



Grant's Tomb

In a new section, we'll be getting to know our national park advocates, Friends Groups, and other park partners. In this issue, Frank Scaturro, President of the Grant Monument Association (GMA) took some time to answer a few questions about his organization.

Can you tell us about the Grant Monument Association? Sure! The Grant Monument Association (in its current form) has been around since 1994 and is the successor to the group of the same name that originally built and administered Grant's Tomb in New York City, officially renamed the General Grant National Memorial when the National Park Service took over the site in 1959. Our mission is to encourage the preservation of Grant's Tomb and promote the legacy of Ulysses S. Grant, our nation's 18th president, through commemorative and educational year-round programming.

Who is General Grant and why is he important? General Grant served as U.S. President and, before his presidency, was the commanding general who led the Union Army to victory over the Confederacy during the Civil War. His rise on the battlefield brought victory after a succession of other Union army commanders failed, and his success came during a war that

continued on page 3

Restore America's Parks

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. That's a century of protecting and preserving America's most iconic and treasured places, places that represent our country's natural majesty, rich culture, and vibrant history. But as record-breaking crowds flocked to parks, the parks face an incredible challenge: a \$12 billion backlog in deferred maintenance. NPCA and its partners launched the Restore America's Parks campaign last year to bring attention to the backlog and to call on Congress to adequately fund national parks.

Repairs at national parks range from deteriorating roads, bridges and trails to threatened environmental resources, to visitor centers built over 50 years ago in desperate need of renovations and updates. Consistent funding shortfalls from Congress mean that necessary repairs to park infrastructure have gone overlooked and maintenance issues grow with time. And just like in your own home, the longer a repair is pushed off, the harder and more expensive it becomes to fix.

We must make our parks safer, more accessible, and preserved for the future by ending the repair backlog.

In addition to the invigorating effects parks have on all visitors, maintaining our parks just makes good economic sense. For every dollar invested by the federal government in the National Park Service, \$10 is returned to the American economy. National park visitation generated \$32 billion for the U.S. economy in 2015 while supporting hundreds of thousands of private-sector jobs.



Congress created the National Park Service a century ago to protect America's beloved natural, historical, and cultural sites, and to ensure that all Americans can enjoy these treasures. As the Park Service commences its second century, it's time for Congress

continued on back flap

FIELD REPORT

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Director's Message

Dear Northeast NPCA members,

As you can guess, it has been a busy time for our national parks and for NPCA. While we respond to the shifting landscape in Washington, D.C., the work of NPCA's members in Maine has paid off! We are pleased to announce the great news of co-sponsorship by Maine Senators Angus King and Susan Collins for the National Parks Legacy Act that was recently introduced in the Senate.

While NPCA has long advocated for greater federal funding of the National Park Service, needs have become magnified and more pressing with the passage of time. Read on to learn about the Restore America's Parks campaign and how the National Parks Legacy Act is designed to bring better funding to our national parks.

The Northeast office has enjoyed meeting many of you at our events in New York, Massachusetts, and Maine. We hope you



plan on joining us for the New York Gala on October 26, 2017 and make sure to stay tuned for more events throughout the region. Join us for upcoming celebrations at General Grant National Memorial and NPCA's work along the Appalachian Trail.

And make sure to visit General Grant National memorial the next time you are in New York City! You will be impressed by the history told by rangers and the grandeur of the site.

A special shout-out to members of the Northeast Regional Council who contributed funding for new directional signs at General Grant which will be in place this spring. Thank you from us to all NPCA members for what you do for our national parks!

Sincerely,
Cortney Worrall
Northeast Regional Director, NPCA

Above: Cortney Worrall ©NPCA Below: Cape Cod National Seashore ©NPCA



Contact our membership department at npcsa@npcsa.org or join online at npcsa.org/give/join. To join NPCA by phone, call us at 1.800.NAT.PARK (1.800.628.7275) between the hours of 9AM and 5PM (ET), Monday through Friday.



Introducing The Grant Monument Association

continued from page 1

the nation depended on for its survival, and ultimately for the emancipation of American slaves. As president, he worked to ensure a new era of peace, civility, and political equality regardless of color, which involved some of the most profound constitutional changes in American history. He used his influence to ensure the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which barred racial discrimination in voting, and the enforcement of both voting rights and the broader promise of civil rights made by the Fourteenth Amendment. He remained dedicated to these objectives while working to heal the nation's wounds and resolving several crises abroad with spectacular success in foreign policy.

Are there any unique features to this park site? Architecturally, Grant's Tomb is a spectacular memorial, the largest mausoleum in the Western Hemisphere, and the largest monument in Manhattan. It serves as the final resting place of General Grant and his wife, Julia.

At NPCA, we're working to Restore America's Parks by advocating for funding to tackle critical maintenance issues at our parks. Has Grant's Tomb been affected by this? Yes, unfortunately.

Having to make do with shrinking federal funding, the Tomb itself has had to reduce its operating hours, and maintenance repairs to the site take longer to complete. The pavement and steps behind the Tomb, while technically on New York City property, is part of any reasonable definition of the site—it



includes a Chinese memorial at Grant's temporary tomb site—and has been in a state of disrepair for decades. While a small pavilion overlooking the Hudson River was recently restored to offer park signage and site interpretation, we have had to delay plans to establish a larger visitor and exhibit space nearby. The Park Service staff at Grant's Tomb are wonderful partners to work with, but they're operating with limited

resources. Despite this, they're still able to host nearly 100,000 visitors a year and in recent years have greatly improved their visitors' education about the life and legacy of General Grant.

When is the best time to visit the General Grant National Memorial?

The best day to visit the park is April 27th—General Grant's birthday. Every year, the Park Service hosts the West Point color guard for a 21-gun salute in honor of General Grant while educational programs occur throughout the day for all ages. The Sons of Union Veterans also host an annual ceremony on the Sunday nearest Grant's birthday (April 30 this year). I'd encourage you to check out www.nps.gov/gegr for upcoming events throughout the year. The Grant Monument Association (GMA) hosts an annual dinner for General Grant's birthday, held this year on April 24, with guests Gen. David Petraeus and Dr. Williamson Murray, one of our foremost military historians. Visit www.grantstomb.org for more information about our annual dinner and find out more about GMA.

Lastly, can you answer this famous question for us: Who is buried in Grant's Tomb? You'll have to visit the General Grant National Memorial to find out!



Appalachian Trail Magic

'Trail magic' is a term coined by long-distance hikers on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) used to describe random acts of kindness left behind for fellow hikers. The tradition of 'trail magic' has taken many different forms over the years, ranging from offerings of cold drinks and snacks to basic medicine and a convenient lift into town.

On February 25th, NPCA partnered with Groundwork Hudson Valley, Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Next Generation Council and the Harlem Valley Appalachian Trail Community to spread some trail magic of our own on the AT in Dutchess County, NY. Groundwork teens took the MetroNorth Railroad from Yonkers to the Appalachian Trail to learn about trail maintenance, wildlife tracking and to construct an outdoor library box that will be installed at a nearby AT shelter this summer. The AT library box will offer a book exchange for long-distance hikers. Inside the box will be a note from the Groundwork teens encouraging hikers to post a photo and tag @groundworkhv #train2trail to follow the books' travels.

Join us for the installation of the AT library box at the Morgan Stewart shelter this summer.

Find out more at www.facebook.com/HarlemValleyAppalachianTrailCommunity/



Photos (Upper Left, Moving Clockwise) **1:** Groundwork HV teens disembark a Metro-North train directly onto the AT. ©Groundwork Hudson Valley **2:** The group learns to track wildlife from Berkshire Natural Resources Council's Michael Leavitt. ©Groundwork Hudson Valley **3:** Trail marker on the AT ©Eric Limon | Dreamstime **4:** Metro-North train stop on the AT ©jdwfoto | Can Stock **5:** Groundwork HV teens construct the library box ©Groundwork Hudson Valley **6:** Library box construction complete! ©Donna Chapman **7:** Great Swamp boardwalk on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail ©Groundwork Hudson Valley **8:** Groundwork HV teens hard at work on the AT library box ©Groundwork Hudson Valley **9:** Participants' signatures on the library box interior ©Groundwork Hudson Valley



Restore America's Parks

continued from page 1

to renew its commitment to our national parks by providing annual, dedicated funding for park infrastructure repairs. By doing so, we can secure the proud legacy of our national parks.

What can you do? Write letters to your representatives, submit letters to the editor (LTEs) and op-eds to your local news publications to bring attention to this issue and urge Congress to better fund our national parks. Don't have time? NPCA

can help! Fill out our LTE interest form at www.npca.org/fixourparksite and we will get in touch with you.

We thank Maine Senators Angus King and Susan Collins for recently cosponsoring the National Park Service Legacy Act. Thank you NPCA Maine members for making your voices heard! The National Park Service Legacy Act, introduced in the Senate, aims to provide funds that over time will significantly reduce the national park repair backlog. If enacted this bill will help provide funds for park infrastructure, roads, buildings, and visitor amenities.



Above: Broken tiles at Vanderbilt National Historic Site ©NPCA

Jamaica Bay Transportation Report Release



Even though Gateway National Recreation Area is one of the most visited national parks in the country, New Yorkers have very few public transportation options to get to the park. Gateway's Jamaica Bay unit, located in South Brooklyn and Queens, is surrounded by millions of residents who are starving for outdoor recreation but are dependent on New York City's public transit network to get around.

NPCA has been working with our network of Jamaica Bay Advocates, supporting organizations, city, state and federal agencies to develop projects that can increase waterborne access and bus and bicycle connections to Jamaica Bay. With support from the

agencies and the community, NPCA released a report, *Transportation and Access Improvements for the Jamaica Bay Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area*, which offers twenty-three specific recommendations to increase public access to the park. Among these recommendations are projects that aim to expand or create new water routes and ferry service, extend and improve New York City bus service, and raise awareness about the multiuse bike and pedestrian paths that lead to the national park.

To learn more about the work NPCA is doing to increase access to Jamaica Bay, visit our website at www.npca.org/jba and download the report.



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SAVE THE DATE

National Parks Conservation Association
NEW YORK GALA
celebrating national parks & their champions

WHEN: Thursday, October 26, 2017

WHERE: Gotham Hall, 1356 Broadway, NYC

HONORING: Norman Selby, NPCA Board Member and Northeast Council Member

For sponsorship and ticket information, please contact
Rachel Mentzer, Associate Director, Special Events
(202) 454-3388 or rmentzer@npca.org

