



# FIELDREPORT

100 YEARS

Northeast Region • Spring 2019



## WILDLIFE CORNER

### Rare Sea Turtle Nests at Gateway NRA

Last July, beachgoers at New York City's Gateway National Recreation Area witnessed a rare wildlife sighting at Jamaica Bay's West Beach.

They spotted something small and scaly crawl out of the ocean and trek to the West Beach sand dunes. Concerned, the beachgoers called the National Park Service to take a closer look. Turns out, it was the first nesting Kemp's Ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) in New York state. The rarest and smallest species of sea turtle in the world, the Kemp's Ridley are critically endangered and federally protected in the United States under the Endangered Species Act.

Thanks in part to a multi-agency effort and help from many international conservation programs, Kemp's Ridley sea turtles are making a steady comeback after the population of nesting females dropped from a high of 40,000 in the 1940s to an alarmingly low 300 in the 1980s.

Why the drastic drop in population? Kemp's Ridley are the only sea turtles that nest during the day, making their

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## A New U.S. Congress

The 2018 election brought a range of outcomes across the country, resulting in a 116th Congress that increasingly reflects the diverse population of America. Those elected also represent many "firsts" for us as a nation.

More women than ever before now serve in the House of Representatives and the Senate; at 125 members strong, they represent over 23 percent of Congress. The class of freshmen House members also includes: the first two Native American women, the first two Hispanic women representing Texas, a Rhodes scholar and Harvard-educated lawyer/rap artist, a National Teacher of the Year recipient, over a dozen military veterans, and two former professional football players. This diversity of backgrounds, opinions and ideas will help our democracy going forward and inspire the next generation to see themselves in the halls of Congress one day.

Additionally, there's plenty of good news for national parks. Voters elected new House members with pro-environmental agendas in places where there haven't been pro-park votes in many years—or ever. If these new members of Congress, representing districts that include parts of Kansas, Iowa, Oklahoma

and southern California, vote even once in favor of a park issue, it will be enormous progress on the political map for national park legislation. As political fights loom that could threaten bedrock laws such as the Antiquities Act and the Endangered Species Act, these votes become more critical than ever.



Here in the Northeast, we've welcomed several new House members, many of whom already possess ties to national parks sites in their districts or could become

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**Top:** A man paddles his canoe on Sebocis Lake near Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument with Mount Katahdin in the distance ©Jerry and Marcy Monkman | EcoPhotography.com | Alamy **Right:** Washington's Headquarters at the Ford Mansion, Morristown National Historical Park in New Jersey, represented by new U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill ©Mauritius Images GmbH | Alamy

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## IN MEMORIAM – JANET WEINBERG

**J**anet Weinberg, a passionate advocate for those with disabilities and for the LGBT community, passed away on September 1, 2018. The northeast NPCA staff who worked with her feel honored and privileged to have received her sage advice and to have seen her leadership in action.



to meet with staff in the White House and the Department of Interior to advocate on behalf of Stonewall's designation. The importance of Stonewall to the lesbian and transgender communities was a driver for her activism, and she remained steadfast in her efforts to ensure the history of the AIDS crisis was also

Janet was renowned in New York City and nationally as a savvy activist and fundraiser who led the Gay Men's Health Crisis and was responsible for the growth of New York City's LGBT Community Center in the 1990s.

included in Stonewall's historical interpretation. Her voice and perspective continue to influence the National Park Service's interpretation of the Stonewall uprising to this day.

A leading voice at NPCA's very first discussion about a possible campaign to designate Stonewall as a national monument in 2014, she continued to offer her wisdom and guidance throughout the designation process. Janet traveled twice to Washington, D.C.,

A memorial attended by nearly 200 people, including U.S. Rep. Jerold Nadler, was held in New York City on November 11 at the Educational Alliance where Janet served as executive vice president for programs and operations.

**Above:** Janet Weinberg • Photo courtesy of the Educational Alliance **Below:** NPCA marches at NYC Pride in support of Stonewall National Monument ©NPCA | Whitney Browne Photography



**VOLUNTEER WITH NPCA! JOIN NPCA AT NYC PRIDE/WORLD PRIDE,**  
celebrating 50 years since the uprising at Stonewall National Monument.  
Visit <https://npcastonewall.eventbrite.com> for more information.

## speaker series

### **NATIONAL PARKS Will We Recognize Them in 100 Years?**

## JOIN US!

**March 20, 2019 • 6:00 pm**  
**The Explorers Club, NYC**

Join NPCA President & CEO Theresa Pierno along with Alan Spears and Ani Kame'euni for a conversation on the immediate and long-term threats facing our national parks.

RSVP: [www.npcac.org/newyork](http://www.npcac.org/newyork)

AN NPCA TRUSTEES FOR THE PARKS SPEAKER SERIES EVENT



# NPCA Releases Economic Report on Upper Delaware National and Scenic River

Last October, NPCA and partners released a new report to highlight stories from the emerging economy in the Upper Delaware River region, an area in Pennsylvania and New York stretching from Hancock, New York downstream to Port Jervis, and anchored by the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

The Upper Delaware park unit is unusual in that the National Park Service (NPS) directly owns, or jointly manages, only 31 acres out of the 55,575 total acres of the scenic and recreational river. One of the last large, undammed rivers in the lower 48 states, the Delaware River flows freely for 330 miles along its main stem from

## NPCA AT WORK

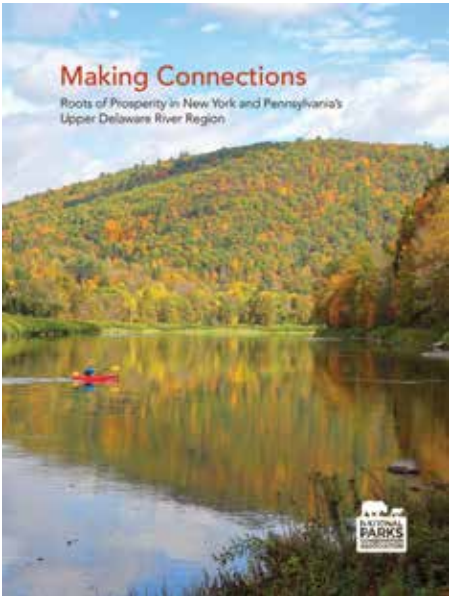
Hancock to the Atlantic Ocean at Delaware Bay. Man-made reservoirs that exist along the river's headwater streams, and the water impounded in them, provide about 60 percent of the water supply for New York City-area residents.

NPCA commissioned this report to spotlight exciting, inspirational efforts under way in the region that are redefining the nature of the region's future economic vitality. More than at most parks, the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River depends upon the stewardship practices of its community neighbors. The future of the region will need

to rely on a place-based economy that utilizes the area's rich recreational opportunities and potential for tourism.

New initiatives to attract visitors to the region build upon the area's history of offering 'pure air, pure water, pure milk' as promoted in the late 19th to mid-20th centuries while other economic strategies encourage a rethinking of traditional regional activities to be more compatible with the fresh air and clean water cherished by residents and visitors alike. NPCA will continue to work for the protection of the Upper Delaware River and the regional economic activities that preserve it and depend upon its ecological services to the region.

Above: Sunrise on the Delaware River ©andykazie Left: Making Connections: Roots of Prosperity in New York and Pennsylvania's Upper Delaware River Region, October 2018 ©NPCA, Photo by David B. Soete



## PARK BY THE NUMBERS

**253,500 PEOPLE** Visitors to the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River in 2017

**\$738 MILLION** Tax revenue generated annually related to tourism in the region

**113 JOBS** Jobs supported by this national park site

**\$10.8 MILLION** Money spent by park visitors

◆◆◆◆◆  
**OUT OF 55,575 Acres**  
**THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS) DIRECTLY OWNS OR MANAGES**  
**Only 31 Acres**



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young more vulnerable to wild predators and human impact. Entanglement in fishing gear, environmental degradation of critical nesting habitats and light pollution associated with development along the beachfront are some of the most common causes of death. Female Kemp’s Ridley sea turtles avoid well-lit beaches because the light can disorient young hatchlings who hatch at night and rely on moonlight and its reflection on the water to find the ocean.

At Gateway, this particular female turtle is believed to have traveled from the Gulf of Mexico to Jamaica Bay, where she excavated a nest and laid 110 eggs. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, about 95 percent of the world’s Kemp’s Ridley sea turtles nest on one beach in Tamaulipas, Mexico with the remaining 5 percent nesting on Padre Island National Seashore in Texas. This was the first Kemp’s Ridley egg deposit ever recorded in New York.

With help from the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, the National Park Service was able to safely remove and incubate all 110 eggs, preserving them from any disturbances. Two months later, the eggs were brought back to the original nesting site on West Beach. From there, 96 of the hatchlings successfully made the treacherous journey to sea, making this first-ever New York nesting a remarkable triumph.

“This isn’t where she would usually come to nest, and then for the eggs to actually successfully hatch ... it’s a pretty amazing thing.”

- PATTI RAFFERTY

Chief of Resource Stewardship  
for Gateway National Recreation  
Area, National Park Service

This miracle was only possible with help from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Silver Gull Beach Club and National Park Service staff members at Gateway National Recreation Area and Padre Island National Seashore.



Kemp’s Ridley are among the rarest of sea turtle species, with most making their home at Padre Island National Seashore in Texas (as shown in these images). **Top:** CNPS Photo | Alamy **Above:** NPS Photo | Alamy **Below:** Nature and Science | Alamy



# The Rising Cost of Climate Change

**A**s we come to grips with a changing climate and contemplate a future of rising sea levels, many vulnerable communities, cities and governments are grappling with how to afford making changes needed to prevent flooding in ecologically sound ways. To that end, NPCA and the Design for Risk and Reconstruction Committee of the American Institute of Architects cosponsored a fall workshop that brought together more than 75 stakeholders from all aspects of resilience planning for productive cross-disciplinary conversations.

Participants examined ecologically sound resiliency case studies, both those that faltered in the face of obstacles, and those that found success, and came to grips with the staggering cost of resilience projects needed around the country.

Consultant Joyce Coffee laid out the challenge in stark terms: “Between now and 2025, we will need \$4.6 trillion for resiliency infrastructure,” she said. “Sixty wastewater treatment plants around the country will be under water by midcentury. More than \$900 billion in real estate will be under water by the end of the century. It’s

a huge gap,” she continued, “but also a huge opportunity to finance the future in a different way.”



While Ms. Coffee provided an eye-opening national overview, NPCA provided the more local context, helping to focus attendees’ attention on resiliency projects at the Jamaica Bay unit of Gateway National Recreation Area that will protect the Bay from future storms while not walling off the largest salt marsh in New York City with harmful grey infrastructure.

“National parks and their critical infrastructure face unprecedented challenges,” Cortney Worrall, senior regional director

of the NPCA Northeast Regional Office, told attendees. By way of example, she discussed NPCA’s crucial work at Jamaica Bay. Vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise—and left even more so after Hurricane Sandy six years ago—Jamaica Bay “needs substantial investment and repair,” Ms. Worrall said. Such repairs include ensuring buildings are fortified and renovated to withstand high intensity storms and that flood control projects are ecologically sound and allow wildlife to find habitat. NPCA works to influence the plans of the Army Corps of Engineers for Jamaica Bay and, more widely, the long-term sustainability of coastal systems around the country.

If you would like to learn more about this event or attend a future workshop on funding strategies for resilient design plans, please email the NPCA Northeast Regional Office at [northeast@npca.org](mailto:northeast@npca.org).

**Above:** Critical shoreline and dune habitats are shrinking for federally protected species like the Red Knot, a bird previously featured in the Autumn 2015 Northeast Field Report. ©Brian Kushner | Dreamstime **Below:** Waves from the Hudson River crash onto Manhattan’s Riverside Park during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. ©John G. Wilbanks | Alamy



**JOIN NPCA TODAY!**

Help protect our national parks  
for future generations!



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Contact our membership department at [npcan@npcan.org](mailto:npcan@npcan.org) or join online at [npcan.org/give/join](https://npcan.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-Friday.



## Northeast Regional Office

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## A New U.S. Congress

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potential partners with NPCA on park-friendly legislation. For example:

- Rep. Max Rose, representing New York's 11th district (which contains portions of Gateway National Recreation Area), has already rolled up his sleeves to volunteer at Gateway during the partial government shutdown.
- Rep. Lori Trahan, newly elected in Massachusetts' 3rd district, has expressed her commitment to clean water. This interest is unsurprising as she hails from Lowell, MA where the city's waterways form a crucial part of its history and subsequently a major part of Lowell National Historical Park.
- Rep. Ayanna Pressley, representing Massachusetts' 7th district, is the first black woman from the state elected to Congress. Her district includes famous Boston national park sites such as Bunker Hill, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston Harbor Islands and portions of the Freedom Trail.



- Maine's Rep. Jared Golden, along with newly elected Governor Janet Mills, are expected to help with the development of Katahdin Woods & Waters National Monument. Both Golden and Mills supported the monument's designation in their previous state government roles.

In less good news for parks, fewer moderate Republicans will be returning to their jobs

in January. As the country gets more polarized and the political center continues to shrink, many of NPCA's proud park allies on the right side of the aisle have lost their jobs. NPCA lost strong Republican park defenders in New Jersey during this last election, such as Reps. Leonard Lance and Rodney Frelinghuysen, who were replaced by Democratic Reps. Tom Malinowski and Mikie Sherrill, respectively.

While we are confident that the new Democrats taking these seats in 2019 will continue to represent the park priorities in these districts, NPCA remains committed to investing in bipartisan support for all of our national park issues. NPCA has worked with every Congress and every administration for the last 100 years, and we remain dedicated to our mission of protecting America's best places.

*Portions of this article previously appeared on NPCA's Park Advocate Blog: "5 Takeaways from the Midterm Elections."*

**Top:** Bunker Hill Monument, Boston National Historical Park, represented by new U.S. Rep Ayanna Pressley ©Michael Dwyer | Alamy

**Bottom:** Pawtucket canal at Lowell National Historical Park, in U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan's hometown and district ©Wangkun Jia | Dreamstime

