



Ocmulgee Campaign Update

In September, NPCA's Southeast regional staff travelled to Macon to participate in the 25th annual Ocmulgee Indian Celebration. This year, the three-day event at the Ocmulgee National Monument featured over 300 Native American storytellers, re-enactors, artists, dancers, and musicians. According to Ocmulgee Superintendent Jim David, the event drew a crowd of 20,400,



breaking the Indian Celebration attendance record. The celebration has grown to become one of middle Georgia's most popular commemorations and the largest Native American festival in the Southeast, with tribes attending from as far away as Alaska. NPCA educated visitors about our regional and national programs and enlisted several hundred to 'take action' by signing postcards to

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Race for Space Putting National Seashore at Risk

Spaceports are proliferating across the United States. Cumberland Island National Seashore, one of the most serene and pristine public access barrier islands in the Southeast is right in the path of a proposed spaceport and there is reason for concern.

From Kwajalein Atoll to Cape Canaveral, the United States government manages eight rocket launch sites. There are an additional nine sites managed by state agencies in partnership with private industry that are licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The University of Alaska operates the Poker Flat Research Range, and there are three non-licensed sites where individual companies conduct launches. Additional launch sites have been proposed in Georgia, Florida, Texas, Hawaii, and Colorado.

In 2016, Camden County, Georgia submitted a proposal to the FAA to operate a commercial site in a location less than five miles from Cumberland Island National Seashore. The launch trajectory would take rockets directly over Cumberland Island's wilderness.

NPCA has concerns about the proposed plan, its impact on visitors to the national seashore, and the cost and logistics of evacuating visitors for launches. The spaceport would also have a negative effect on Cumberland Island's historical structures and cultural sites, representing 4,000 years of human history, and on the island's incredible natural resources, including several endangered species of sea turtles and shore birds.

Rocket launches have a significant impact on water quality and quantity. Millions of gallons of water are needed for each launch, and advocates are concerned about the Satilla River, ground water and aquifers underlying Cumberland Island. Additionally, contaminants in runoff from impervious surfaces at the launch site could have a detrimental effect on fragile land and aquatic habitat.

Locating a rocket launch site near public land is not a new concept. As demand grows, FAA must carefully consider which locations are appropriate for rocket launches, consider available alternatives, and carefully determine how to best protect fragile ecosystems and historical resources of national significance.

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Top: Cumberland Island National Seashore looking toward the north end of the island. ©Stephen Royer | Dreamstime.com | Dreamstime.com **Left:** Ocmulgee Corridor program manager Chris Watson and his daughter Katie tabling at the 2016 Indian Celebration.

FIELD REPORT

Fall 2016

Southeast Regional Office

Advocating for National Parks in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina

706 Walnut Street • Suite 200
Knoxville, TN 37902
www.npca.org/southeast
865.329.2424 • 800.628.7275

Don Barger

SENIOR REGIONAL DIRECTOR
dbarger@npca.org
865.329.2424, ext 23

Emily Jones

SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER
ejones@npca.org
865.329.2424, ext 26

Chris Watson

SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER
cwatson@npca.org
865.329.2424, ext 24

Tracy Kramer

SENIOR OUTREACH COORDINATOR
tkramer@npca.org
865.329.2424, ext 21

Asheville Field Office

One Rankin Ave. • 2nd Floor
Asheville, NC 28801

Jeff Hunter

PROGRAM MANAGER
jhunter@npca.org
828.545.1401



npca.org

Since 1919, the nonpartisan National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA, its 1,000,000 members and supporters, and many partners work together to protect the park system and preserve our nation's natural, historical, and cultural heritage for our children and grandchildren.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

A Centennial Message



A century ago, in 1916, the United States Congress made a profound commitment to sustainability when they created the National Park System with these words:

The service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is 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. (U.S.C., title 16, sec. 1.)

On May 13, 1918, Secretary Lane wrote National Park Service Director Stephen Mather a letter outlining how these parks were to be managed:

For the information of the public, an outline of the administrative policy to which the new Service will adhere may be announced. This policy is based on three broad principles: First that the national parks must be maintained in absolutely unimpaired form for the use of future generations as well as those of our own time; second, that they are set apart for the use, observation, health, and pleasure of the people; and third, that the national interest must dictate all decisions affecting public or private enterprise in the parks.

NPCA was founded the next year, in 1919, to promote and protect the natural and cultural resources that define the American adventure. We're still here and, with your support, we remain dedicated to that mission.

And, oh, I've got something that belongs to you.

In conjunction with the centennial of the Park Service, the Great Smoky Mountains Association came up with a list of the "100 Most Influential People in the History of Great Smoky Mountains National Park" (see excerpt below) and included me on that list. The recognition, however, belongs to NPCA, and to its staff and advocates like you, who over the years, have supported NPCA's mission to protect and preserve our national parks. This honor recognizes our collective effort to preserve not just the places, but the principles that have made America's National Park System the envy of the world.

Thank you. And congratulations!



“Don Barger: Advocate for the ecological health of the Smokies as the National Parks Conservation Association's Southeast Regional Director. He founded NPCA's Southeast office in 1992 and has vastly increased public awareness of air pollution problems in the Smokies. Under his leadership, NPCA was part of a lawsuit against the Tennessee Valley Authority in the early 1990's. Their effort led to the historic 2011 Clean Air agreement that created an enforceable strategy to retire 18 of 59 of TVA's coal-fired boilers, and ensure that 36 others are brought up to modern standards by 2021.” (Smokies Life, Vol. 10, #1)

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

What do you like about this newsletter? What other topics or features would you like to see? Please contact us with your feedback at npca.org/southeast.

NPCA's New Asheville Field Office

In mid-June 2016, NPCA opened its new Asheville Field Office in the heart of the bustling city in a space shared with Defenders of Wildlife's recently opened Southeast Regional Office. Located downtown at One Rankin Avenue on the second floor, NPCA staff members Jeff Hunter and Ulla Reeves are enjoying the new space that features beautiful south-facing windows, hardwood floors and a spacious, open floorplan.

OUR
NEW
OFFICE

Jeff is NPCA's new Southern Highlands Living Landscape Program Manager (since November 2015) and works on critical Blue Ridge Parkway transportation issues and leads our Southern Appalachian Landscape Program. Ulla is NPCA's Clean Air Campaign Manager (since May 2015) and she is coordinating nationwide efforts to strengthen and implement clean air policies that protect national parks and wilderness areas from air pollution.



We look forward to being a part of the Asheville community and having a bigger presence in western North Carolina and across the state.

We would like to extend a special thank you to our regional donors and supporters, whose financial assistance helped NPCA secure this office space. We look forward to being a part of the Asheville community and having a bigger presence in western North Carolina and across the state.

Left: One Rankin Ave in downtown Asheville. ©Jeff Hunter **Below:** Scenic sunrise on the Blue Ridge Parkway. ©Anthony Heflin | Dreamstime.com



Race for Space Putting National Seashore at Risk

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The SpaceX South Texas Launch Site is located next to the Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge and Boca Chica Beach. The proposed Shiloh Launch Complex in Florida is in close proximity to Merritt Island National Wildlife Area and Canaveral National Seashore. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport and Wallops Flight Facility are in close proximity to Assateague Island National Seashore and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

An accident in 2014 at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport, located at the NASA Wallops Flight Facility on Virginia's eastern shore illustrates the potential impact of locating highly combustible materials near fragile environments. The Associated Press reported:

“Debris—potentially hazardous because of rocket fuel—plummeted into the Atlantic and onto the launch site, igniting fires. Helicopters took to the air at first light Wednesday to

track down remnants. Authorities warned people to avoid touching any debris that might wash ashore ...

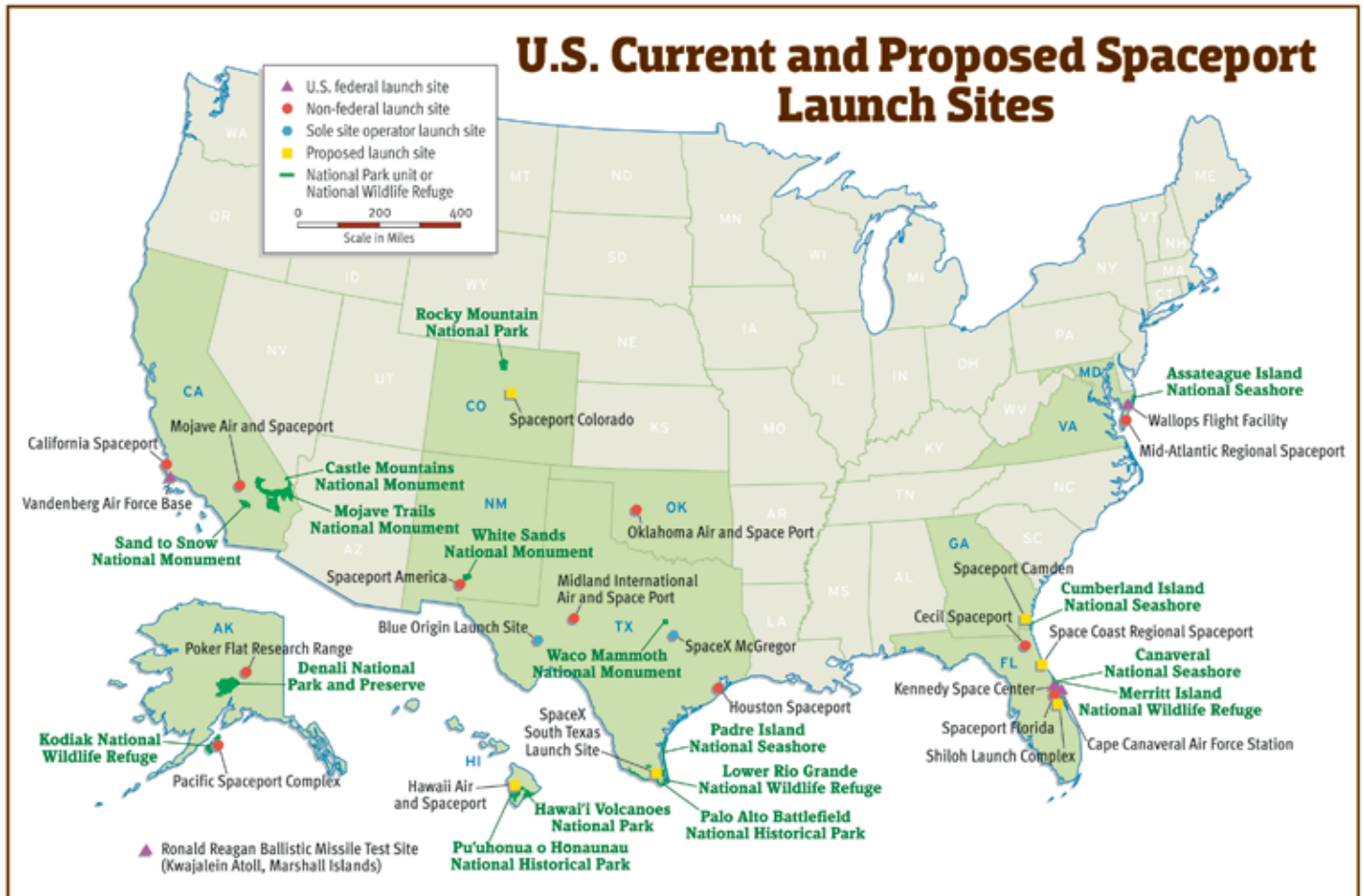
... Ash and other debris covered Chrissy Mullen’s house, patio and yard on Chincoteague Island a few miles away. She spent the morning cleaning up.”

Launch explosions are not rare. In September, a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and its commercial satellite payload exploded on the launch pad during a routine test at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. SpaceX was preparing to launch a communications satellite for an Israeli company. In 2015, a SpaceX rocket bound for the International Space Station exploded during flight about 2 minutes from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

The commercial space industry is a growing field. The FAA has a tremendous responsibility in considering these applications and the location of these launch sites. Some places are not appropriate. Given the importance of natural sounds, the wilderness experience



and the fragile resources at Cumberland Island, we feel the Spaceport Camden site is an inappropriate location. The FAA held scoping meetings in 2015, and they are preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for public review and comment. NPCA will be notifying our members when this 45-day comment period is open. Sign up for NPCA's Action Alerts at npca.org/signup to stay informed about this and other threats to our national parks.





Ocmulgee Campaign Update

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Senator Isakson in support of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act (S1696).

In addition to attending the Indian Celebration, NPCA staff had the opportunity to enjoy Macon’s great downtown food scene and to paddle the Ocmulgee River Water Trail with our good friends at Ocmulgee Outdoor Expeditions. We put in at Macon’s beautiful and recently renovated Amerson River Park and spent a gorgeous morning on the river. We were not in town simply to have fun however. NPCA was actively engaged in laying the groundwork for the next stages of the Ocmulgee Campaign; renewing our relationships with partners, including the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative (ONPPI), the Ocmulgee National Monument Association, Historic Macon Foundation and Mercer University.

The evening before the Ocmulgee Indian Celebration, we attended a reception and dinner generously hosted by ONPPI and sponsored by the Compass Group. Looking ahead, we continue to work for final passage of park expansion legislation by the end of

this year and anticipate a Park Service special resource study that will examine options for conserving the broader Ocmulgee River corridor between Macon and Hawkinsville. The coming months will be full of exciting events including the release of our long anticipated study of the potential economic impacts of creating a National Park & Preserve along the Ocmulgee River (primarily funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation). We also will be rolling out

new initiatives with Mercer University to build the case for the river corridor’s national significance and expect an exciting announcement soon from our good friends at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. So stay tuned. Great things are afoot in middle Georgia!

Top: Paddling the Ocmulgee River near Amerson River Park in Macon, GA. ©Tracy Kramer **Bottom:** Visitors participating in the ceremonial dancing at the 2016 Indian Celebration. ©Sharman Ayoub



'A SILENT BUT MOST EFFECTIVE VOICE'

Ansel Adams and Advocacy

2016 marks not just one, but two centennials—that of the National Park Service and that of Ansel Adams' first visit to Yosemite National Park.

Of his first sight of Yosemite, Adams recalled, "In the bright morning [we took] the grand, dusty, jolting ride in an open motor bus up the deepening, greening gorge to Yosemite. That first impression of the valley...was a culmination of experience so intense as to be almost painful. From that day in 1916, my life has been colored and modulated by the great earth gesture of the Sierra."

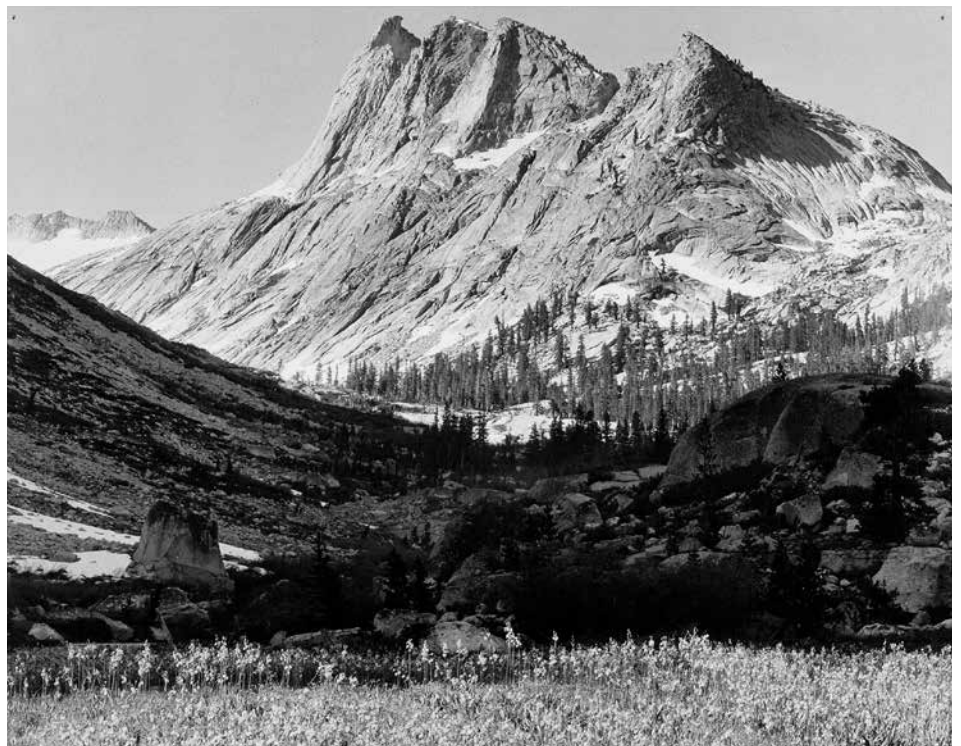
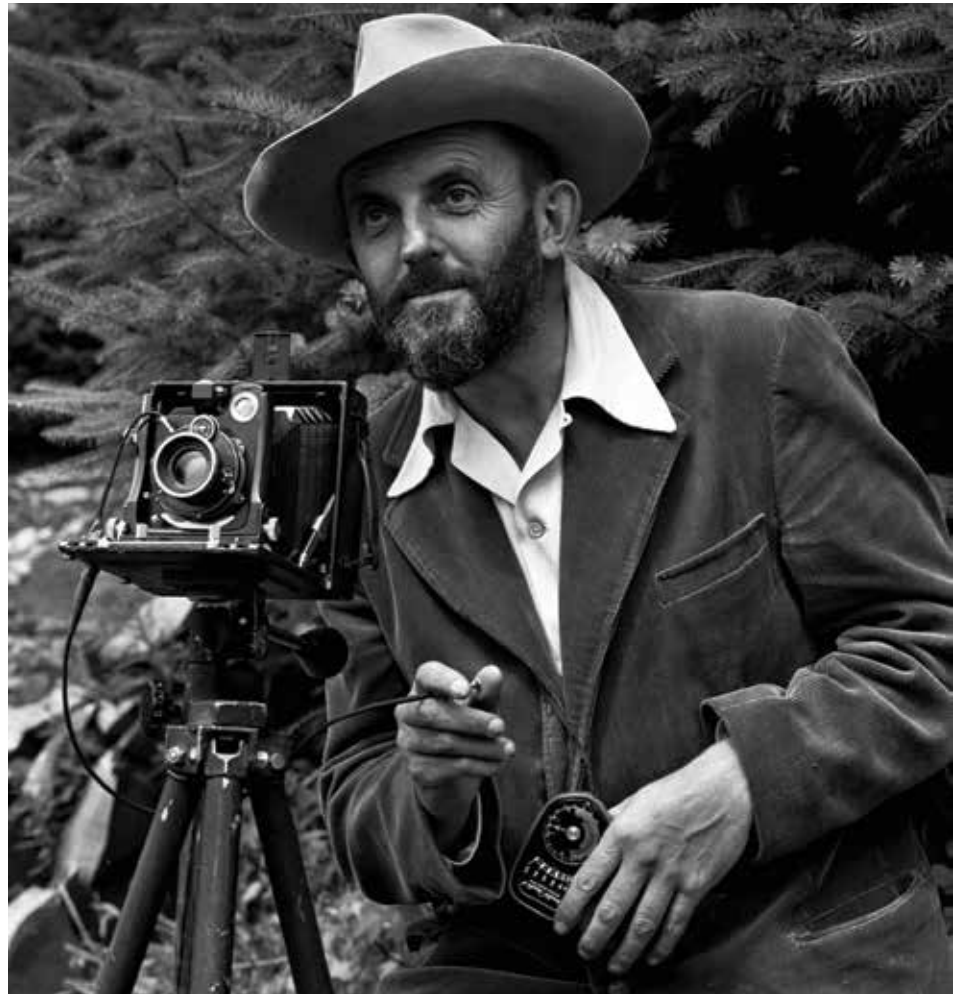
His subject was the awe he felt in nature, the humbling exaltation he felt in the wilderness, whether manifest on a huge or tiny scale. In the early 1930s, other photographers and critics complained that the world was going to pieces while people like Adams and Edward Weston were 'photographing rocks'. Adams responded in a letter to Weston that "Humanity needs the purely aesthetic just as much as it needs the purely material."

Adams recognized that there was something he was suited to do for humanity, namely to share the beauty of wilderness and convince people to keep some areas inviolate for generations to come. He said he couldn't make art about bread lines or unemployment lines—that wasn't his ability—but he could inspire reverence and gratitude for nature.

Adams also became an activist for conservation. The Sierra Club sent him to Washington, D.C., in 1936 to lobby for a bill before Congress to create Kings Canyon National Park. He toted his portfolios from Senate to House, meeting with more than 40 members of Congress, telling his story of finding his life's purpose in the parks. He spoke before a conference on the National Park Service and there met Harold Ickes, secretary of the Interior, and shared his photographs with him.

That 1936 bill failed, but Adams assembled his Kings Canyon images with others made

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Upper Right: Portrait of Ansel Adams, circa 1947. Photo by J. Malcolm Greany. **Lower Right:** Kings River Canyon (Proposed as a national park). Photos donated by Ansel Adams, February 1936. ©NPS

in the Sierra and published them as a book, "Sierra Nevada: The John Muir Trail," in 1938. He sent a copy to Secretary Ickes, who shared it with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Kings Canyon National Park was created the following year, putting half a million acres under protection. Director of the National Park Service Arno Cammerer wrote to Adams that "A silent but most effective voice in the campaign was your own book...As long as that book is in existence, it will go on justifying the park."

From 1940 on, Adams taught thousands of young photographers, many of whom went on to careers as nature photographers. In case you're imagining a nightmare scenario of Adams judging pale imitation after pale imitation of his own well-known images, year after year, like the Saturday Night Live episode of Paul Simon dying and going to purgatory only to find it an elevator playing Muzak versions of his greatest hits, have no fear. Adams himself said "Most people have the idea that there is nothing you can do with a camera in Yosemite except take another postcard snapshot. I remind workshop participants that the national parks provide an experience, a mood, an incredible subject for the camera. The fact is that it happens in a national park and is stimulated by the photographer's feeling that it is a new kind of scene, and this feeling is possible because Yosemite had been set aside and protected as a national park. But the beauty itself was there even before it was a national park."

This is one way that the parks have continued to repay their debt to the art of photography, which has been essential to the conservation of wilderness areas from the first national parks to the most recent monuments at Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow and Castle Mountains.

Phil Archer is the Director of Program and Interpretation at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston Salem, NC. This article was adapted from his lecture during our event "Ansel Adams and Advocacy: An Evening with National Parks Conservation Association" held earlier this year. Phil leads the museum's exhibition and educational programs and curated the museum's current exhibition "Grant Wood and the American Farm," which runs through December 31, 2016.

TRAVEL WITH NPCA

March 19-24

Alaska's Winter Magic

Venture into the heart of the "Aurora Bubble" to watch the northern lights from a heated yurt or if you prefer, from your outdoor hot springs pool. Try your hand at dog mushing as you drive your own dog sled team on a 16-mile round-trip run with views of Exit Glacier.

take you on mountain trails, walks amongst giant sequoias, feeling the mist of waterfalls, and opportunities to gaze across granite hewn valleys.

April 16-21 & May 25-30

Springtime in Yosemite

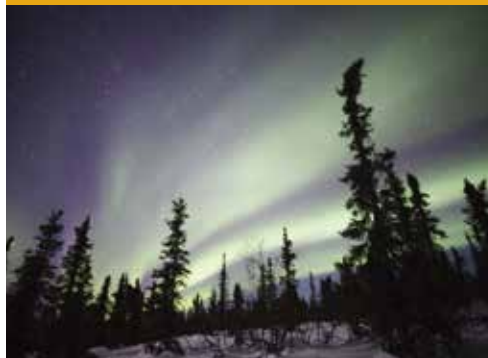
You'll feel the long reach of history and see the grandeur of Muir's beloved Sierras as our daily excursions will

July 9-14, July 16-21, August 19-24

Crown of the Continent

Lace up your boots and come with us as we explore over 10 million acres of dramatic mountains, expansive vistas, iconic trails, and abundant wildlife that make up the Crown of the Continent including Glacier National Park and Waterton Lakes National Park.

Check out NPCA's full 2017 tour lineup at www.npc.org/travel



Top Left: Northern Lights featured in Chena Hot Springs, Alaska ©Chena Hot Springs Resort
Top Right: View of Half Dome in Yosemite ©Ben Sander | NPCA **Above:** NPCA's Travel Coordinator Ben Sanders on Grinnell Glacier Hike ©Ben Sander | NPCA



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The green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) is a native lizard species found on Cumberland Island. Although not a chameleon, the same individual can change color from brown to green or grayish, depending on environmental conditions.
©Ann Froshauer



Progress on the Buffalo

NPCA has been working with The Ozark Society, Arkansas Canoe Club and the Buffalo River Watershed Alliance, to draw attention to the harmful impact a 6,500 hog factory, which has been located upstream of the Buffalo National River since 2013, could have on water quality.

On September 30, 2016, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson directed the Arkansas Departments of Environmental Quality, Health, Agriculture, Parks and Tourism, and the Natural Resources Commission to work together to:

1. Identify and address potential issues of common concern in the Buffalo River Watershed;
2. Develop an open and effective forum to allow stakeholders to engage with each other, share relevant information, and work collaboratively to improve or maintain the water quality of the Buffalo National River;
3. Initiate the development of a Buffalo River Watershed Management Plan (WMP) funded by an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant, and;
4. Consider the state of current scientific investigation in the watershed and prioritize future research needs.

This action is in response to concerns raised by NPCA and our allies. We commend Governor Hutchinson for taking this important step to protect America's first national river.

Right: Enjoying Big Bluff Overlook at the Buffalo National River. ©IrinaK | Shutterstock.com

