

## Survey of Impacts to National Parks During the 2019 Partial Government Shutdown

Completed by the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks in coordination with the Institute for Parks, People and Biodiversity at the University of California, Berkeley.

### Instructions:

During the extended government shutdown, our National Parks have been left open to public use but seriously understaffed. Consequently, there are reports of significant problems, ranging from trash and overflowing toilets, to an increase in vandalism. Only a few of these reports have been specific, such as the cutting of a Joshua Tree in Joshua Tree National Park.

Coalition members bring extraordinary expertise and knowledge of the operations and resources at our national parks that no other organization can claim. The goal of this survey is to observe and record specific impacts to parks from the shutdown. The survey should be conducted by former NPS employees who have special expertise and knowledge of individual parks and the NPS in general. The impacts can fall into four general categories: (1) work that is not being completed because the staff are on furlough, (2) impacts to the park natural and cultural resources and facilities, (3) visitor safety incidents, (4) morale, working, and family situations for NPS employees.

We recommend that the survey is conducted by at least two or more members of the Coalition working together. This increases their safety and doubles their knowledge of the park. It is not required that all of the team members formerly worked in the park they are surveying, but it is preferable that at least one of the team member was a former employee.

Using the attached checklist as a guide, make notes, take pictures and capture the impacts in a way that can be easily conveyed to the media and others. Try to contact current employees and get their input on impacts, and their suggestions of what to see. **DO NOT RECORD** the names of any of the current employees, as retaliation is a real threat in this administration.

The survey checklists will be collected by the Coalition and Institute leadership and compiled into reports that will be released to the media and to Congress for their consideration of funding to repair the parks in 2019. Anticipate that members of the survey teams may be individually contacted by the press.

We also want to record positive efforts, as NPS employees are working gallantly under extreme conditions and many partners and volunteer efforts are underway as well.

Please email your observations and any accompanying photos or video to [Editor@protectnps.org](mailto:Editor@protectnps.org) by **Tuesday, January 22, 2019**.

## Survey of Impacts to National Parks during the 2019 Government Shutdown Checklist

Survey Team Member Names, expertise, years of service with the NPS or other agency, and specific experience in the park being surveyed:

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Name of National Park surveyed and date of the survey: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Category 1: Work Not Getting Done**

Look for trash not collected and any appearance of animal activity in the trash. Look for unmaintained or closed toilets. Check on campground cleanliness. Look for maintenance projects that are halted mid-project. Talk with employees about natural and cultural resource surveys, weather measurements, restoration projects, or science that has been halted. Ask about delays in hiring, contracts, agreements and planning projects that have stalled. Assess the scope of these delays and how long after the shutdown ends before things get back to normal.

### **Category 2: Impacts to Park Natural and Cultural Resources and Facilities**

Look for specific damage (intentional or inadvertent) from public use, including driving off-road with vehicles (including snowmobiles), vandalism, poaching, pot hunting, metal detecting, and breaking and entering park buildings or closed areas such as sensitive ruins. Talk with NPS employees about what they are observing and the types of contacts they are making. Take photos of any damage you see.

### **Category 3: Visitor Safety Issues and Incidents**

Learn from NPS employees about visitor accidents that could have been prevented had the park been fully staffed. Observe and record safety signs, such as road conditions or informational materials, that are outdated. Check the NPS park website for outdated information as well.

### **Category 4: Employee Morale and Work and Family conditions**

Talk with NPS employees about the impact of the shutdown on their financial situation, their families, their morale, and their working conditions (no back-up/dispatch/slow response time, etc.) Reassure them of complete confidence and anonymity. **DO NOT COLLECT THEIR NAMES.**

**Positive efforts:** Make note of any specific efforts by park staff, volunteers, partners, local communities, or others who are assisting the parks and the employees during this shutdown.