aging infrastructure.

Teddy Roosevelt, if he were alive today, could say his prediction has come true: He believed that people would try to "improve," and thus mar, the Grand Canyon. NPCA is committed to his original vision: "Let this great wonder of nature remain as it now is," he told a group gathered on the rim in January 1908 when he exercised his right

to make more than 800,000 acres of the Grand Canyon area into a national monument. He said: "You cannot improve on it. But what you can do is keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see."

"You cannot improve on [the Grand Canyon]. But what you can do is keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see."

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 26TH US PRESIDENT



Colorado Gateway Community Workshop

NPCA hosted the first Colorado Gateway Community Workshop in Keystone in April. The event brought together more than 70 business leaders, park supporters, marketing and outdoor recreation representatives, historic preservation advocates, land managers, and elected officials. Participants worked in break-out groups to identify community and economic development opportunities—and challenges—unique to those places that serve as gateways to the Centennial State's national parks, as well as other cultural and natural heritage assets. NPCA will be following up at a local level in the coming months, and we hope to host a follow-up, statewide workshop in 2017.

FIND YOUR VOICE

Speak up for National Parks

For more information on how you can be a congressional champion go to www.npca.org/advocacy/20-find-your-voice.

Gridlock in Washington, D.C., is the new normal with only rare occasions when bills pass and government agencies get the funding they need to fulfill their missions. Now more than ever, in the National Park Service's centennial year, national parks need our help in Washington. The future of our national parks depends on park advocates and congressional champions speaking up for America's favorite places. Parks don't have a voice, so we have to speak for them. More info about the latest NPCA Advocacy work can be found to the left.



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Celebrating the National Park Service Centennial - Utah Style

On February 11, 2016, the Southwest office of NPCA co-hosted a Utah National Parks Centennial “Your Park After Dark” Celebration at the Clark Planetarium in Salt Lake City with the Utah National Park Service staff, Utah Office of Tourism, Clark Planetarium, Colorado Plateau Dark Skies Cooperative, Tyler Nordgren and Harvest Moon Events. There were over 600 park enthusiasts and supporters including 100 state legislators in attendance. More than 15 business sponsors donated time and money to help

with the event; seven destination marketing tourism organizations from across the state also participated. The event highlighted the latest MacGillivray Freeman IMAX3D film “National Parks Adventure” and a special National Park Dark Sky Presentation by Tyler Nordgren, Night Sky Ambassador. There were three floors of park-related exhibits and demonstrations from the 13 Utah park sites and lots of local food and refreshments. All in all, it was a spectacular extravaganza! Thanks to everyone who made it a success.



Left: One of the displayed “See the Milky Way” Posters by Tyler Nordgren highlighting the amazing Dark Skies of the Colorado Plateau. **Middle:** This past February, more than 600 park enthusiasts and supporters helped celebrate the National Park Service Centennial in Salt Lake City, UT. **Right:** The Clark Planetarium hosted the event and created a great place to discover the wonders of the dark sky and Utah’s National Parks. Photos by Trevor Hooper.

Haiku Contest Winner!

Thank you to Nancy Burgas from Santa Fe, New Mexico, for her Haiku submissions reflecting an important issue that impacts our Southwest parks—light and air pollution.

**Gone the deep night skies
 Glare creeps in and while we watch
 Part of Chaco dies**


**Sequoias stand tall
 Sadly watch the healthy air
 Turn to deadly pall**

Do you Haiku? Send us your version of a haiku to celebrate the National Park Service centennial. Please contact Britte Kirsch at ekirsch@npca.org for more details.

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