



# TRUSTEES FOR THE PARKS

NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021



Channel Islands National Park (CA)  
Madellnesalocks/Dreamstime

Protecting more land and water is essential to averting the extinction of thousands of species.



Everglades National Park (FL)  
© NPS

## 30 BY 30

### National Parks and Climate Change

In the next 30 seconds, natural land the size of a football field will be lost to development in the United States. Wild rivers, clear lakes and clean shorelines are also disappearing at an alarming rate in the name of “progress.”

As humans continue to irrevocably alter the landscape, the climate crisis worsens and brings increasingly dire consequences for all national park sites.

Nearly everything we love about national parks — wildlife, forests, beaches, historic structures and more — is under stress from climate change as our parks warm at twice the rate of other parts of the country. Climate

change is so overwhelming that it can seem as though there is nothing we can do to stop the harm it is causing. But there are effective steps we can take to address this catastrophe. One such step comes in the form of an executive order, signed by President Biden in January, to conserve nearly a third of U.S. land and ocean waters by 2030, known as 30 by 30.

#### Good for the Planet

Biologists and other scientists have documented the importance of protecting the world’s lands and waters. It is essential to averting the extinction of thousands of plant and animal species. Plus, protected natural

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*A humpback whale breaches out of the Pacific Ocean amongst mountains and tiny islands in Kenai Fjords National Park (AK)*

© Sboice1 | Dreamstime.com

spaces are proven to store and absorb the carbon dioxide that fuels climate change.

Expanding the acreage of public lands safe from development and deforestation, including lands and waters adjacent to national parks, will do more than reduce threats from extreme events such as wildfires and hurricanes that can hit parks head-on. It will also help solve the climate crisis and contribute to a sustainably livable planet

### Good for People

National parks are not just places where plants and animals can find refuge, but where humans can connect with nature and learn about our national heritage. The pandemic underscored the benefits of outdoor recreation and relaxation – something NPCA Trustees for the Parks have always recognized.

That is why everyone has a stake in avoiding irreversible damage to the parks and making sure those special places become steadfast anchors in land and water conservation.

### Good for the Economy

The goal of 30 by 30 is supported by a range of advocates – it would provide more green spaces and recreational opportunities as well as a strong economy.

Our public lands and waters are an economic boon to the U.S. They produce benefits totaling nearly \$900 billion in consumer spending and 7.6 million jobs. Setting aside more spaces where people can play would increase those numbers while providing the priceless dividend of a beautiful world far into the future.

### PLACES WORTH SAVING

A variety of lands and waters all across the country are worthy of protecting as part of “30 by 30.” Here are three such places NPCA is calling on federal officials to prioritize before imperiled national park landscapes suffer additional climate change-related damage.

#### THE BEAR COAST OF ALASKA

The Kenai, Katmai and Alaska Peninsulas southwest of Anchorage are world famous for their wildlife,

including the world’s highest density of brown bears. Despite national and state park designations, much of the Bear Coast is under severe threat from warming temperatures and proposed mining operations. Connecting parklands and strengthening protections would buffer the region’s wildlife against potentially disastrous climate change impacts.

#### THE GREATER EVERGLADES REGION OF FLORIDA

This unique ecosystem once stretched from the Kissimmee River in central Florida down to the Florida Keys. Widespread development and industrial agriculture, however, have led to the draining, dredging or paving of roughly half of the Greater Everglades Region. South Florida is especially vulnerable to storm surges, sea-level rise and pollution. Better protections would benefit national parks in the region and millions of the region’s residents.

#### THE CALUMET REGION OF ILLINOIS AND INDIANA

Between Pullman National Monument in Chicago and Indiana Dunes National Park near the southern tip of Lake Michigan lies a 50-mile patchwork of natural areas, industrial development, lakefront beaches and urban neighborhoods. NPCA is part of a coalition of local and national partners working to conserve this 61,000-acre region to offer greater access to recreation for people in local communities while helping safeguard Lake Michigan from climate change.

### Learn More and Speak Up

We encourage all Trustees for the Parks to learn more about 30 by 30 and the effects of climate change on national parks at [npca.org](http://npca.org). You can also contact your member of Congress to express your support of 30 by 30.

*Visit [npca.org](http://npca.org) to review our complete court filing and to follow developments in this and other cases led by NPCA.*



# Looking Forward

Like me, you may be looking forward to visiting one or more national parks this summer. That anticipation starts building every year around this time. But it seems even more pronounced this summer because so many people canceled travel plans last year due to the pandemic and are now eager to get back out into the parks.

“Looking forward” also describes NPCA’s approach to all of our work. That’s because we are always thinking about and striving to improve the future of national parks. This *Trustees for the Parks* newsletter spotlights some of the ways you are helping ensure the world’s best National Park System will be even better in the years ahead.

Your leadership support is the key to the success of our forward-looking initiatives — from an ambitious effort to prevent the worst effects of climate change, to establishing new national parks and expanding existing sites so the parks tell a more complete and inclusive American story. Please also note the tips on protecting yourself and others while

visiting your parks, as well as a long-ago discovery in Yellowstone National Park that made COVID-19 testing possible and helped save countless lives.



Along with everyone at NPCA, I’m deeply grateful for the role you play in preserving our past and protecting our future as a *Trustee for the Parks*. You will also have the gratitude of park visitors this summer and for generations to come because you are taking action today to enhance tomorrow’s national parks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abby Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Abby Evans  
Associate Director, *Trustees for the Parks*





# FUTURE PARKS

## More stories for more people

**N**PCA *Trustees for the Parks* are strong, passionate champions of America's national parks. For more than 100 years, our advocacy has played a leading role in both protecting existing public lands and setting aside new locations to be safeguarded in perpetuity.

We are continuing this proud tradition today by amplifying the voices of people across the country who are calling for the



**Blackwell School (TX) first-grade class 1947**

© Courtesy of the Blackwell School Alliance



**Fort Monroe National Monument (VA)**

© U.S. Army photo



**Walthall County Training School (MS)**

© Alan Spears/NPCA

became a refuge for self-emancipated people, including Harriet Tubman. Although sections of the fort are designated as a national monument, parts of the peninsula remain unprotected. NPCA supports adding those 40 coastal acres of land to Fort Monroe to prevent irresponsible development.

### **Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (California)**

With more than 17 million people, the Los Angeles Metropolitan area is the second most populated area in the

creation of new national parks and the expansion of existing park sites in their backyards. Our objective is to tell a more complete American story — past, present and future — that enables more people to see themselves in the parks.

Adding or expanding the following sites and others to the National Park System will also move our country closer to the vital goal of protecting 30% of America's lands and waters by 2030.

### **Julian Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park (Illinois and other states)**

This would be the first national park honoring a Jewish American. Julian Rosenwald was a prominent Chicago businessman and philanthropist. Between 1912 and 1932, he partnered with African American communities across the South to fund and build thousands of schoolhouses. These "Rosenwald Schools" were some of the first permanent educational facilities for Black children in rural areas.

### **Fort Monroe National Monument (Virginia)**

Some of the first enslaved African Americans in English North America landed here in 1619, marking the start of centuries of enslavement. During the Civil War, Fort Monroe

country, yet it has less open space than any other large urban area on the West Coast. The Rim of the Valley proposal, which would add 191,000 acres to the national recreation area, represents an opportunity for the Park Service to protect historic sites as well as the greater Los Angeles area's unique Mediterranean ecosystem and some of the last wild lands there. The expanded park would encompass Griffith Park, the Simi Hills, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, portions of the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Seco watershed. The expansion would also protect a vital corridor for wildlife, including mountain lions, bobcats, raptors and threatened red-legged frogs.

### **Blackwell School National Historic Site (Texas)**

The Blackwell School tells the story of de facto segregation that took place along the U.S.-Mexico frontier border in the early 1900s, when students of Mexican descent were educated separately from their white peers. Blackwell School alumni and their families have asked the National Park Service to protect this historic three-room schoolhouse. NPCA is helping with this effort to create what would be one of just a handful of parks dedicated to highlighting modern Latino history and culture.



*Santa Monica Mountains  
National Recreation Area (CA)*

© NPS

## FUTURE PARKS FEATURE:

### *Amache National Historic Site (Colorado)*

**N**ot all the history preserved in America's national parks is uplifting. It is, however, instructional and deserving of preservation. Such is the case with the proposed Amache National Historic Site.

During the first months of World War II, the United States initiated the single largest forced imprisonment in its history when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order forcing more than 120,000 people of Japanese descent to relocate to 10 remote military-style "camps." More than 7,500 Japanese Americans were incarcerated at the Amache internment camp, also known as the Granada Relocation Center.

Two-thirds of the people imprisoned at Amache were American citizens. Most were given a week or less to dispose of everything they owned and abandon their homes in California, Oregon, Washington and Arizona. They had no idea where they were going and only knew they were unwelcome because they had Japanese faces or names. People at Amache lived in trauma, with a constant presence of armed guards, barbed wire and shoddy barracks that offered no dignity and little protection from the elements.

The indefensible and unconstitutional treatment of people incarcerated at Amache is a story that must not be forgotten. And it's a story that sadly remains relevant to the trauma inflicted on Asian American Pacific Islanders to this day. The National Park Service is our nation's official protector of cultural and historic resources and is our nation's largest classroom, where we can learn about our past through the power of place. What it chooses to preserve and the stories it chooses to tell—including the complex and difficult—reflects our values as a nation.

That is why NPCA is working alongside Amache survivors and descendants, civil rights and veterans groups, and elected officials at all levels of government to establish the Amache National Historic Site. We are leading advocacy efforts to pass federal legislation that would make Amache an official member of the National Park System.

Visit [npca.org](http://npca.org) for updates on the status of the Amache National Historic Site Act, details on the proposed parks described on page 4 and opportunities to get more involved in our Future Parks campaign.



*Amache National Historic Site (CO)*

© Mikaela Ruland





# Delaware River Victory

## *Your Persistence Pays Off Again*

One of the most recent conservation successes made possible by Trustees for the Parks came in February when the harmful oil-extraction process known as “fracking” was permanently banned in the Delaware River Basin, which includes two iconic national parks — the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

This is a victory years in the making. NPCA initially went to court in 2010 to challenge draft regulations that would have allowed fracking. Our lawsuit raised the profile of this threat to national parks in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and other parts of the country.

In 2015, we released a report highlighting the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area’s contributions to local communities, including natural, cultural and economic values. We followed up with another report in 2018 detailing how protection of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River is critical to the areas’ continued economic growth.

These in-depth reports, backed by NPCA advocacy, Trustees for the Parks’ generosity and collaboration with many other organizations, have led to stronger protections for the entire Delaware River Basin.

NPCA Senior Manager for Pennsylvania and Delaware Programs, Halle Van der Gaag, hailed the fracking ban as “a victory for local community health, our national parks and the 15 million people who depend on the Delaware River for clean drinking water, swimming, boating and fishing. It is imperative that we protect our parks and the people who love and depend on them from the devastating environmental impacts of fracking.”

Congratulations to everyone involved in this important win for both parks and people!

### WHAT IS FRACKING?

Hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking,” is an extreme oil-extraction process that blasts a mixture of toxic chemicals and water into the ground to crack open rocks that might contain oil. Groundwater poisoning, noise and air pollution, and disruption of wildlife habitats are among the dangers fracking poses to national parks.



NPCA Blog Excerpt:

# YELLOWSTONE'S LIVING LABORATORY SAVES LIVES

In the 1960s, a microbiologist named Thomas Brock became fascinated with bacteria that could survive in the superheated thermal pools at Yellowstone National Park. The park was a perfect setting for his study of microorganisms in their natural environments.

Brock collected samples in various parts of the park, including a large spring in the Lower Geyser Basin known as Mushroom Pool. One single-celled microbe, now fittingly known as *Thermus aquaticus*, turned out to be crucial to a type of testing scientists use to rapidly copy DNA so millions of replicas of the same sample can be studied.

The testing procedure, which has been valuable for years in prenatal testing, genetic research and other uses, became all the more important as the coronavirus spread worldwide in 2020. Accurate testing continues to be a critical way of

knowing who has been exposed to COVID-19, easing fears and saving lives during a time of global crisis.

Writing in the journal *Genetics*, Thomas Brock acknowledged “My discovery of *T. aquaticus* and other high-temperature bacteria could not have been made without studies directly in the natural environment in Yellowstone National Park.”

If what meets the eye is all there is to Yellowstone, it would be plenty to inspire awe. Knowing the treasure trove of fascinating microscopic life that also thrives there makes this national park all the more impressive and vital.

Read NPCA's full blog post — “The Park That Made COVID Testing Possible” — at <http://www.npca.org/covidtesting>



Dr. Thomas Brock at Mushroom Pool in Yellowstone National Park in 1967

Public Domain



Grand Prismatic Spring at Yellowstone National Park  
© Lane Erickson/Adobe Stock





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## SHOW YOUR PARK PRIDE!

NPCA's new online store is the best spot to buy parks gear & NPCA logo items!

Check it out at [npca.org/shop](http://npca.org/shop)



# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## *Enjoy Your Parks Safely This Summer*

As you venture out to your national parks this summer you might encounter new safety measures such as mask requirements, timed-entry passes and new reservation systems.

For the most up-to-date info for planning your national park trip we recommend [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov), which government agencies including the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service describe as a "one-stop shop" for information on more than 100,000

sites across the country. You should also visit the National Park Service's site, [nps.gov](http://nps.gov), for regulations in place at the specific national park(s) you plan to visit.

Knowing before you go to any national park is crucial but with planning and preparation, we can all still find ways to adventure responsibly in our parks.

View NPCA's list of 10 ways you can adventure responsibly at <http://www.npca.org/10ways>

